



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

BUSH FIRE PRONE LAND MAP

Fact Sheet

September 2021

What is Bush Fire Prone Land?

Bush Fire Prone Land (BFPL) is an area of land that has the potential to carry a bush fire and may be subject to bush fire attack. Bush Fire Prone Land identifies vegetation hazard within an LGA, this includes most vegetated areas and land that falls within the buffer distance of that vegetation and is recorded on a Bush Fire Prone Land Map that has been certified by the Commissioner NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS).

Legislatively, it is land recorded for the time being as Bush Fire Prone Land on a Bush Fire Prone Land Map that is certified by the Commissioner of the NSW RFS.

Bush Fire Prone Land Map

Councils are required to prepare a Bush Fire Prone Land Map in consultation with the NSW RFS. This is in accordance with legislation under the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) No 203 (10.3). This map is then certified by the Commissioner of the NSW RFS and updated every 5 years to reflect changes in vegetation. Under the EP&A Act (10.3) it is each Council's responsibility to contact the RFS before the 5 year certification period has ended and request that Councils BFPL Map be review process and be re-certified.

Urban Release Areas

Urban Release Areas (URA's) is land that is covered in vegetation and has been identified for future development for Industries or residential growth.

Councils are to work with the NSW RFS to update the Bush Fire Prone Land Map on a regular basis to ensure that any changes due to URA's are kept up to date.

Note: URA's will not restart the 5 year Certification date.

URA's can only be excluded from BFPL when development is imminent clearing of the land for infrastructure such as roads and utility services will occur within the next 6-12 months.

URA's are to be submitted to Council and if required Council will then forward the recommended changes to the NSW RFS for consideration. URA's are to be a size larger than 2.5 hectares (ha) in size.

Are There Specific Requirements for Development on Bush Fire Prone Land?

In NSW different construction standards and development restrictions apply to land that has been identified as bush fire prone to manage the increased threat from bush fires.

Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping is used as a trigger for development control purposes to ensure that a bush fire threat is considered.

New development, or alterations and additions to an existing development that requires the submission of a development application must meet the relevant specifications and requirements of the NSW RFS *Planning for Bush Fire Protection (PBP)*.

This document also requires development to meet certain requirements of *Australian Standard AS3959 - Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas*.

Is My Property Mapped as Bush Fire Prone Land?

There are a few ways to find out if your property is identified as BFPL:

- By using the NSW RFS Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping Tool on the NSW RFS website
- By accessing it through the NSW ePlanning Spatial Viewer. You will need to turn on the Bush Fire Prone Land layer under the 'Hazard' heading; or
- By applying for a Section 10.7 Planning Certificate from Council. The planning certificate will include a statement advising that the land, or part of the land, is bush fire prone, or that the land is not bush fire prone.

What do the Colours on the Bush Fire Prone Land Map Mean?

The Bush Fire Prone Land Map includes four different categories based on vegetation hazard.

This hazard may identify a potential bush fire risk, which is based on combustibility and the likelihood of forming fully developed fires.

Note: Colours may display in variation depending on the interpretation of your computer, monitor or printer.

Vegetation Category 1 (Red)	Land considered to be the highest vegetation hazard for bush fire and surrounded by a 100m buffer (buffer is in Yellow). Vegetation Category 1 consists of areas of forest, woodlands, heaths (tall and short), forested wetlands and timber plantations
Vegetation Category 3 (Dark Orange)	Land considered to be a medium vegetation hazard for bush fire and surrounded by a 30m buffer (buffer is yellow). Vegetation Category 3 consists of grasslands, freshwater wetlands, semi-arid woodlands, alpine complex and arid shrublands
Vegetation Category 2 (Light Orange)	Land considered to be a lower vegetation hazard bush fire than categories 1 and 3. It is surrounded by a 30m buffer (buffer is yellow). Vegetation Category 2 consists of rainforests and lower risk vegetation parcels, for example due to active management, topography, access, and likelihood of fire detection by the community
Vegetation Buffer Zone (Yellow)	A vegetation buffer is defined as an area within close proximity to a vegetation category 1, 2 or 3. Buffer area is not a vegetation class, nor can it be treated as one. The buffer area may be impacted by the hazard from conditions such as ember attack, radiant heat and/or flame contact.

What is a Bush Fire Attack Level (BAL)?

A Bush Fire Attack Level (BAL) is a means of measuring the severity of a building's potential exposure to ember attack, radiant heat and direct flame contact.

There are 6 levels, in order of lowest to highest risk category:

- BAL-LOW;
- BAL 12.5;
- BAL 19;
- BAL 29;
- BAL 40; and
- BAL FZ (Flame Zone).

The BAL rating is determined by applying the methodology in Appendix 1 of the NSW RFS publication *Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019*.

The BAL rating is based on your individual site taking into consideration:

- the region where you live,
- the type of vegetation around your property and the distance to the vegetation, and
- the slope of the ground under the vegetation.

The BAL will also vary depending where on the site the development will be located. You can use the NSW RFS [Single Dwelling Application Kit](#) to assist you in determining the BAL for your home or development.

Note: not all Council's will accept the Single Dwelling Application Kit that the NSW RFS provides.

It's important to note that the NSW RFS do not determine or give BAL ratings.

To find a Bush Fire planning and design accredited practitioner you can search the register by the [Fire Protection Association Australia](#) or by visit the [NSW RFS website](#).

Related Documents

Planning for Bush Fire Protection

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000

Rural Fires Act 1997

AS3959 Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas

Reference: DPP002520210907



For further information regarding Bush Fire Prone Land, please contact The Development Planning & Policy team on (02) 8741 5211 or email BushFireProne.Mapping@rfs.nsw.gov.au
