



Cape York Peninsula Development Association Inc.

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Media Alert

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Fire From the Sky - Aerial Incendiary to Reduce Risk of Wildfire on Cape York in 2007

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) and the Cape York Peninsula Development Association Inc. (CYPDA) are visiting five Cape York communities to consult with landholders about aerial incendiary burns to reduce the risk of wildfire during the 2007 dry season.

QFRS - Rural Operations and CYPDA subsidise the aerial burning program to Rural Fire Brigades and members to facilitate best practice fire management in Cape York.

The QFRS subsidy includes the provision of aerial ignition machine and bombardier expertise, labour, accommodation, incendiary balls and glycol for ignition, and partial costs for the hire of the aircraft.

CYPDA also provide partial funding for the aircraft through the Cape York Fire Management Program (CYFMP) which has been using satellite technology to track fire since 2000 and produce fire scar history maps that assist landholders in monitoring fire activity over time.

In previous years, the incendiary program has been offered at no cost to property owners but an increase in the number of people wanting to access the service means that it can no longer be fully subsidised.

Jamie Haskell, Area Director for QFRS said that a small investment by property owners could save thousands of dollars in lost pasture or damage to property.

The economic linkages between fire management and cattle grazing in Cape York will also be raised by Niilo Gobius, (CYFMP) who is inviting landholders to take part in a joint CYPDA/Charles Darwin University research project funded through the National Landcare Program.

Niilo said, "Fire has always been a part of the landscape but little is understood about the economics of fire management. Last year, 4.8 million hectares burned on Cape York and this has repercussions for the economy and the environment. We are calling on landholders to participate in the project so we can gain a better understanding of the overall relevance of fire to sustainable production."

Meetings have already been held in Lakeland and Musgrave with a meeting in Weipa on 1 May, Coen on 3 May and Cooktown towards the end of May.

Interviews:

Jamie Haskell (aerial incendiary) and Niilo Gobius (satellite mapping and economic impacts) Niilo and Jamie are currently in the field on Cape York and will be in and out of telephone contact. Please contact MaryBeth Gundrum to arrange an interview time on 0429 385 567.



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