

<b>Title</b>	<b>Bushfire Mitigation Policy</b>
<b>Council Resolution</b>	Item 10 (27 July 2020)
<b>Responsible Directorate</b>	Infrastructure and Works
<b>Due for Review</b>	One (1) year from Council resolution date
<b>Strategic Plan Reference</b>	<u>Valuing our Environment</u> 3.2 Manage our natural environments now and for future 3.2.1 Identify and protect areas of high natural values  <u>Leading our Community</u> 4.3 Build strong relationships to deliver our communities' goals 4.3.1 Foster productive relationships with other levels of government, other Councils and peak bodies to achieve community outcomes
<b>ECM</b>	Council Policy
<b>Version</b>	1.2

## PURPOSE

This policy provides direction how Council will mitigate associated risks for low probability but high impact bushfire events to Greater Hobart area.

## SCOPE

This policy provides guidance and framework for Council's Bushfire Mitigation Strategy and Bushfire Mitigation Plans. It will assist in mitigating the impact of bushfire to human settlements and loss of life within the Greater Hobart community, 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
- 'responses' to bushfires which is responsibility of the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) and other emergency services.

## 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 (Section 63).

- 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 (Section 64).
- 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” (Section 56).
- to contribute towards the operating costs of fire brigades (Sections 79 to 95).
- 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

<b>Acts</b>	<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>
<b>Regulations</b>	Not applicable
<b>Australian/International Standards</b>	ISO 31000:2018 Risk management — Guidelines AS 3959-2018 Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas

**DEFINITIONS**

<b>Asset</b>	Anything valued by people which includes houses, crops, forests and, in many cases, the environment.
<b>Bushfire</b>	An unplanned fire burning in vegetation; also referred to as wildfire.
<b>Bushfire Attack Level (BAL)</b>	A means of measuring the severity of a building’s potential exposure to ember attack, radiant heat and direct flame contact, using increments of radiant heat expressed in kilowatts per metre squared, and the basis for establishing the requirements for construction to improve protection of building elements from attack by bushfire.

<b>Bushfire-prone area</b>	An area that is subject to, or likely to be subject to, bushfire attack.
<b>Bushfire-prone vegetation</b>	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.
<b>Hazard Management Area</b>	An area around an asset where vegetation is modified, and most flammable material has been removed to reduce the fire's radiant heat intensity.
<b>Fire Danger Rating (FDR)</b>	A system to warn of the potential impact of a bushfire on any given day, based on forecast weather conditions.
<b>Planned burning</b>	The process of planning and applying fire to a predetermined area, under specific environmental conditions, to achieve a desired outcome.
<b>Strategic planned burning</b>	The utilisation of prescribed fire in key areas of the landscape, having significant potential to influence bushfire intensity and rate of spread.
<b>Tolerable risk</b>	The lowest level of likely risk from the relevant hazard: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) to secure the benefits of a use or development in a relevant hazard area; and</li> <li>b) which can be managed through:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) routine regulatory measures, or</li> <li>ii) by specific hazard management measures for the intended life of each use or development.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

## POLICY STATEMENT

### Objectives

The two primary objectives of this policy are:

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

The following means objectives will be used to achieve two primary objectives:

- continuously improving bushfire risk mitigation treatments
- delivering a tenure-blind, integrated approach to mitigating bushfire risk, and
- complying with legislative requirements.

### Bushfire Mitigation

Council has a dedicated Coordinator, Bushfire Management who develops and implement 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, land owners, land managers and neighbouring Councils within the Hobart Fire Management Area to contribute to a tenure-blind, integrated approach to mitigating bushfire risk by:

- maintaining hazard management areas on Council managed bushland to the most current TFS guidelines;
- maintaining fire trails on Council managed bushland to the most current Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service Managed Vehicular Fire Trail 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 bushland;
- regularly investing in developing and expanding Council's knowledge base, and ability to mitigate bushfire risk;
- regularly educating Council and the local community on bushfire mitigation treatments;
- involving local communities in decision making, and capturing local knowledge and expertise;
- 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 implement the objectives of this policy by implementing a Bushfire Mitigation Strategy, and Bushfire Mitigation Plans. These documents will set out the treatments to be undertaken to reduce Greater Hobart's bushfire risk.

Council's bushfire mitigation treatments will contribute to a 'tenure-blind' approach, reflecting the approach of neighbouring Councils, land managers and fire agencies within the Hobart Fire Management Area. These will provide a level of assurance that bushfire risks faced by Councils are mitigated holistically, and that firefighting agencies are put in levels of tolerable risk.

### **Planned Burning Approval**

Operational Planned Burn Plans are to be prepared and reviewed by separate parties. Those parties must hold the nationally recognised competency *Develop Prescribed Burning Plans*, and *Conduct Prescribed Burning*, or equivalent.

Council's Coordinator Bushfire Management is responsible for approving Council's Operational Planned Burn Plans.

### **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 in the Wellington Park Ranges. 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 is responsible to manage. It is reflective of Council's increased commitment to actively and adaptively mitigate bushfire risks to Glenorchy and the Greater Hobart area.

## VERSION CONTROL

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Details of Change</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Date Manager Sign-off</b>	<b>Adopted by Council</b>
June 2017	1.0	First complete version adopted by Council.	Rob Whittle	<b>Name:</b> Paul Garnsey <b>Date:</b> May 2017	13 June 2017
16 July 2019	1.1	Amendments to objectives. Amendments to terminology to reflect updated International and Australian standards, Codes of Practice.	Rob Whittle	<b>Name:</b> Ross Frankcombe <b>Date:</b> 16 July 2019	29 July 2019
18 June 2020	1.2	Amendments to terminology.	Rob Whittle	<b>Name:</b> Clive Thompson <b>Date:</b> 18 June 2020	27 July 2020