

# CRITERIA TO BE USED IN MAPPING VICTORIA'S BUSHFIRE PRONE AREAS

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 Victorian building regulations require a Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) assessment to be undertaken for certain types of construction in bushfire prone areas. The outcome of a BAL assessment determines the construction standards to be used to better protect properties from the threat of bushfire as defined in Australian Standard 3959.
- 1.2 Since November 2011 the Minister for Planning has designated Victoria's Bushfire Prone Area's (section 192A of the *Building Act 1993*).
- 1.3 New dwellings and attached outbuildings, apartments, hotels and buildings such as hospitals, schools, kindergartens, and care facilities which are occupied by the vulnerable, or significant alterations and/or additions to these, located in a Designated Bushfire Prone Area must be built to a minimum BAL 12.5 construction standard for sites assessed as BAL Low (Regulation 157 of the Building Regulations 2018).

## 2.0 The Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) Map

- 2.1 The BPA Map shows areas the Minister for Planning has designated under section 192A of the *Building Act 1993*
- 2.2 While the method used to derive hazard data is robust, it is important to note that the BPA Map is representative of inputs and conditions at a point in time. Periodic and systematic review will assure the BPA Map's currency.

## 3.0 Criteria informing the review and refinement of the BPA Map

- 3.1 Attachment 1 shows the three different bushfire hazard levels have been developed for use in Victorian planning and building systems; Bushfire Hazard Level 2, Bushfire Hazard Level 1 and Bushfire Hazard Level Low. The vegetation categories used to describe these hazard levels can be found in Australian Standard 3959.
- 3.2 **Bushfire Hazard Level 2 (BHL2):** Areas of forest, woodlands, scrub, shrublands, mallee and rainforest where there is potential for bushfire behaviour such as a crown fire, extreme levels of radiant heat and extreme ember attack. BHL2 does not include grasslands.
- 3.3 **Criteria:** An area of BHL2 that is larger than 4 hectares will be mapped as BPA including a buffer of 300 metres.
- 3.4 **Bushfire Hazard Level 1 (BHL1):** Areas of forest, woodlands, scrub, shrublands, mallee, rainforest and unmanaged grasslands where there is potential for bushfire behaviour such as crown fire, grassfire and ember attack.
- 3.5 **Criteria:** An area of BHL1 that is between 2 and 4 hectares that is not unmanaged grassland will be mapped as BPA including a buffer of 150 metres.
- 3.6 **Criteria:** An area of unmanaged grassland larger than 2 hectares will be mapped as BPA including a buffer of 60 metres. Document Number: DOC/15/41250 Version: 06/02/15 Document Author: PW40

3.7 **Bushfire Hazard Level Low (BHL Low):** Areas where the extent, configuration and/or management of vegetation means there is low potential for bushfires. Examples of areas that may be rated as BHL Low include:

- Areas of managed grassland including
  - o residential land
  - o recreational areas and ovals
  - o commercial and industrial land
  - o airports and some airstrips
  - o botanical gardens
  - o irrigated agricultural lands used for horticulture and cropping activities
  - o orchards, vineyards and market gardens
  - o wholesale and retail nurseries
  - o mangroves
- Managed golf courses
- Parks and reserves smaller than 2 ha

3.8 **Criteria:** Areas of BHL Low are excluded from the BPA map except where buffering from BHL2 or BHL1 has encroached into the area.

3.9 An additional connectivity buffer of 300m may be considered in particular where there is a corridor of linking BHL2 vegetation of at least 20m width (e.g. creek reserves, drainage corridors).

3.10 For an isolated area of vegetation greater than 1 hectare but less than 2 hectares, the connectivity to other identified hazards, as well as the shape of the area, will be a factor in deciding whether it is included in the BPA.

#### 4.0 Refining the Designated BPA Map

4.1 The criteria will be used to identify Bushfire Prone Areas before verification at several points as shown in attachment 2

- Consultation with the relevant fire authorities
- Consultation with the relevant Local Government Authority
- Final consideration by the DELWP Rapid Verification Taskforce

4.2 The BPA Map is informed by local knowledge of local conditions combined with the collective expertise of the Rapid Verification Taskforce and may vary from the strict application of the criteria.

4.3 DELWP will recommend refinement of the BPA Map to the Minister for Planning. The Minister for Planning will determine whether the areas recommended for refinement be designated as Bushfire Prone Areas.

## Attachment 1 INTEGRATED PLANNING AND BUILDING FRAMEWORK

<p>Areas of extreme fuel loads where there is potential for extreme bushfire behaviour such as a crowning fire and extreme ember</p>	<p><b>BUSHFIRE HAZARD LEVEL 2 AREAS</b></p>	<p><b>Planning response:</b> Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) <b>AND</b> <b>Building response:</b> Bushfire Prone Area (BPA), the Building Regulations and AS 3959</p>
<p>Areas of high to extreme fuel loads where there is potential for high bushfire behaviour such as a crown fire and ember attack</p>	<p><b>BUSHFIRE HAZARD LEVEL 1 AREAS</b></p>	<p><b>Building response:</b> Bushfire Prone Area (BPA), the Building Regulations and AS 3959</p>
<p>Areas where the extent, configuration and/or management of vegetation means that there is low potential for bushfire spread</p>	<p><b>BUSHFIRE HAZARD LEVEL LOW AREAS</b></p>	<p><b>Planning:</b> No planning response. <b>Building:</b> No building response outside the Bushfire Prone Area</p>

## Attachment 2: PROCESS FOR BPA MAP REVISION

