

FAQ's: Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping



Q. What is bush fire prone land?

Bush fire prone land is an area of land with vegetation that can support a bush fire or is likely to be subject to bush fire attack.

Q. Why does Council map bush fire prone land?

In 2002 the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and *Rural Fires Act 1997* were amended to provide greater protection for people and property against the dangers that may arise from bush fires. The amendment also required councils to map bush fire prone land within their local government area.

Bush fire prone lands are identified on a map using the NSW Rural Fire Service's (NSW RFS) '*Guide for Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping*'. The map identifies vegetation categories and buffer zones for three vegetation categories. The map is required to be certified by the Commissioner of the NSW RFS and is updated every five years to reflect any changes in vegetation or legislation.

Q. What does it mean if my property is mapped as bush fire prone land?

Mapping of bush fire prone land provides a trigger for assessment of new development. If you are proposing to build a new development or undertake renovations to an existing development that requires development consent, and the property has been mapped as bush fire prone land, you must meet the requirements of the NSW RFS '*Planning for Bush Fire Protection, 2006*'. '*Planning for Bush Fire Protection, 2006*' requires certain protective measures be provided in order to make a building less susceptible to damage or destruction from bush fires.

Owning property that is mapped bush fire prone land does not mean you cannot build, but requires determination of the risk of fire to the property. Development of bush fire prone land is not restricted, but in order to provide appropriate protection from bush fires protective measures may result in modification of the style, construction material or sighting of a building.

Q. My property was not previously mapped as bush fire prone land, why has this changed?

Council is required to review the bush fire prone land map every five years to reflect changes in vegetation or legislation. Council's last bush fire prone land map was certified by the NSW RFS in 2009. Council submitted a revised map to the NSW RFS and the map was certified on the 10 July 2018.

The new map resulted in an additional 1346 hectares of land being designated as bush fire prone land. 670 new properties were added as new bush fire prone land, but the majority of land added was grassland around Hexham Swamp.