

SHIRE OF BODDINGTON
Planning Policy No. 8 - Fire Protection Measures for New
Development and Subdivisions

1. Policy Statement

To ensure that the impact of fires is significantly reduced and fire suppression is maximised through careful planning and the implementation of fire prevention measures for the safety of Shire of Boddington residents.

It is Council's policy to adopt a precautionary approach to fire risks. To achieve this, the Council will require proponents seeking planning (development), subdivision, scheme amendment, structure plan, and development guide plan approval and other works to take account of fire risk with their proposals.

2. Background and Issues

Bush fires and other fire events are inevitable. Appropriate planning can however reduce the potential for fires to occur and lessen their potentially devastating effects where they do occur.

The level of subdivision/development and associated population growth is expected to increase in the Shire of Boddington in both the shorter to longer term. All new subdivision/development increase fire risks and place demands on fire services to varying degrees. Further, a considerable portion of new subdivision/development will be on "lifestyle" lots i.e. rural residential and rural small holding lots.

Fire risk locally is also influenced by factors including:

- approximately 50% of the municipality is set aside as State Forest and conservation areas;
- much of the municipality is moderately to steeper sloping (especially relative to most of Western Australia);
- most experts predict rainfall will continue to reduce in the coming years/decades and this may be more acute east of the Darling Range than compared to the Swan Coastal Plain; and
- the availability of resources for fire management and responding to fires. As part of this, it is not known whether the State Government and/or the Commonwealth Government will provide the Shire of Boddington with additional resources to manage fire risks in the coming years.

The Council considers that the overall fire management situation within the Shire can be improved by preparing Fire Management Plans early in the planning process, with implementation prior to occupation and/or subdivision clearance.

3. Definitions

In this policy, Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) means the State Government's lead agency that is responsible for fire management and includes any other agency should it be renamed.

Throughout this policy, "proponent" can refer to "developer" or "subdivider", while "proposal" can refer to "planning (development) application, subdivision application, scheme amendment request, structure plan request and development guide plan request or other works" where considered appropriate by Council.

4. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- minimise the risk from bush fire and other sources to life, property and community assets for new proposals and require proponents to suitably justify why there should be a departure from this policy;
- control the location of development and use of land to avoid placing inappropriate developments in areas that have higher fire risks;
- ensure the implementation of appropriate fire management measures to mitigate fire risks;
- ensure that buildings, by virtue of materials and design, are reasonably fire resistant;
- recognise that Council has endorsed the FESA and Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) document titled "Planning for Bush Fire Protection"; and
- provide guidance to developers, subdividers, landowners, the community, other stakeholders and the Shire administration to ensure new developments and subdivisions appropriately address fire risk.

5. Application of the Policy

This policy applies throughout the municipality. In particular, this policy applies to all proposals within the municipality in areas of fire risk and/or which contributes to fire risk as determined by the Council.

6. Links to Town Planning Scheme and other documents

This policy relates to various requirements set out in the Shire of Boddington Town Planning Scheme No. 2, Council's Local Planning Strategy, State Planning Policy 3.4 Natural Hazards and Disasters, *Planning for Bush Fire Protection*, the WAPC Policy DC3.7 Fire Planning and the Building Code of Australia.

7. Policy Provisions

7.1 Endorsement of the *Planning for Bush Fire Protection* document

Council endorses the WAPC and FESA *Planning for Bush Fire Protection* (December 2001) document along with any amendments or updates. Accordingly, the Council will require proponents to ensure compliance with the document. Further, the Council will have due regard to *Planning for Bush Fire Protection*.

7.2 General

The Council will adopt a precautionary approach to fire risk.

The Council will consider fire risk in planning decisions to avoid increasing the risk through inappropriately located or designed land use and development.

More intensive land use and development should only take place in areas where the performance criteria and acceptable solutions set out in *Planning for Bush Fire Protection* can be achieved.

The Council will consider fire hazard in the context of other considerations such as landscape protection and vegetation retention.

The Council will have regard to the objectives and provisions of this policy in determining proposals in areas where there is fire risk as determined by Council.

Council reserves the right to vary this policy where, after consideration of all matters, it is deemed appropriate relevant to the circumstance and is consistent with the spirit and intent of the policy.

7.3 Fire Management Plans

All Fire Management Plans are to be prepared in accordance with the *Planning for Bush Fire Protection* document. Fire Management Plans are to address, to the satisfaction of Council, issues including:

- assessing the fire hazard and risk level;
- subdivision and development design to address the hazard;
- siting of buildings;
- access;
- firebreaks and/or strategic firebreak systems;
- water supply, stand pipes, tanks, fire hydrants and water conservation;
- fuel reduction management;
- fire suppression response;
- access reservations and easements maintenance requirements;
- required building design standards to account for fire risk;
- other relevant performance criteria; and
- the anticipated impact on environmental assets (especially reporting on rare flora, fauna and/or threatened ecological communities) on the application site, through implementing the Fire Management Plan.

Other than for minor proposals and/or where fire risks are low in the opinion of Council, the Council expects that Fire Management Plans will be prepared by a suitably qualified professional. This professional is required to hold appropriate professional indemnity insurance to the satisfaction of Council.

7.4 Fire Risks

The Council does not support more intensive development and subdivisions, such as residential, rural-residential, rural small holdings, tourist and industrial developments in extreme fire hazard areas.

The Council will not approve development, nor support proposals in areas classified as “extreme” fire risk without permanent and realistic hazard level reduction measures being implemented, that can be sustained in the opinion of Council to reduce the hazard level to high, medium or low.

In high and medium fire hazard areas, the use and development of land for more intensive purposes will not be approved or supported without assessment of the bush fire risk and compliance with the performance criteria and acceptable solutions set out in *Planning for Bush Fire Protection*. The Council will only support proposals in areas classified as high and medium fire risk following the receipt of a Fire Management Plan from a suitably qualified professional confirming that the proposal, design, facilities and management are appropriate to address fire risk to the satisfaction of Council.

7.5 Strategic Firebreaks

Where strategic firebreaks are required as part of an approved Fire Management Plan, the Council will require the subdivider to install the strategic firebreaks, gates and other required measures to the satisfaction of Council. In particular, the strategic firebreak is to be to an all weather standard that can be accessed by two wheel drive vehicles. Where the strategic firebreak is also used for pedestrian/cyclist access, the Council may require the access to be sealed, concreted or constructed to an appropriate standard to the satisfaction of Council.

The Council’s preference is that the on-going management and maintenance of strategic firebreaks (not firebreaks around each property) rests with the Council for:

- larger rural residential and rural small holding subdivisions;
- residential, tourism or industrial subdivisions adjoining river foreshores and/or public land; and
- other subdivisions as determined appropriate by Council.

The strategic firebreak is to be protected through an easement, inclusion in a Public Access Way or through other measures to the satisfaction of Council.

The Council does not support taking over on-going management and maintenance of strategic firebreaks in the Rural Zone.

7.6 Signage

Planning for Bush Fire Protection sets out requirements for signage where fire service access and emergency access adjoin public roads. Where set out in an approved Fire Management Plan, the Council will require the subdivider to install appropriate signage prior to the clearance of the Deposited Plan.

7.7 Reticulated Water

The Council's priority is seeking to minimise fire risks and the provision of reticulated (scheme) water, with associated hydrants and storages tanks, is an important component to achieve this.

The Council will require urban development and will seek to ensure that urban subdivisions are connected to the reticulated water system. The Council will seek to ensure that rural residential subdivision is connected to the reticulated water system in accordance with *Council Policy No. 4 Rural Residential Lots and Water Supplies*.

While noting the above, the Council is mindful of the need to conserve water and that water should be fit for purpose. The Council will require that proponents consider appropriate water sources and an appropriate range of fire management measures in preparing Fire Management Plans.

7.8 Fire Hydrants

In areas served by reticulated water, the Council will require fire hydrants to be provided in accordance with FESA and Water Corporation standards, including design, spacing and water pressure. The Council will require the subdivider's consulting engineer to provide sufficient details in order for the Council to make its assessment.

The Council may also require the subdivider to install a reserve storage tank, in an appropriate location, to compliment the reticulated water system to assist in maintaining continuity of supply.

7.9 Scheme Amendment and Structure Plan Requests

Any scheme amendment request, where there is a potential for fire risk in the opinion of Council, must be accompanied by a statement or report which demonstrates that all fire protection requirements contained in *Planning for Bush Fire Protection* can be achieved to the satisfaction of the Council.

The Council will require a suitable professional to prepare a Fire Management Plan for scheme amendment requests prior to adoption of the scheme amendment.

The Council will not adopt scheme amendment requests on land having medium, high or extreme risk where the performance criteria and acceptable solutions contained in *Planning for Bush Fire Protection* can not be met.

Council will require a Fire Management Plan to be provided with structure plan requests.

7.10 Subdivision Applications

The Council will only support subdivision in areas classified as "high" fire risk following the receipt of a Fire Management Plan from a suitably qualified professional confirming that the proposal, design, facilities and management are appropriate to address fire risk to the satisfaction of Council.

For Subdivision Applications, as determined by Council, the Council may request the WAPC impose conditions to address on-the-ground fire protection issues including, but not limited to the following:

- requiring the preparation and implementation of Fire Management Plans in accordance with the *Planning for Bush Fire Protection* document to the satisfaction of the Council;
- the provision of fire fighting water supply and fire hydrants;
- the provision of fire services access;
- to ensure that adequate fire prevention and suppression measures are implemented;
- the allocation of a site for the location of a fire fighting facility; and
- to ensure that prospective purchasers are aware of relevant scheme provisions and publications addressing bush fire safety.

7.11 Planning Applications

For developments that are in areas of medium, high or extreme fire risk (in the opinion of Council) and for where there is no existing and contemporary Fire Management Plan covering the area subject to the application, the Council may require the submission of a Fire Management Plan with the Planning Application to assess development risks.

The Council may impose a condition requiring either the preparation and/or implementation of a Fire Management Plan in accordance with the *Planning for Bush Fire Protection* document to the satisfaction of the Council.

7.12 Bushfire Hazard Mapping

Following bushfire hazard mapping being undertaken for all or part of the municipality, the Council will give this due consideration in determining proposals.

7.13 Fire Equipment Strategy

Following a Fire Equipment Strategy being prepared for all or part of the municipality, the Council will give this due consideration in determining proposals. Subject to the recommendations of the Fire Equipment Strategy, the Council may require developers/subdividers to contribute to upgraded fire management equipment in order to reduce fire risks for future residents and/or visitors.

7.14 Obtaining Advice

The Council will seek advice from the local volunteer Bush Fire Brigades, FESA and/or other agencies as appropriate on proposals.

7.15 Landowner Responsibilities

Landowners should take all practical steps to address fire risks subject to gaining necessary approvals.

8. Approval Authorisation

Authority to implement the policy will be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, other than as outlined in this policy.

9. Final Adoption

Final adoption of the policy was resolved by Council on 21 July 2009.

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Council will require a Fire Management Plan to be provided with structure plan requests.

7.10 Subdivision Applications

The Council will only support subdivision in areas classified as "high" fire risk following the receipt of a Fire Management Plan from a suitably qualified professional confirming that the proposal, design, facilities and management are appropriate to address fire risk to the satisfaction of Council.

For Subdivision Applications, as determined by Council, the Council may request the WAPC impose conditions to address on-the-ground fire protection issues including, but not limited to the following:

- requiring the preparation and implementation of Fire Management Plans in accordance with the *Planning for Bush Fire Protection* document to the satisfaction of the Council;
- the provision of fire fighting water supply and fire hydrants;
- the provision of fire services access;
- to ensure that adequate fire prevention and suppression measures are implemented;
- the allocation of a site for the location of a fire fighting facility; and
- to ensure that prospective purchasers are aware of relevant scheme provisions and publications addressing bush fire safety.

7.11 Planning Applications

For developments that are in areas of medium, high or extreme fire risk (in the opinion of Council) and for where there is no existing and contemporary Fire Management Plan covering the area subject to the application, the Council may require the submission of a Fire Management Plan with the Planning Application to assess development risks.

The Council may impose a condition requiring either the preparation and/or implementation of a Fire Management Plan in accordance with the *Planning for Bush Fire Protection* document to the satisfaction of the Council.

7.12 Bushfire Hazard Mapping

Following bushfire hazard mapping being undertaken for all or part of the municipality, the Council will give this due consideration in determining proposals.

7.13 Fire Equipment Strategy

Following a Fire Equipment Strategy being prepared for all or part of the municipality, the Council will give this due consideration in determining proposals. Subject to the recommendations of the Fire Equipment Strategy, the Council may require developers/subdividers to contribute to upgraded fire management equipment in order to reduce fire risks for future residents and/or visitors.

7.14 Obtaining Advice

The Council will seek advice from the local volunteer Bush Fire Brigades, FESA and/or other agencies as appropriate on proposals.

7.15 Landowner Responsibilities

Landowners should take all practical steps to address fire risks subject to gaining necessary approvals.

8. Approval Authorisation

Authority to implement the policy will be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, other than as outlined in this policy.

9. Final Adoption

Final adoption of the policy was resolved by Council on 21 July 2009.