

Local Planning Strategy: Bushfire Assessment Requirements

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

A **local planning strategy** (LPS) sets out a local government's long-term planning direction for an area. It must incorporate any relevant State planning policies and provide the rationale for any zoning or classification of land under the local planning scheme.

State Planning Policy 3.7: Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas (SPP3.7) should be addressed in an LPS. The local government should identify the bushfire issues and how (or if) a bushfire assessment is necessary to inform the preparation of a LPS. The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (Bushfire Policy team) and/or the Department of Fire and Emergency Services can assist with this process.

The resulting bushfire assessment can be a standalone document that informs the LPS, or it can form part of the strategy document itself.

There are two types of bushfire assessment that may be relevant to a local planning strategy. To satisfy the minimum requirements of SPP3.7, Bushfire Assessment 1 for 'proposed' development areas (DIAs) should be undertaken (where relevant).

Select either Bushfire Assessment 1 or Bushfire Assessment 2 or a combination of the two, and justify the reasoning.

Bushfire Assessment 1

This assessment is used to help the local government identify new areas for land use intensification in accordance with SPP3.7; and/or rationalise legacy areas previously identified for land use intensification, but that are yet to be developed.

Outputs

The following documents will be prepared through Bushfire Assessment 1:

1. A Bushfire Hazard Level assessment (BHL) for:
 - areas identified, or being considered for land use intensification – these are proposed DIAs, and/or
 - areas identified in a current strategy or zoned in the current scheme, but that are not yet developed – these are legacy DIAs.

2. Assessment against the bushfire protection criteria and identification of areas of non-compliance.
3. Spatial representation of the measures necessary to achieve or improve compliance with the bushfire protection criteria.
4. Comparison of assessed areas and recommendations for appropriateness of areas for intensification of land use.

Bushfire Assessment 2

This assessment identifies measures that could be undertaken to reduce or better manage existing developed areas that have a medium or extreme bushfire risk.

The local government would generally be aware of the bushfire risk in their jurisdiction and can undertake Bushfire Assessment 2 as required, in accordance with SPP3.7. Further advice can be sought from the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (Bushfire Policy team) and/or the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, if required.

Outputs

The following documents will be prepared through Bushfire Assessment 2:

1. Identification of areas for consideration. Not necessarily through a BHL assessment as a local government may be already aware of the areas they would like to consider – these are existing DIAs.
2. Assessment against the bushfire protection criteria and identification of areas of non-compliance.
3. Spatial representation of the measures necessary to improve compliance with the bushfire protection criteria. This may include improved vehicular access and egress, increased hazard separation, improved water infrastructure, implementation of fire management strategies, and vegetation management.

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APPLYING POLICY MEASURE 6.3

In accordance with Policy Measure 6.3 any strategic planning proposal that requires a bushfire assessment is to be accompanied by:

- a BHL assessment, which must be prepared by an accredited Bushfire Planning practitioner.
- identification of any bushfire hazard issues arising from the relevant assessment.
- demonstration that compliance with the bushfire protection criteria can be achieved in subsequent planning stages.

This information must be prepared in accordance with the *Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas*.

Bushfire Hazard Level assessment

A BHL assessment should be prepared for 'proposed' and 'legacy' DIAs, with the possible exception of 'existing' DIAs, using the methodology in Appendix Two of the *Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas*.

The level of detail for the assessment should reflect the physical size of the DIAs and/or likely complexity of issues. Where the DIAs are large, then the assessment may be more generalised as the focus is to identify spatial issues rather than simply mapping the existing conditions.

Assessment against the bushfire protection criteria

The assessment for each DIA should address the following elements.

Element 1: Location

- Consider the landscape context of the proposal, including the type and extent of vegetation, topography (particularly land with slopes of >10 degrees), areas of possible fire-runs, and evacuation options.
- Identify areas that represent an extreme bushfire risk that cannot be managed and should not be supported for development.
- Identify areas most suitable for land use intensification where the bushfire hazard is low or moderate on completion.
- Identify conservation areas including threatened ecological communities (TEC), Bush Forever, nature reserves or national parks that may constrain the clearing of vegetation to manage or reduce the BAL rating.

- Identify areas that would require clearing to achieve an appropriate BAL rating.

Element 2: Siting and design

- Apply appropriate density codes (or lot sizes) large enough to accommodate asset protection zones (APZs) if required.
- Identify interfaces between proposed development and bushfire prone vegetation (hazard separation) to achieve an appropriate BAL rating (in accordance with AS3959).

Element 3: Vehicular access

- Identify existing vehicular access routes that provide safe access and egress to two different destinations at a local and a broader district level.
- Identify requirements for additional vehicular access.
- Identify opportunities to improve access and egress for existing development including incorporating emergency access ways and fire service access routes where no alternative exists.

Element 4: Water

- In reticulated areas, highlight locations of hydrants and existing water infrastructure.
- In non-reticulated areas, it will be necessary to demonstrate the availability of alternative water supplies for firefighting purposes.

Spatial representation of bushfire protection criteria

At this stage of the planning process it is important that the work undertaken to determine the bushfire hazard, and the measures required to comply with the bushfire protection criteria are connected spatially with the DIAs.

This spatial representation (map) should provide a snapshot of the bushfire risk management measures for each of the DIAs (as identified in the assessment against the bushfire protection criteria).

Recommendations

To help the decision-makers evaluate the appropriateness of areas for intensification of land use, the bushfire assessment should provide a comparison of each of the areas.

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The comparison can be presented as a matrix and should capture:

- the BHL assessment
- the assessment against the bushfire protection criteria
- which measures would need to be undertaken to comply with the criteria
- whether the site is likely, unlikely or will possibly meet the bushfire protection criteria.

The decision-makers' recommendations for the land should reflect this comparison in determining the suitability of the proposed development sites for land use intensification.

It should be noted that bushfire is one consideration in a final recommendation and ultimately, the decision-makers may need to consider broader land use planning issues.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please email specific queries to:

Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage -
Bushfire Policy team bushfire@dplh.wa.gov.au