

PURPOSE

This policy guides Council's bushland management activities in mitigating bushfire risk in the Greater Hobart area.

SCOPE

This policy provides guidance and a framework for Council's Bushfire Mitigation Strategy, and Bushfire Mitigation Plan. It will assist in mitigating the impact of bushfire to human settlements and loss of life within the Greater Hobart area, and where possible promote and maintain natural and cultural values.

The underpinning principle is the protection of life.

This policy applies to any bushfire-prone area that is subject to, or likely to be subject to, bushfire attack. It does not apply to:

- land which is not owned and managed by Council (including privately owned land, or land which is owned by Council but managed by a separate authority);
- Fire Hazard Nuisances under Section 199 of the *Local Government Act 1993*; or
- Response to bushfires which is responsibility of the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) and other emergency services. Council's role in bushfire response and recovery is covered in the Glenorchy Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Making Lives Better

Objective 1.1	Know our communities and what they value
Strategy 1.1.1	Guide decision making through continued community engagement based on our Community Plan

Valuing our Environment

Objective 3.2	Manage our natural environments now and for the future
Strategy 3.2.1	Identify and protect areas of high natural values
Strategy 3.2.2	Encourage access to and appreciation of natural areas through the development of trail networks and environmental education

Leading Our Community

Objective 4.1	Govern in the best interests of our community
Strategy 4.1.1	Manage Council for maximum efficiency, accountability, and transparency
Strategy 4.1.3	Maximise regulatory compliance in Council and the community through our systems and processes
Objective 4.2	Prioritise our resources to achieve our community's goals
Strategy 4.2.1	Deploy the Council's resources effectively to deliver value
Strategy 4.2.2	Ensure that we have a skilled, capable and safety-focused workforce

- Objective 4.3 Build strong relationships to deliver our communities' goals
- Strategy 4.3.1 Foster productive relationships with other levels of government, other councils, and peak bodies to achieve community outcomes

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Fire Service Act 1979

Council's powers, responsibilities and obligations under this Act include:

- to take all reasonable precautions to prevent any fire lit on their property from spreading to adjoining land.
- to take diligent steps to extinguish or control any unauthorised fire on their property during a fire permit period, and to report that fire to the TFS, or the Police.
- to "cause the formation in its municipal area of such fire breaks as it considers necessary or desirable to arrest the spread, or to facilitate the suppression of, fires" .
- to contribute towards the operating costs of fire brigades.
- to deal with a fire danger which Council has been notified of under section 49 within such reasonable period of not less than 30 days as is specified in the notice, as if that fire danger were a nuisance under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Local Government Act 1993

Under section 93(a) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council can make a service rate on rateable land for the purpose of ‘fire protection’. Council may also have obligations under the legislation listed in the following table when conducting bushfire mitigation activities.

Acts	<i>Aboriginal Relics Act 1975</i> <i>Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994</i> <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)</i> <i>Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality) 2004</i> <i>Fire Service Act 1979</i> <i>Forest Practices Act 1985</i> <i>Historical Cultural Heritage Act 1995</i> <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> <i>Mineral Resources Development Act 1995</i> <i>Nature Conservation Act 2002</i> <i>Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act 1995</i> <i>Tasmanian Weed Management Act 1999</i> <i>Wellington Park Act 1993</i>
Regulations	<i>N/A</i>
Australian/International Standards	<i>AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk management — Guidelines</i> <i>AS 3959:2018 Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas</i>

DEFINITIONS

Asset means anything valued by people which includes houses, crops, forests and, in many cases, the environment.

Bushfire means an unplanned fire burning in vegetation; also referred to as wildfire.

Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) is a term arising from the Australian Standard for building in bushfire prone areas (AS3959: 2018) It is a measure of a building’s potential exposure to ember attack, radiant heat and direct flame contact. BALs form the basis for establishing the requirements for the construction of new dwellings to improve resistance to attack by bushfire.

Bushfire-prone area. A ‘bushfire-prone area’ for the purposes of Tasmanian planning and building legislation includes:

1. Land that is within the boundary of a bushfire-prone area shown on an overlay on a planning scheme map; or
2. Where there is no overlay on a planning scheme map, land that is within 100m of an area of bushfire-prone vegetation equal to or greater than 1 hectare.

Bushfire-prone vegetation means contiguous vegetation including grasses and shrubs but not including maintained lawns, parks and gardens, nature strips, plant nurseries, golf courses, vineyards, orchards, or vegetation on land that is used for horticultural purposes.

Hazard Management Area means an area around an asset where vegetation is modified, and most flammable material has been removed to reduce the fire's radiant heat intensity.

Fire Danger Rating (FDR) means a system to warn of the potential impact of a bushfire on any given day, based on forecast weather conditions.

Planned burning means the process of planning and applying fire to a predetermined area, under specific environmental conditions, to achieve a desired outcome.

Strategic planned burning means the utilisation of prescribed fire in key areas of the landscape, having significant potential to influence the intensity and rate of spread of future bushfires.

Tolerable risk means the lowest level of likely risk from the relevant hazard:

- (a) to secure the benefits of a use or development in a relevant hazard area; and
- (b) which can be managed through:
 - i. routine regulatory measures, or
 - ii. specific hazard management measures for the intended life of each use or development.

Whole-of-landscape is a concept in bushfire management whereby bushfire fuels, risk management and potential bushfire paths are assessed irrespective of the land tenure, agency or management responsibility.

POLICY STATEMENT

Objectives

The two primary objectives of this policy are:

1. Council will work to minimise the impact of bushfire on human life, communities, infrastructure, industries, the economy, and the environment. Human life will be afforded priority over all other considerations, and
2. In delivering objective 1, Council will maintain or improve the resilience of natural ecosystems and their ability to deliver services such as biodiversity, water, carbon storage and forest products.

The objectives above will be delivered according to the following core concepts:

- Council will comply with legislative requirements in our risk management endeavors,
- Council will deliver a an integrated, whole-of-landscape program directed towards mitigating bushfire risk, and

Council will continuously improve our bushfire risk mitigation capacity Bushfire Mitigation

Council has a dedicated Coordinator Bushfire Management who develops and implements Council's bushfire mitigation activities. All actions carried out under this policy, including the development of supporting plans, strategies and other documents, and the review of this policy, are the responsibility, of the Coordinator Bushfire Management.

Measures to Mitigate Bushfire Risk

Council will make informed decisions, and improve the management of risk by working jointly with other fire agencies, landowners, land managers and neighbouring Councils within the Hobart Fire Management Area to contribute to an , integrated, whole-of-landscape approach to mitigating bushfire risk by:

- maintaining Hazard Management Areas on Council managed bushfire-prone areas to the current TFS guidelines. Council will target that the prescribed maximum width of a Hazard Management Area on Council managed land is no less than that required for BAL-29 rated development to be achieved on the lot once the owner of the lot has undertaken their best efforts;
- maintaining fire trails on Council managed bushland to the most current TFS preferred categories;
- supporting the provision of appropriate resources to carry out effective bushfire mitigation treatments;
- developing, coordinating, implementing and maintaining a five-year planned burning program;
- minimising smoke impact to communities resulting from bushfires and planned burning;
- maintaining an annual planned burning vegetation monitoring program;
- providing an annual report to Alderman and other stakeholders on bushfire mitigation treatments undertaken on Council managed bushfire-prone areas;
- regularly investing in developing and expanding Council’s knowledge base, and Council’s ability to mitigate bushfire risk;
- regularly educating Council and the local community on bushfire mitigation treatments;
- informing local communities on decisions made;
- strengthening understandings of relationships between fire and sensitive environments;
- acknowledging the potential effects of climate change and the likelihood that they will increase the risk of bushfire in Glenorchy; and
- ensuring compliance with statutory responsibilities.

Bushfire Mitigation Procedures

Council will deliver the objectives of this policy by implementing its Bushfire Mitigation Strategy 2020-2030, and Bushfire Mitigation Plan. These documents will set out the treatments to be undertaken to reduce Greater Hobart’s bushfire risk.

Council’s bushfire mitigation treatments aim to articulate the agreed principles and strategies from the *Tasmanian Vegetation Fire Management Policy 2017* and will reflect a coordinated approach with neighbouring Councils, land managers and fire agencies within the Hobart Fire Management Area.

Planned Burning Approval

Operational Burn Plans must be prepared and reviewed by separate parties. Those parties must hold the nationally recognised competency *PUAFIR406A/B Develop Prescribed Burning Plans*, and *PUAFIR407A/B Conduct Prescribed Burning*, or equivalent qualifications. Council’s Coordinator Bushfire Management is responsible for approving all Operational Burn Plans on Council managed land.

Policy Review and Monitoring

This policy must be reviewed annually after the end of each bushfire season or as required to facilitate:

- a change in legislation that has a bearing on the document
- a change in Council’s position on a particular subject area
- a recommendation from a governance body (e.g. TFS, State Fire Management Council, Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service)
- where quality assurance guidelines change due to continuous improvement initiatives, or
- changes in Council’s agreed service levels.

BACKGROUND

Bushfire mitigation is critical to Glenorchy given that a third of the Glenorchy municipality is bushfire-prone vegetation located within the Wellington Park Ranges and Goat Hills. Fire is the most significant issue for this area of bushland, in the form of the threat of bushfire.

This policy was developed to delineate Council’s perceived bushfire risks to human settlements and loss of life against the actual high risks that Council has legislative requirements to mitigate. It is reflective of Council’s increased commitment to actively and adaptively mitigate bushfire risks to Glenorchy and the Greater Hobart area.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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