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Ellenbrook on alert

Multiple fast moving fires in Ellenbrook kept firefighters busy in the January heat, as they tirelessly battled to save many homes in the area.

The first blaze started at Whiteman Park at around 3pm on Thursday 19 January, crossing Lord Street and cutting off the main access road into Ellenbrook for several days.

Firefighters were able to bring the fire under control in five hours due to the level of response from fire crews across Perth and surrounding areas.

Station Officer Wayne Brown said at the height of the fire 90 firefighters were involved.

“There were 15 career and 20 volunteer appliances, as well as support from an air attack supervisor, two water bombers and one air crane,” Wayne said.

“West Swan Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade opened up their station to help and we were able to establish a control point on the ground.”

An Incident Management Team consisting of ten District Officers and Superintendents was set up to manage the incident.

North East Superintendent Craig Waters said battling the fire was a co-operative multi-agency effort.

“A WA Police contingent was on hand to manage road blocks while support was also provided by the State Emergency Service (SES) who set up lighting towers and the Salvation Army who fed the famished firefighters.

“The main impact the fire had on the community was due to the location, which significantly affected people’s access to their homes.

“The fire burnt through approximately 150 hectares and residents from two homes had to be evacuated.”

Whilst the first fire was in the later stages of being contained, another fire was started in the area. It raged across the northern part of Ellenbrook burning approximately 300 hectares of bushland near Pineroo Terrace, Feredy Loop and Maralla Road, with several roads having to be closed.

The fire was met with the same concerted response from fire crews across Perth, with 90 firefighters from DFES, the Department of Parks and Wildlife and Local Government involved at the height of the fire and reinforced by air support.

The incident involved large scale evacuations, including Disability Services residents, as the fire was travelling between people’s homes.

The blaze was brought under control in five hours and took a further three days to be completely extinguished.

Superintendent Waters said it was highly concerning that someone was deliberately lighting fires in the area.

“The Ellenbrook subdivision contains significant pockets of virgin bushland and paper bark trees and while it may look nice, it creates a highly flammable environment for a residential area and increases the potential for ember attack,” he said.

“Fortunately, we were able to bring both fires under control relatively quickly before any homes were lost.”