

Fire Prevention – Requirements and Program

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Legal requirements

Bush Fires Act 1954

- S.33 of the Act enables Local Governments to give notice to all owners and occupiers of land within the district to put measures in place to prevent the outbreak, spread or extension of a bush fire.



Emergency Management Act 2005

- Fire is a prescribed hazard and has a dedicated State Hazard Plan.
- Part 2.1 *Responsibility for prevention and mitigation states;*

*The responsibility for property **fire prevention/mitigation lies with the property owner or occupier of premises.** Owners/occupiers also have responsibility for bushfire mitigation in accordance with section 33 of the Bush Fires Act.*

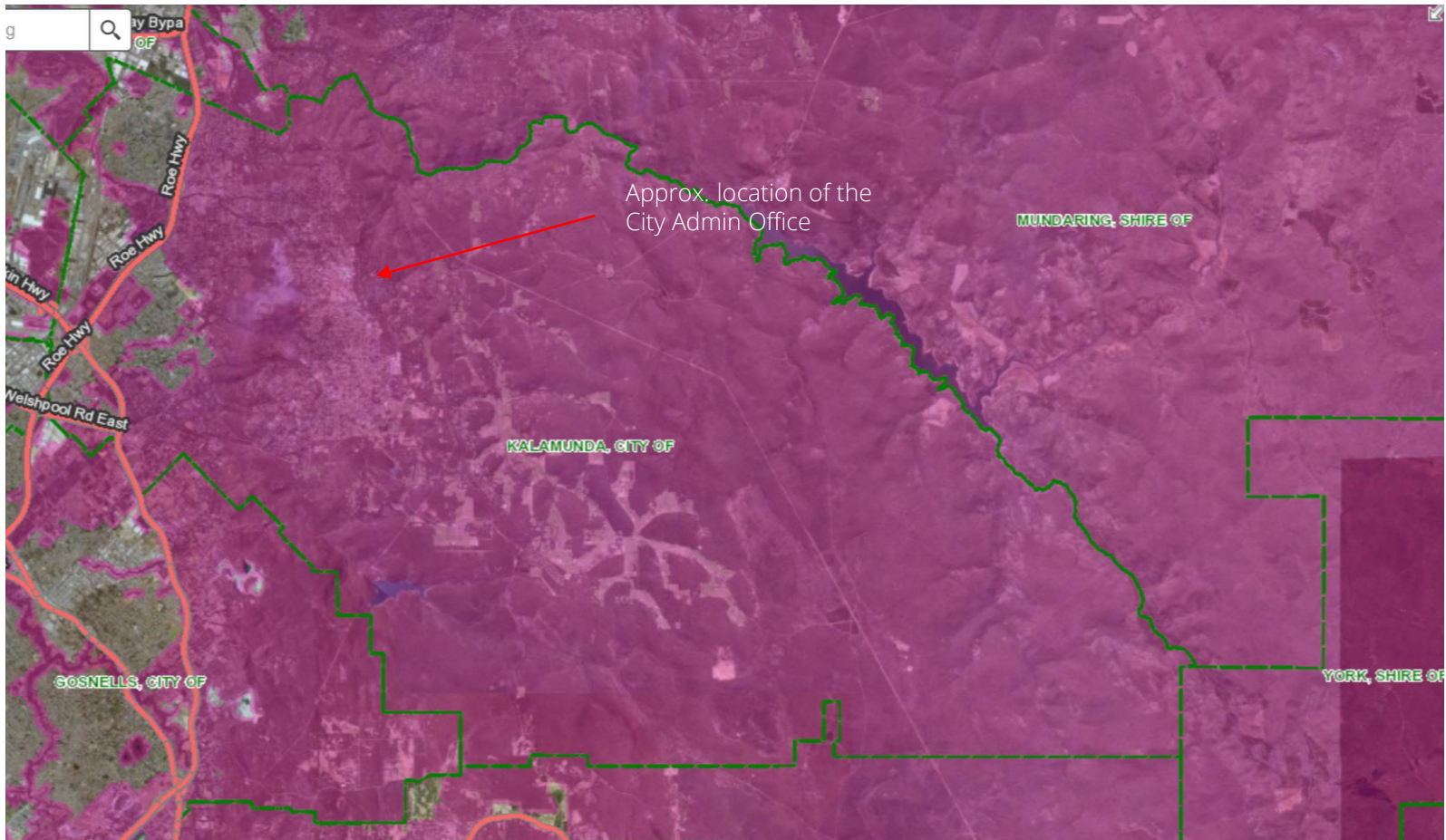
LG's are responsible for issuing an appropriate firebreak notice for their area and ensuring compliance.



Discretionary or Statutory

- > The Bush Fires Act 1954 S.33 states that a Local Government 'may' and if so, required by the Minister 'shall' give notice.
- > The Emergency Management Act 2005 requires Local Government to prepare Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA). These set out amongst things;
 - > A description of emergencies that are likely to occur in the district and
 - > Strategies and priorities for emergency management in the district
- > The LEMA are to be consistent with the State Emergency Management Policies and State Emergency Management Plans.
- > Fire has been identified as one of the main hazards that is likely to impact the City.

Map of Bushfire Prone Areas



Approx. 95% of the City is bushfire prone

What we do – Notice

- The City issues an annual Fire Hazard Reduction Notice pursuant to Section 33 of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*.
- The Notice is posted out in July with the rates. The Notice is also published in the Government Gazette and in the local newspaper.
- The Notice requires all owners and occupiers of land to complete works outlined within the Notice by the 1 November and maintained in that state up to and including the 31 March each year.

What we do – Plan, Engage and Assess

- > Fire Hazard Assessment Plan (Plan) presented to Council
 - > Transparent and comprehensive strategy for the City's annual fire hazard assessments.
- > Extensive engagement leading up to (pre-season) and during the season
- > Property assessments throughout the season and if required issue work orders, infringements or engage contractors to undertake the works in extreme cases

Pre-season engagement

- Social media posts
- Street Meets
- Property walk throughs
- Media releases
- Community newsletters
- Shopping centre pop ups
- Burn smart events
- Senior Information booths @ Woodlupine
- Rural urban interface exercises
- Bush Fire Brigade open day
- Farmer's market



How we resource it and cost

- > Staffing allocated to the program consist of;
 - > Primary - Senior Fire & Emergency Management Officer, Fire & Emergency Management Officer, Casual Fire Control Officers , Customer Relations Officer
 - > Support – Senior Ranger & Rangers
 - > Management – Manager Environmental Health & Community Safety, Coordinator Community Safety & Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
- > Vehicles
 - > Community safety fleet vehicles
 - > 3 x hire 4x4 vehicles fitted with Cell-Fi 4G booster kit
- > Cost: Approx. \$550,000



Risk Register

- > Operational risk
- > Risk issue – Not fulfilling requirements of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*
- > Controls
 - > Appoint Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer and Fire Control Officers
 - > Prepare Annual Fire Hazard Assessment Plan
 - > Prepare Section 33 Fire-Break Notice
 - > Undertake property inspections on a risk-based approach (starting with extreme – high risk)

Risk:
Catastrophic bushfire impacts communities within City of Kalamunda

Consequence	Likelihood	Rating
Critical	Possible	High

Action Strategy

Educate community on bushfire preparedness
Issue an Annual Bush Fire notice and undertake assessments

Changing Climate

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report states

"Understanding fuel management is of shared interest across Australia, as all jurisdictions are looking to improve how land management and hazard reduction approaches can adapt and respond to climate change."

The Western Australian Climate Policy recommends to

"Consider findings of recent bushfire and the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements to ensure the approach to bushfire risk mitigation is contemporary and enhances resilience of Western Australian communities."



Community feedback to Councillors

- › Enforcement is never an easy task
- › The City appreciates the constructive feedback Councillors receive on specific properties and pass on any learning to the administration
- › The City takes learnings from specific cases, reviews in detail and feeds that back operationally
- › Learnings provide key information to assist with providing customer service improvements
- › Any matters raised by Councillors are and will continue to be investigated and reported back in detail

Continuous Improvement

- > Following each season, a summary report is prepared.
- > Observations from last year:
 - > Improve community awareness, safety practices and asset preparedness
 - > Continue to improve community resilience by issuing a fire hazard reduction notice for compliance
 - > Provide a comprehensive community engagement schedule to help educate on the importance of preparedness
 - > Use the bushfire risk management system to assist in identifying and planning a strategic approach to conducting fire hazard assessments

Stats and Facts

Season	No of assessments	No of work orders	No of infringements
20/21- to date	3,944*	1027 (26%)	82 (2%)
19/20	4,150	1,196 (29%)	39 (1%)
18/19	1,782	724 (40%)	46 (2%)
17/18	Not recorded	1,382	72

*15 landowners have escalated matters to Councillors in 20/21 (0.4%)

Season to date

- This season like the last few seasons has seen a continued improvement in compliance and property preparedness across the City.
- This season only 26% of assessments has resulted in a work order and only 2% in an infringement.
- This could be due to several reasons however the City's continued approach towards community engagement and the devastating bushfires on the east coast may have contributed to the high compliance rates.
- Important work – lives and homes.

Were to from here

Recommendation

Council continue to support the City issuing an annual Fire Hazard Reduction Notice pursuant to Section 33 of the Bush Fires Act 1954 and ensuring compliance with the Notice is achieved.

Discussion

City Land - Fire Mitigation

Overview

- › Reserve Fire Mitigation
- › Roadside Fire Mitigation
- › Bushfire Risk Management Plan

Reserve Fire Mitigation

Does the City comply with the Bushfire Act?

Yes. Freehold tenure that is owned and managed by the City is bound by the crown and is required to comply with the FRN (Fire Hazard Reduction Notice).

Crown land owned by the State but vested for management to the City (Parks, Reserves and Verges) are not bound by Bush Fire Act (Crown is exempt) therefore the FRN does not apply. DBCA etc adopt this stance as well

What Fire Mitigation in Parks, Reserves etc does the City do?

The City maintains 350ha of bush type reserves that we call Cat 4 Reserves, that are under active fire management. These Fire management works include 50 Ha of slashing, 80 km of fire breaks, mechanical removal of DFM and the application of herbicide to manage fuel loads.

In addition, the City conducts hazard burns to approximately 30 hectares of land, these works are undertaken each year on a programmed basis.

Firebreak maintenance and slashing occurs in Spring and sometimes needs a follow up treatment.

Issues that arise.

Some Reserves have topographical issues while others have Environmental issues that need to be considered such as Declared Rare Flora or Threatened Ecological Communities which prevent wholesale removal of vegetation or cutting of fire breaks. In these instances, a risk based approach is needed.

Selective herbicide is sometimes used to reduce fuel loads.



Roadside Fire Mitigation

Whilst the City provides a verge maintenance service, it is not compelled by the Bush Fires Act 1954. The City's Fire Mitigation obligation is to City owned land and not Crown land such as verges. Verges also tend to be relatively small and segmented by driveways, footpaths, roads and lawn; or firebreaks on the property side. These factors contribute to reducing the genuine risk of fire.

The verge provides a range of benefits including:

1. Aesthetic value to the community.
2. Habitat for flora and fauna.
3. Wildlife corridors.
4. A barrier to traffic.
5. Wind and heat reduction.

These benefits need to be balanced against the need to minimise risk to life and property from fire.



Roadside Fire Mitigation

The following factors are considered when prioritizing fire mitigation works on the verge.

1. Traffic volumes and thoroughfares .
2. Provision of buffer zones adjacent to the carriageway .
3. Whether properties have an alternative means of escape .
4. Environmental values of the roadside .
5. Local environmental conditions such as topography, vegetation type and structure.
6. Distance to high priority areas such as evacuation centres and emergency assets (dams and water tanks).
7. Distance to major community infrastructure.
8. Overall fuel loading of roadside.

Methods of Control.

The City selects one of the below methods, depending upon the situation.

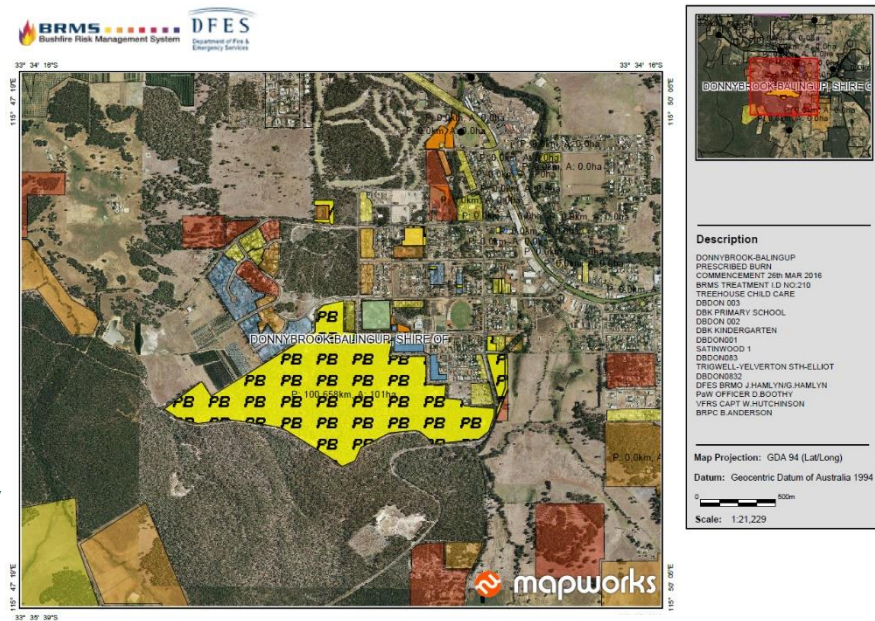
1. Mechanical removal of vegetation, living or dead.
2. Chemical treatments - to limit the growth and spread of vegetation, primarily within separation areas.
3. Burning - using cool or hot fires as appropriate to burn in a controlled manner.





Bushfire Risk Management Plan

- Program Background
- BRMP project was implemented to address recommendations from the 2011 Perth Hills Bushfire Review.
- State Emergency Management Policy and the State Hazard Plan for fire requires Local Governments with significant bushfire risk to develop integrated Bushfire Risk Management (BRM) Plans.
- BRMP process is an asset focused risk assessment approach that supports development of tenure-blind treatment strategies.
- What this means for the City of Kalamunda
- The City of Kalamunda adopted its Bush Fire Risk Management Plan (BRMP) in 2019.
- Identifies assets of value that are at risk from bushfire.
- Documents the risk to identified assets and their priority for treatment.
- Documents the responsibilities of landowners and managers tasked with implementing the treatment strategies.





Questions?