



29 November 2022

**Media Release**

## **Mowing, slashing and fire mitigation programs moving ahead**

Completing mowing programs and preparing for the fire danger season during spring has proved to be challenging for local councils with high grass growth and sodden ground that is difficult to cover due to continued and extended periods of rainfall.

Mount Barker District Council's general manager infrastructure, Phil Burton said: "This wet weather has accelerated the growth of grass and caused unavoidable delays."

"Council has not wanted to cause severe damage to saturated surfaces in many of our reserves, parks, sports grounds and cemeteries across the district. We do need a few days of dry weather before we can access some sites."

As the weather improves the council has put on more crews, including contractors, to tackle the backlog of work created by the persistent rain that has saturated soils and accelerated grass growth. Staff and contractors have been re-prioritised to mowing and slashing activities wherever possible including on weekends.

Mount Barker Council's roadside slashing program has been underway since early October with many of the lead in roads already finished.

Mowing and brush cutting works are continuing on council lands within townships including day paddock in Macclesfield, which has been the subject of recent concern for residents of Lutterworth and Vernon streets which border the reserve.

"Our two Fire to Flourish, fire mitigation team members along with contractors will be cutting the fire break within the open woodland boundaries of the day paddock as a priority," Mr Burton said.

"The nearby Macclesfield Primary School has reached out to us with concerns about day paddock and we will be working in partnership with them to manage verges adjoining and opposite the school grounds.

"We have also been engaging with Bush for Life who assist with management and protection of the diversity of this very important native vegetation site to ensure a consolidated approach with vegetation management, weed control and habitat."

The council's Fire Prevention Officer has also been assessing private lands and working with the community to ensure properties are prepared for the fire danger season.

753 clean up notices have been issued by the council in the lead up to fire season this year compared to 745 Notices in 2021.

"There are approximately 20,000 properties within the district and all are inspected as part of the 105F notice process," Mr Burton said.

"Due to the number of land developments in the area and the ongoing wet season, there has been an increase in the number of notices issued to vacant blocks in the new development areas.

"For property owners who do not comply with the notices that are issued, the standard penalties under the Fire and Emergency services Act apply. This includes an expiation notice and costs associated with cleaning up the property.

"It is noticeable that a significant number of the properties issued with a notice have already cleaned up their properties ahead of the fire danger season."

The council will continue to monitor areas that have been completed in their mowing and slashing program for regrowth due to the current high water content in the soil, and to make sure load reduction measures have taken place.

"Council shares the community's pride in our wonderful open spaces and we are working hard to overcome the impact of ongoing wet weather. We thank residents for their understanding and support and remind them to contact us if they notice areas that need attention," Mr Burton said.

Residents can contact Mount Barker District Council directly on 8391 7200; [council@mountbarker.sa.gov.au](mailto:council@mountbarker.sa.gov.au), or use the My Local Services or Snap Send Solve apps to report a problem.

- ENDS -

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