



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE



# URBAN RELEASE AREAS

Guide to Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping





## Introduction

As part of the changes to section 146 of *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Act 2012* (EP&AA Act) and the regulation affecting this change, the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) and NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure (DP&I) have been working together to implement changes to bush fire prone land mapping process. The regulation now allows a new process for updating bush fire prone land maps within Urban Release Areas (URAs). This process is aimed at reducing lags in the development process to enable housing supply to be increased in an efficient yet responsible manner.

The bush fire prone land mapping process within URAs will enable the alteration and recertification of the map as works and development change the landscape. This will involve stakeholders and / or developers undertaking works and accurately identifying clearing or vegetation amendments for the NSW RFS to adopt into the bush fire prone land maps.

This document describes the steps and requirements for amending a Bush Fire Prone Land Map (BFPLM) in an URA.

## Who can use this?

The NSW RFS is providing this service to owners, developers or other relevant stakeholders to development as part of an urban release area. This will enable the NSW RFS to amend the bush fire prone land map as evidence of clearing or development is provided and verified.

**This process does not apply to land NOT located within an Urban Release Area**

## The purpose

Under traditional bush fire prone land mapping practices, the onus is on council to update their map at least every five years. As development occurs the bush fire landscape changes. Often these changes do not occur as quickly on the bush fire prone land maps. So a situation could arise where development that has altered the landscape has occurred, making the bush fire prone land map no longer accurate.

Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping in URAs will allow the developer or stakeholder to work directly with the NSW RFS to change their BFPLM as the landscape changes. This will provide a more accurate and streamlined process for these developments through the NSW planning system.

## How the process works

Changing a BFPLM in a URA is a seven step process. The first step of the process is to first identify that your development site falls within a defined URA. DP&I have defined what an URA is and have mapped these areas on a map that has been certified by the Director General of DP&I. The map can be located on the DP&I website [www.planning.nsw.gov.au](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au).

Once your site has been determined as being located with a designated URA area you are required to contact the NSW RFS and request an electronic copy (shapefile) of the current bush fire prone vegetation layer for the URA. This can be done by contacting the bush fire prone land map coordinator on 02 8741 4912 or email [BushFireProne.Mapping@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BushFireProne.Mapping@rfs.nsw.gov.au).

It is then up to you to amend the bush fire prone vegetation layer (shapefile) to accurately represent the bush fire hazard. It is recommended that a suitably qualified consultant or council are involved in the process of amending the shapefile.

Once you have amended the electronic file, complete the application form (Appendix 1). Below are a list of submission requirements to be lodged with your amended electronic file (shapefile) and application form.

The NSW RFS will promptly assess your application and notify the council/s concerned of the proposed change.

Any anomalies between the submitted electronic file and the NSW RFS assessment will be negotiated prior to the amendments approval.

Once approved, the amended map will be recertified by the Commissioner of the NSW RFS.

A .pdf of the changes will be sent to you and the updated map will be sent to the relevant council/s.

## Submission requirements

To process an application, the NSW RFS requires accurate evidence of the changes to the bush fire hazard that have occurred. As a minimum, the applicant is to provide the following information:

1. A completed application form (see Appendix 1).
2. The amended electronic file (shapefile) of the site that has been previously provided to the applicant by the NSW RFS.
3. URA name and Stage or Precinct name / number.
4. A screen shot of the existing BFPLM affected.
5. A copy of the subdivision plan for the site.
6. Any other supporting information that contributes to your application. (E.g. updated aerial photography, etc).



## **Council's role as part of this process**

The changes to the regulations, *Section 146 of the EP&A Act*, allows the Commissioner of the NSW RFS to revise the map as determined. Under the regulations this only applies to areas defined as URAs.

The NSW RFS intends to continue to work in the process of updating the bush fire prone land maps.

The NSW RFS will contact the relevant council once an application has been received for an amendment to a bush fire prone land map. Once the application for an amendment has been determined by the NSW RFS, council will be notified of the change and provided with an updated certified AO copy of the map as per the existing arrangement along with the new data set.

## **Assessing of bush fire prone vegetation**

The assessing of bush fire prone vegetation and its accuracy is a critical component of this process. The classification of bush fire prone vegetation should be undertaken in accordance the NSW RFS 'Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping Guidelines'

It is important to note that Grasslands as defined in AS3959 2009 'Construction of Dwellings in Bush Fire-Prone Areas' are considered as being bush fire prone vegetation and should be mapped as referenced above.

## **The removal of vegetation**

It is important to consider, as development occurs, that the appropriate authority has given approval for the removal of vegetation or for the revegetation of lands within the site.

The removal of vegetation for the development can be determined by the works carried out and can be mapped accordingly.

## **Revegetation of a site**

In some cases lands can require revegetation. Such areas could include a degraded riparian area that is currently not vegetated or an area that has been planted out but where the vegetation is in a juvenile state.

Generally, areas dedicated for conservation in the form of a nature reserve or riparian area will be defined on the site plan. The NSW RFS will require these areas to be mapped if the intended future vegetation meets the criteria as being bush fire prone vegetation.

## Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping in Urban Release Areas (URA) Changes Process

Contact NSW RFS HQ to request a copy of the bush fire prone vegetation layer.  
This will be supplied in the form an electronic file (shapefile).  
Contact Bush Fire Prone Land Map Coordinator 02 8741 4912 or [BushFireProne.Mapping@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BushFireProne.Mapping@rfs.nsw.gov.au).

Amend the electronic file obtained from NSW RFS. The NSW RFS recommends you engage a suitably qualified consultant to amend your electronic file. The amended shapefile forms part of your application.

Submission requirements:

1. Application Form
2. Current BFPLM
3. Amended shapefile of proposed bush fire prone vegetation
4. Evidence of Development
5. Site plan / Lot Layout of Development

Send to [BushFireProne.Mapping@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BushFireProne.Mapping@rfs.nsw.gov.au)

On receipt, the NSW RFS will:

- Notify you of receipt of application
- Verify any information provided

If discrepancies or issues arise, NSW RFS will contact you using information from the application form.

Once issues (if any) are resolved and the application has been verified, the NSW RFS will commence the recertification process

The NSW RFS will issue an updated certified BFPLM to

- Council
- NSW RFS District Office

The NSW RFS will inform you of the changes to the BFPLM and provide a picture of the changes.



## **What/who is a suitably qualified consultant?**

A suitably qualified consultant would include someone who is an accredited member of a recognised organisation and has suitable experience, education, qualifications and indemnity insurance to undertake the work competently. The NSW RFS website lists those organisations which have current accreditation schemes recognised by the RFS. A list of recognised Bush Fire Consultants can be found on the Fire Protection Association of Australia website [www.fpaa.com.au](http://www.fpaa.com.au).

## **Will the NSW RFS contact me during the process?**

Yes, the NSW RFS will contact you:

- if the application requires further supporting documentation or discrepancies have been detected and / or
- when the process has been completed a .pdf and certification date will be provided.

## **How long will my application take to process?**

The length of the application process is directly dependant on the quality and accuracy of the information received.

A standard, accurate submission should take approximately one month to complete.

## **Who do I contact?**

All applications can be emailed directly to [BushFireProne.Mapping@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BushFireProne.Mapping@rfs.nsw.gov.au).

For any questions or queries relating to process, please contact the Bush Fire Prone Land Map Co-ordinator on 02 8741 4912 during business hours.

# Appendix 1

		<b>NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE</b>			
<b>BUSH FIRE PRONE LAND MAP</b>					
<b>Amendment Application</b>					
<b>URBAN RELEASE AREA</b>				<b>FORM</b>	
<b>Applicant Details</b>					
Name:					
Comany:					
Contact Phone:					
Email Address:					
<b>Property Details</b>					
Lot/s		DP/SP			
URA NAME		STAGE No/s			
SUBURBS/s:					
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ARERA/s:					
Details of proposed amendments					
.....					
.....					
<b>Checklist</b>					
Amended shapefile					
Lot Layout / Masterplan					
Extract of existing Bush Fire Prone Land Map					
Aerial photography of site (if available)					
NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE - APPLICATION BFPLM AMENDMENT V1-0514				<b>1 OF 1</b>	



## **Appendix 2**

### **Bush fire prone vegetation**

The criteria for mapping bush prone vegetation can be found in the NSW RFS document titled 'Guideline for Councils on Bush Fire Prone Area Land Mapping'

# Appendix 3

## Completed Application Form

**NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE**

### BUSH FIRE PRONE LAND MAP

#### Amendment Application

URBAN RELEASE AREAFORM

Applicant Details	
Name:	Joe Smith
Company:	URA's R Us
Contact Phone:	0410 123 456
Email Address:	urosrus@iomi.com

  

Property Details			
Lot/s	1,2 &3	DP/SP	4587
URA NAME	Joyce Rd	STAGE No/s	
SUBURBS/s:	Hopetown		
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ARERA/s:	Sydney		

Details of proposed amendments

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Checklist	
✓	Amended shapefile
✓	Lot Layout / Masterplan
✓	Extract of existing Bush Fire Prone Land Map
	Aerial photography of site (if available)

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE - APPLICATION BFPLM AMENDMENT V1-0514 1 OF 1

Figure 4: Completed Application form

# NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

**Postal address**

NSW Rural Fire Service  
Locked Bag 17  
GRANVILLE NSW 2142

**Street address**

NSW Rural Fire Service  
15 Carter Street  
LIDCOMBE NSW 2141

T (02) 8741 5555  
F (02) 8741 5550  
[www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)