

# Ban ends reduction burns

## Fire service calls halt after blazes

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TASMANIA Fire Service says it will reboot its fuel reduction burn program next week, following this week's total fire ban, extreme weather and bushfires.

Three bushfires in the state's south caused concern for homeowners in the Orford, Campania and Osterley areas, but crews were able to contain the blazes on Wednesday and Thursday.

TFS has dismissed a rumour that the bushfires were out-of-control fuel reduction burns and said no further burns would go ahead this spring unless conditions were absolutely ideal.

A 289-hectare burn is planned for Gravelly Ridge, north-east of Hobart, next week. Another burn is also scheduled for the Grindelwald area next week.

Despite concerns earlier this week, State Fire Management Council chairman Ian Sauer said the burns were critical if Tasmania was going to survive this bushfire season.

"In simple terms, there will be a very quick halt to the fuel reduction burning program because this week there were some horrendous weather conditions and the state declared a total fire ban," Mr Sauer said.

"If we don't do (fuel re-



**Fire crews take a break during this week's bushfires which caused concern for homeowners in the state's south. A total fire ban means no further reduction burns will take place unless conditions are ideal.**

duction burns), it will be Dunalley, after Dunalley, after Dunalley and Victoria, after Victoria, after Victoria," Mr Sauer said.

The government's fuel reduction burn program began last year and is expected to continue for the

next three years. Mr Sauer said 300 fuel reduction burns a year was an achievable number, but said that the figure was dependant on the weather.

So far this year, TFS has carried out 26 fuel reduction burns over 8400 hec-

tares of land across the state. Last autumn and spring, TFS conducted 119 burns across 28,000 hectares.

Mr Sauer said the service had 32 burns ready to be carried out in the coming months, with weather pend-

ing. Another 92 burns are in different stages of planning.

"We're looking at the risk and we're protecting communities and the environment. We're better off having a small amount of smoke now than a dangerous bushfire later," he said.