

# NARPULUNGUP NEWS

[www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au](http://www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au)

## AGM - 14 March 2026

**Everyone is welcome** - members and non-members, young and not so young; whether you are interested in a committee role or not; or if you simply want to spend a day amongst like-minded, people in the stunning Quaalup homestead inside the Fitzgerald River National Park.

### JOIN US - CHECK OUT THE PROGRAM BELOW:



### AGM PROGRAMME Saturday 14th March 2026

**9.00 -10.30 am** Arrive at Quaalup Homestead  
Wilderness Retreat-Morning tea (bring a plate to share)

**10.30-12.30 pm** Annual General Meeting

**12.30-1.30 pm** BYO Lunch

**1.30-2.30 pm** Jeremy Friend, DBCA's Albany District Manager, will share his knowledge on the 'Fitzgerald Fires'

**2.30-3.30 pm** Dr Matthew Macdonald will give an update on the 'Fitzgerald Biosphere vegetation research for appropriate fire regimes' project

Please arrange overnight accommodation directly with the Quaalup Homestead where chalets and campsites are available [www.whalesandwildflowers.com.au](http://www.whalesandwildflowers.com.au)

(08) 9837 4124

BYO dinner & drinks - barbecue available



Image sourced from <https://whalesandwildflowers.com.au/>

## SUPPORT US!

High quality tea towels **ONLY \$27**  
To order contact: [admin@fitzgeraldfriends.org.au](mailto:admin@fitzgeraldfriends.org.au)

Royal Hakea linen tea towels by Rowena Howard.

Fitzgerald Biosphere organic cotton tea towels  
by Vivienne Hillyer - white or linen-look



FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE FITZGERALD BIOSPHERE REGION  
INCLUDING THE FITZGERALD RIVER NATIONAL PARK



# The Fitz Fires

by Alan Hordacre

As many of you will be aware via the media a very large fire, ignited by lightning, has been running in the Fitzgerald River National Park. It is now controlled but its enormous area and perimeter will require attention for some time.

Last Saturday, DBCA Rangers Damien and Jess generously escorted Friends' Committee Members Gil, Alan, Nathan and Libby to the Twertup Field Studies Centre to inspect, assess the fire's outcomes and shore up any damage.

Fortunately, despite no firefighters being able to safely access the area when the fire was active, there is only minor damage to the main building and other infrastructure. A pre-fire run, precision retardant drop by DBCA air attack along with a pre-prepared, permanent fuel-reduced buffer, other careful fuel mitigation and the use of low or non-flammable building materials certainly slowed and reduced the intensity of the fire when it approached and made contact with the Twertup Field Studies Centre. This work certainly reduced damage and possibly saved the buildings.

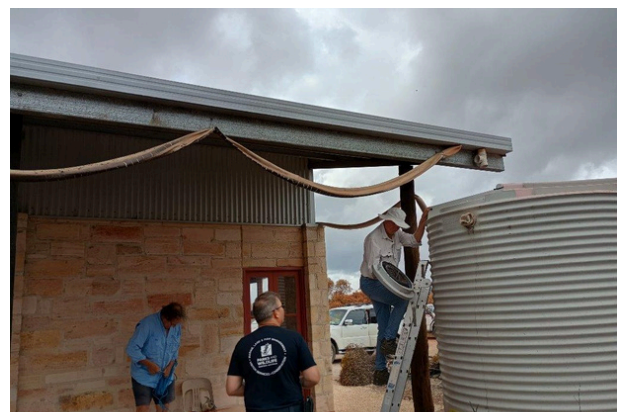


Photo credit: Alan Hordacre



**Photo credit: Alan Hordacre**

Two windows have minor cracks and PVC downpipes have been melted or burnt on three sides of the main building. Plans are afoot to make the necessary repairs. Tanks will need testing for retardant pollution and may need to be cleaned. The centre will remain closed to the public until repairs are completed.

High intensity fire has incinerated much of the vegetation within the Fitzgerald River National Park on Pabelup Drive and all vegetation except some small pockets on the Twertup Track. Remarkably we saw a live skink and fresh signs of Echidna and Brush Wallaby activity. Plants have shed their seeds ready for what will hopefully be steady and consistent rains in autumn and winter. Tiny green signs of life could be seen on the grass trees. Life exists and is ready to return. Fauna will certainly benefit from a comprehensive and ongoing fox and cat control programme.

We encourage new members (a share to your friends appreciated) or cash donations via Membership | [fitzgeraldfriends](https://www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au) to assist with the repairs to Twertup and foster the rehabilitation, recovery and protection of the unique flora and fauna disrupted and displaced by the fire.



**Photo courtesy of DBCA Albany**



Photos by Libby Sandiford



# Fitzgerald Biosphere Research Project

By Annie Leitch

At this year's Friends' AGM, join us for an update from Dr Matt Macdonald, the contracted botanist leading the Friends' Fitzgerald Biosphere research into appropriate fire regimes project.

Matt will share progress on the State NRM-funded project investigating varying regenerative success of serotinous, obligate-seeder species in this botanically rich region. Before the recent fires in January 2026, the project had already completed three field trips across the region, sampling 20 research sites, with long-term monitoring plots now established to track change over time. Several of these sites have since been burnt, enabling population recovery after the recent fire to be quantified.

Set within the 1.5-million-hectare UNESCO Fitzgerald Biosphere - the Fitzgerald River National Park at its core and part of the internationally recognised Southwest Biodiversity Hotspot - this research sits at the intersection of biodiversity conservation, land management and community knowledge.

The region's status, as one of Australia's 20 federally recognised Priority Places under the Threatened Species Program, underscores the importance of this work.



*Melaleuca cucullata* site Photo credit: Annie Leitch



Matt undertaking drone mapping Photo credit: Annie Leitch



Volunteer Tyler Anthony and Technical Assistant Annie Leitch with *Banksia baxteri* Photo Credit Matt Macdonald

The project focuses on three vegetation systems rich in serotinous obligate-seeders: Proteaceae-dominated kwongan shrublands, *Melaleuca* shrublands, and *Eucalyptus* mallet woodlands. Guided by a steering committee of community members and DBCA staff, four target species have been selected for initial monitoring: *Banksia baxteri*, *Banksia lemmaniana*, *Eucalyptus platypus* and *Melaleuca cucullata*.

To begin to build a picture of how these species are responding to different fire intervals, Matt and the team are combining fire history data, community-identified sites, field surveys, seed bank assessments and drone mapping - creating a foundation for long-term understanding and management.

This research project is supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program.



*Eucalyptus platypus* subsp. *platypus* Photo credit: Matt Macdonald



We respectfully acknowledge the Noongar People as Traditional Owners of Country.

We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, culture and community and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.