



Hamersley Fire Pilot Project

Presentation to Pilbara NRM Group
March 2010

The Issue

- Frequent, hot fires in the Hamersley Range threaten infrastructure, pastoral production and biodiversity
- The area contains fire-sensitive vegetation, short-range endemic species and Declared Rare flora and fauna
- It covers a range of land ownership: corporate stations, private stations, a national park and UCL, all with different fire management regimes



Project Aims

- Improve communication between corporate, private and government landholders
 - share and record landholders' prescribed burn practices
 - voice concerns with neighbours' burn practices
 - devise strategies to develop collaborative fire planning and management
- Collate and analyse data on fire history, vegetation and station infrastructure
 - develop a series of maps for each participating station
 - develop large-scale maps across the project area
 - work with landholders to ground-truth data

Project extent

- approx 3 million hectares in the eastern Hamersley Range

Private stations:

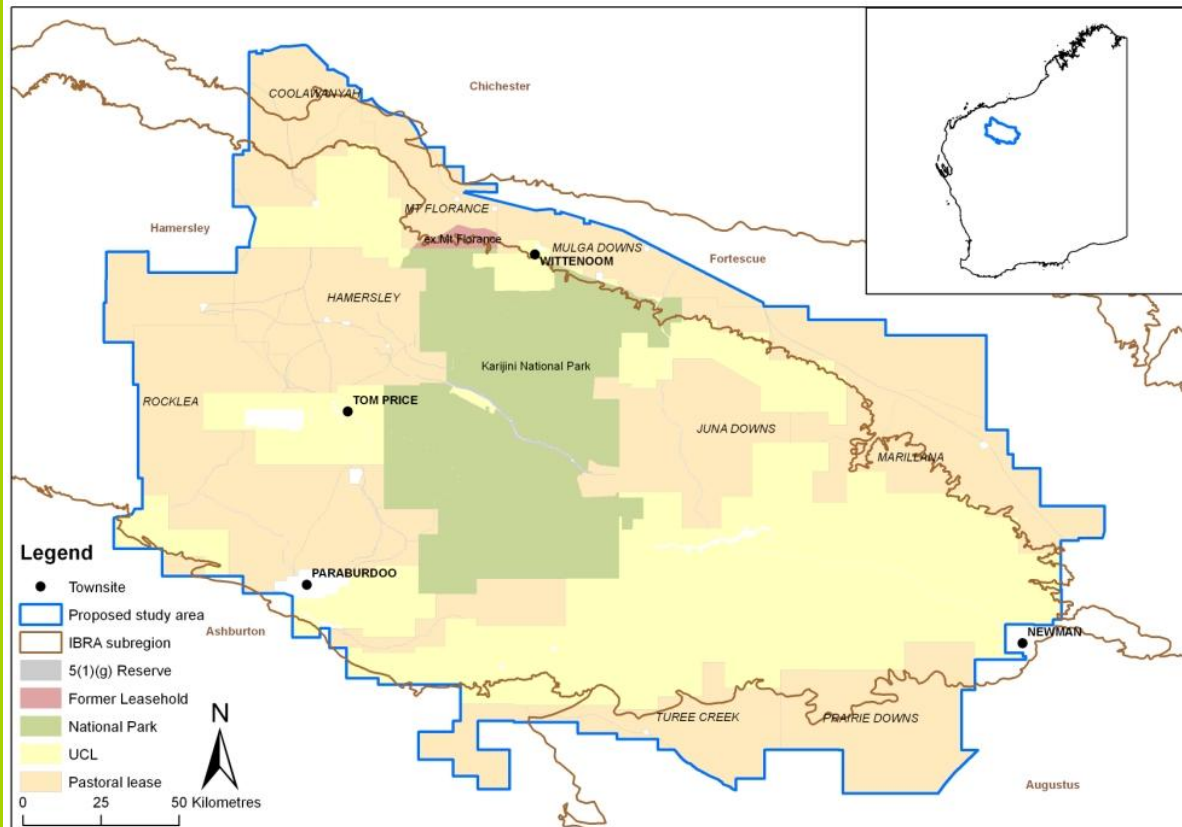
Coolawanyah
Mount Florance
Turee Creek
Prairie Downs

Rio Tinto stations:

Juna Downs
Rocklea
Hamersley

BHP station:

Marillana



Rangelands
NRM

Shire of
Ashburton

DAFWA / ESRM

FESA

DEC:

Karijini
National
Park

UCL

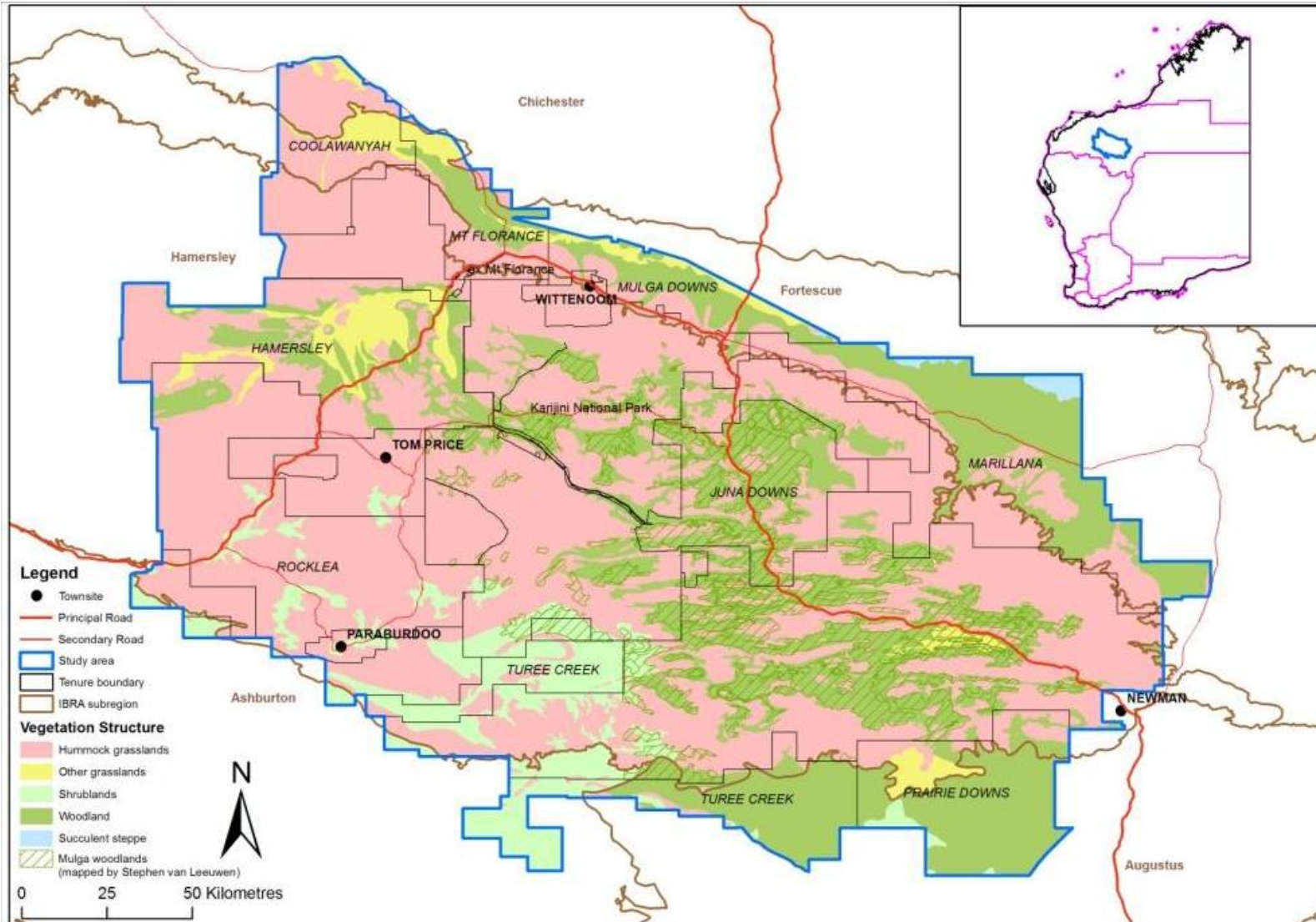


Activities

- Maps series developed
- Stakeholder workshop held in January
- Questionnaires completed and results compiled
- Burning needs of each vegetation type for each landholder recorded
- Visit to Juna Downs and Mount Florance by GIS officers in February
- Report completed and sent to stakeholders



Vegetation structure



Spinifex grasslands

Buffel grass creek systems & plains

Other grasslands eg. Mitchell grass

Other grasslands eg. Themeda

Snakewood shrublands

Acacia & other sp shrublands

River woodland with spinifex

River woodland with other grasses

Mulga & spinifex

Mulga & soft grasses

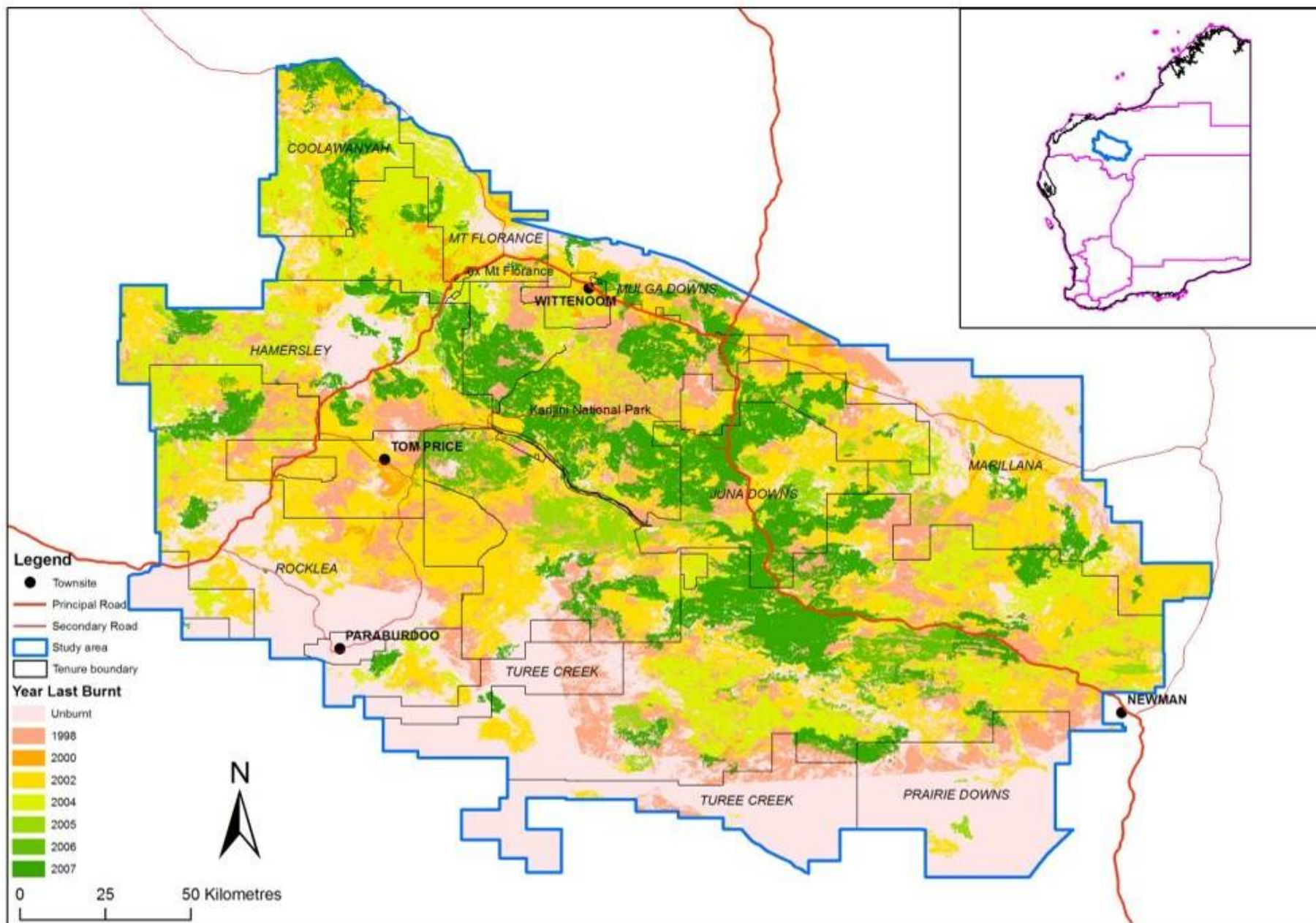
Mulga & annuals

Refugia - hilltops & gorges

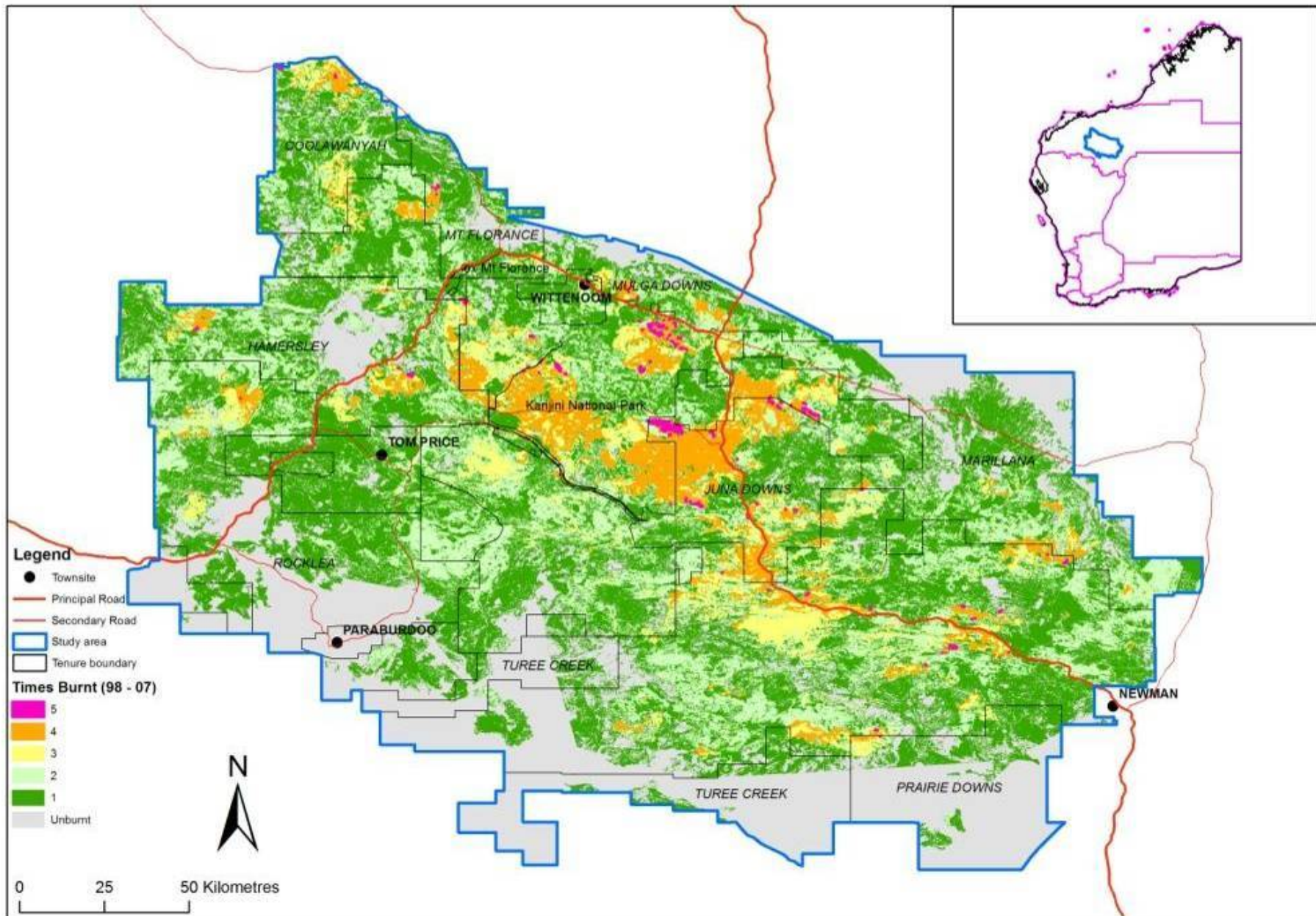
Burning needs for veg types

Veg type	Mt Florance	Juna Downs	Rocklea	Karjini NP
Spinifex	Rotation every 5-7 years Small manage-able areas Soon after summer rains	Burn program has only existed in last 18 months Rotation every 5-7 years	Large wildfire in 2000 has meant low fuel load & fire risk Will burn for soft regen after rain	Regular burning for mosaic of fuel ages Patch size <2000ha
Buffel grass	Haven't burnt in past May burn if veg becomes tall & rank	No buffel on Juna Downs	Don't burn but after natural fires has recovered well	Exclude fire
Mitchell grass	Do not burn, manage through grazing	Do not burn, manage through grazing	Doesn't grow on Rocklea	
Mulga & spinifex	Burn as for spinifex	Burn as for spinifex	Burn as for spinifex	Exclude fire
Mulga & soft grasses	Do not burn, manage through grazing	Do not burn, manage through grazing	Do not burn, manage through grazing	Exclude fire

Extent of most recent fire



Fire frequency



Landholder questionnaire

- Prescribed burns on own country
 - Aims, timing, methods, scale
- Prescribed burns on neighbouring country
 - Opinions on current practices, risks to their country, management of risks
- Fire suppression
 - What's at risk, how fires are attacked, resources, significance of fires caused by a third party



Issues raised during consultation

- **Fire practices aren't aligned amongst landholders**
- **Perception that DEC's burns are not protecting infrastructure adequately**
- **Permit process doesn't allow flexibility in burning to local conditions**

Issues continued..

- **Lack of communication between neighbours and parties entering land**
- **Responsibility for fire preparedness on adjacent properties needs clarity**
- **2015 arrangements are unclear**
- **Fires lit or caused by third parties are costly**

Strategies & recommendations

- Form a fire management working group
- Survey existing management templates and develop a fire management model and template for the Pilbara
- Develop a coordinated fire management plan, including a communication strategy
- Develop a communications policy for parties entering private land



More strategies

- Each property to develop a fire management plan
- Work with ESRM to include fire in property plans
- Develop an accredited fire operator scheme
- Use local staff in areas that can implement burns when conditions are suitable
- Employment of contractors with local knowledge to implement burns

Where to from here

- Work with the ESRM team to coordinate fire planning and avoid duplication
- Identify funding sources for continuation of project works and exec. support for working group
- DEC to progress plans for summer burning
- Hold further working group meeting in April or June