

Benefits of cool burning in savanna landscapes

What is cool burning?

Cool burns are a land management technique. Started soon after the wet season, before the grass completely dries out, cool burns do not damage plants, seeds or animals to any significant extent. During a cool burn the grasses on the ground burn slowly, allowing most of the small animals to escape. Seedlings, green grass, tree trunks and fallen logs are not burnt or damaged. The rising heat from the burning grass usually won't singe the eucalyptus leaves above. Overnight, the cool moisture in the air will put out any remaining fires before the morning.



How does cool burning benefit communities and landscapes in the savanna?

Traditional custodians are able to go back to their lands and meet their cultural obligations to looking after country. Connecting with and caring for Country is essential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; cool burning practices are one way they can care for Country.

Scientists and traditional custodians work together to show how traditional land management practices are good for the environment, bolstering awareness, respect and pride in traditional cultures.

Cool burning practices help to reduce hot burns. This means fewer farm buildings, equipment, property and fences being destroyed.

More cool burns will reduce hot burns resulting in less wildlife being killed.

Through reducing the frequency and intensity of hot burns, cool burns result in fewer trees, plants and their seeds being destroyed.

Cool burns slow the devastating impacts of hot burns, and see grass for grazing cattle and wildlife flourish.

Reducing the frequency and intensity of hot burns may help some endangered species.

Hot burns cause fallen logs to burn and disintegrate. Logs are home for small creatures. Smouldering logs after hot burns produce more greenhouse gases. Cool burning practices help to reduce the frequency and intensity of hot burns and so help to reduce the number of logs that are burnt.

Cool burns can reduce weeds so there is more food for cattle and wildlife.

Land can be managed so that carbon credits can be earned. This allows famers, Aboriginal communities and even parks to earn income from managing Country with cool burns.

Cool burning projects have shown the value of Aboriginal knowledge and science coming together.

Cool burning is a very cheap way of managing large areas of land.

Cool burning projects provide long-term employment opportunities in large areas of northern Australia, and frequently in other parts of Australia too.

