

### BACKGROUND

The draft map has been prepared by the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) in consultation with Council to identify areas with elevated bushfire risk within the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area, in accordance with the latest mapping guidelines and will update the current map which was implemented in 2016.

Bush Fire Prone Land Maps are required to be reviewed at least every five years under Section 10.3 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act). Bushfire Prone Land maps are certified by the Commissioner of the NSW RFS. Council has no legislative responsibility regarding the making of the map.

### WHAT IS BUSHFIRE PRONE LAND?

Bush Fire Prone Land (BFPL) is land that has been identified as land that can either support a bush fire or that is subject to bush fire attack. Not being identified as being bush fire prone land on the BFPL map is not a guarantee that losses from bush fires will not occur. Changes to the landscape and the environment may occur from time to time or over time and therefore the certified BFPL maps may not be a true indication of bush fire risk.

### VEGETATION CATEGORIES

To assist with the preparation of BFPL maps, the NSW RFS prepared the *Guide for Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping (Version 5b)* (NSW Rural Fire Service 2015).

The Mapping Guideline groups vegetation types into categories based on the level of bushfire risk.

#### Category 1

Under the guidelines Vegetation Category 1 is considered to be the highest risk for bush fire. It is represented as red on the BFPL map and will be given a 100 metre buffer (that is the land within 100 metres of the edge of the vegetation will also be mapped as BFPL). This vegetation category has the highest combustibility and likelihood of forming fully developed fires including heavy ember production and includes areas of forest, etc.

#### Category 2

Vegetation Category 2 is considered to be a lower bush fire risk than Category 1 and Category 3 but higher than the excluded areas. It is represented as light orange on a bush fire prone land map and will be given a 30 metre buffer. It includes vegetation like rainforests and remnant vegetation.

#### Category 3

Vegetation Category 3, the new (since 2015) category, is considered to be medium bush fire risk vegetation. It is higher in bush fire risk than category 2 (and the excluded areas) but lower than Category 1. It is represented as dark orange on a Bush Fire Prone Land map and will be given a 30 metre buffer. This vegetation includes grasslands.

The inclusion of Category 3 vegetation on the BFPL map has seen a significant increase in the amount of area on the draft Wagga BFPL map that is identified as being bush fire prone.

## **WHAT DOES BEING MAPPED AS BFPL MEAN?**

Being mapped is a legislative trigger for the consideration of bushfire impacts on new developments via Development Applications (DA's), Complying Development Certificates (CDC's) and Construction Certificates (CC's). The purpose is to ensure that new developments are appropriately designed to the level of bushfire risk they are exposed to. There are different assessment pathways depending on the type of development, however, all developments essentially are required to comply with Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019 (PBP).

If you are carrying out a subdivision of BFPL that could lawfully be used for residential or rural residential subdivision or you are carrying out what is known as Special Fire Protection Purpose (SFPP) development (which is development like schools, child care centres, hotels, seniors housing, etc.) on BFPL a "bush fire safety authority" (BFSA) is required from the NSW RFS.

Building work on BFPL must also comply with the requirements of the National Construction Code (NCC). The NCC contains the technical provisions for the design and construction of buildings. Under the Deemed to Satisfy provisions of the NCC, building work on BFPL must comply with Australian Standard 3959:2018 Construction of buildings in bushfire prone areas (AS 3959) or the National Association of Steel Framed Housing (2014) Steel Framed Construction in Bush Fire Areas (NASH Standard).

As part of the consideration of a development on BFPL, where applications are lodged with Council, Council officers will need to undertake a bush fire attack assessment in relation to the application. There is a detailed methodology for this assessment in the PBP.

Due to the substantial changes to the mapping caused by the inclusion of Grasslands it is important to note that where grassland is the only vegetation within 100m of the site and a 50 metre APZ can be provided, there are no further bush fire protection measures required. An APZ is a buffer zone between a bush fire hazard and buildings. The APZ is managed to minimise fuel loads and reduce potential radiant heat levels, flame, localised smoke and ember attack on the building.

Therefore, having your land mapped as BFPL means that you must consider the PBP and the NCC requirements when planning for your development and that additional information will be required with an application for development. In order to make this easier for people in the community, Council has information on what is expected to be lodged with applications contained within their Development Application Preparation and Lodgement Guide. There is also information which is made available on the NSW RFS website. The lodgement information is intended to be used to provide Council with the information needed so that an application can be assessed in accordance with Section 4.14 of the EP&A Act.