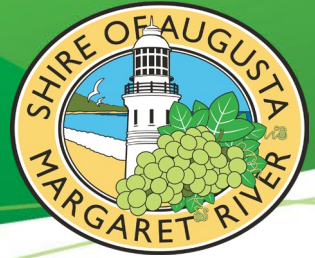


# 2023/24 Vegetation Die-Off Event Information Sheet



Date September 2024

**Due to exceptionally dry and warm conditions in 2023/2024 we have seen some vegetation die-off on public and private land throughout our Shire. This information sheet provides information about the die-off event and the perceived bushfire risk.**

## What we know

- The event impacted both private properties and public land managed by the Shire of Augusta Margaret River and national park managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA).
- It appears that many of the areas affected are linked to poor and/or shallow soils and/or the presence of granite or limestone in the location.
- A similar event happened in 2011, and whilst the event was labelled as vegetation die-off around 85% of the tree recovered. Actual tree mortality was approximately 15%.
- The 2023/24 event is much more extreme, larger in size and affects a range of vegetation types.
- It is possible that the tree mortality for the 2023/24 event will be higher; however, there will be tree recovery and some areas are beginning to show signs of recovery.
- The recovery process has been likened to how the trees recover after a bushfire.
- Following recovery areas may not look the same as before this event as nature adapts to new climate conditions.
- During the recovery the affected areas will continue to provide important breeding and foraging habitat for native birds and animals.
- Some areas in the Shire that feature granite have been lodged for protection as a priority ecological community. These may include areas that have suffered die off. For more information contact DBCA at [enquiries@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@dbca.wa.gov.au)
- ***Recovery will be a long-term process over many years. Residents are urged to allow that time before attempting to address any perceived increase in bushfire risk through tree removal.***



Trees on a granite outcrop next to this Margaret River property were impacted by the 2023/24 vegetation die -off event.

## Bushfire Risk after a die-off event

Shire Officers (after consulting with DBCA, and Nature Conservation Margaret River Region) have provided the following guidance for those concerned about the potential bushfire risk after the vegetation die-off, particularly residents on smaller rural lifestyle blocks.

- Fuel is considered to be any material capable of burning which is spread over the landscape. It becomes available at different times as it moves through the annual drying cycle.
- Total Fuel load (or the total amount of combustible material in our shire) has not increased because of the 2023/2024 die-off event.
- The fuel structure and arrangement of fuels has changed which meaning the available fuel load has increased.
- Dead ground fuel (such as dry leaves, branches, and other vegetation on the ground) becomes available early in the season, in the lead up to the High Threat Period. Clearing ground fuels should therefore be the focus of concerned residents.
- Any affected trees that next to driveways, roads, or footpaths should be assessed to determine if they may fall and/or shed dead limbs, as this may affect access to properties or the general area. This is particularly important in areas with single or limited access.
- Where possible avoid using machinery to address these areas as these were already fragile environments prior to this event and generally do not respond well to machinery intervention.
- Where residents believe removal of an affected tree is warranted, they should understand their legislative obligations before undertaking any work.
- For further information on firebreak requirements and general information about important dates please refer to the Shires Bush Fire Information pages at <https://www.amrshire.wa.gov.au/residents-community/fire-and-emergency-management>

## Additional information

- Develop a [bushfire plan](#) for your household and share it with all members of the household.
- During summer regularly monitor [Emergency WA](#)
- Familiarise yourself with the [Australian Fire Danger Rating System](#) and the new [Australian Warning System](#).
- To reduce ground fuels on your property
  - For smaller areas: hand rake dead vegetation for disposal through the Shires FOGO bin system or you may burn up a 1sqm pile after 6pm without a permit during the Spring restricted burning period
  - For larger areas in a rural urban setting: a low intensity winter or early spring burn can be conducted according DFES guideline is ideal.
- More information on how to conduct these activities are available through the below QR Code, or contact your local [Fire Control Officer](#).

