

# Developing People for the North

North Australia Fire Managers Forum

Alice Springs

June 2016

Trevor Howard

Department of Parks and Wildlife

Western Australia



# Fire Management Development Program

## Background

- Post-Boorabin review of DEC by Ferguson (2010) highlighted succession planning as critical
- Report on Margaret River bushfires by Keelty (2012) highlighted operational complexity and the need for succession planning
- Most senior and experienced fire personnel (ex forestry) have diverse operational backgrounds
- Support and \$\$\$\$ for FMDDP provided in late 2012

# Fire Management Development Program

## Scope

- 16 full time L1 – L4 positions, with vehicles, mainly south west based and focussed, plus a program manager
- Placements in districts, regions and state fire branch for around 18 – 24 months, then another placement
- Standard program requirements for each level, structured group/block training and development, tailored individual development, projects, deployments
- Recent program review and planned expansion

# Fire Management Development Program

## Northern Aspects

- After initial SW focus, FMDDP teams have been involved in ground burning in the Pilbara, Goldfields and Kimberley 2014, 2015 & 2016
- FMDDP placement in Broome for Yawuru fire planning, now the District Fire Coordinator in Kununurra
- Selected FMDDP participants assisted with development of fire ecology courses – initial phase, tropical savannas, hummock grasslands etc.

# Beyond Operations: Fire Ecology Courses

## Why?

- Australia is recognised as a biodiversity hotspot and one of the world's most fire prone regions
- Conservation and land management responsibilities of P&W WA
- Courses will facilitate a deeper understanding among fire practitioners and managers of the interactions that fire has with ecosystems and the biota they contain
- A sound understanding of fire ecology enables managers to make sound decisions about when, where and how to introduce fire to the landscape to ensure the conservation of biodiversity

# Course Development



- The courses have been developed collaboratively between P&W fire managers, Science Division and subject matter experts
- Tropical savannas module produced by Dr Ian Radford
- Hummock grasslands module being produced by Dr Neil Burrows
- Learning materials developed by some FMDP participants



# What is covered

- Fundamental fire ecology concepts:
  - Different fire environments (biomes)
  - Fire adaptations (flora and fauna)
  - Fire responses (flora and fauna)
  - Appropriate fire regimes
  - Influences of climate variability and change
  - Adaptive management



# Two courses, Two audiences

## Base Level Introductory Course

- For fire practitioners
- Mainly field delivery at suitable sites
- To gain an understanding of fundamental concepts of fire ecology
- To identify with the purposes of burns and to understand the effects different fire behaviours have on ecosystems

## Intermediate Course

- For prescribing officers, planning officers, fire managers
- To gain a thorough understanding of fire regimes and how fire interacts with the natural environment
- To acquire the ability to recognise potential habitat and identify an appropriate solution to enhance or maintain biodiversity

# 2016 and Beyond

- A pilot course was delivered to participants in the Fire Management Development Program (FMDP) in June 2016 in the jarrah forest at Busselton + review of other biomes
- The course will be reviewed and extended to fire practitioners and managers at all levels across the department over coming years
- Development of modules for tropical savannas, hummock grasslands and other biomes are well advanced and will soon be ready for delivery
- Fire ecology courses will provide a foundation for the continuous professional development of all departmental personnel involved with fire



