Buloke Shire Municipal Fire Management Plan
Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee, August 2012

Forward by Mayor

The risk and the impacts of bushfire on people and property within the Victorian context are all too frequently brought into stark reality. Some areas are more bushfire prone than others, but none of us can say with certainty that we are immune from the potential impact of a fire given certain weather conditions.

This first Fire Management Plan for the Buloke Shire, which replaces the Shire's Fire Prevention Plan, is a key step in a more integrated approach to the identification and treatment of risks from fire in Buloke Shire, post the Black Saturday fires. The Fire Management Plan has been developed in part a response to recommendations from the Bushfires Royal Commission about the role of local government planning in relation to fires, but more importantly, the role of the community and other key government agencies in the planning process. The Plan recognises that identifying and managing the risk from fire is the shared responsibility Council, other agencies and the community.

The Plan will be reviewed annually by the broad based Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee because it is important that we continue to assess the risks from fire to protect people and property in the Shire. It will change as new risks and risk treatments are identified.

The Plan has been developed with many people and organisations committing their time and providing valuable input to the process which has been managed by the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee, chaired by Deputy Mayor Councillor Leo Tellefson. We thank all of them for the work done to date and look forward to the continued partnership that is necessary to deliver improved community safety outcomes.

Cr David Pollard
Mayor
Buloke Shire Council

Version Control Table

Version number	Date of issue	Author(s)	Brief description of change
Version 1.0	00/00/2012		
Version 2.0	26/05/2015		Annual review

Authorisation

This Municipal Fire Management Plan has been prepared by the Buloke Shire Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee after community consultation was completed in June 2012. The Plan has been considered by all parties identified within the Plan as reflecting the intent of their organisation with regard to fire management planning and committing to work together to deliver the actions identified in the Plan.
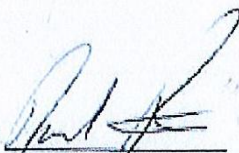
This Plan was endorsed through a formal motion by the Buloke Shire MFMPC at their meeting on 8 August 2012.

Signed: _____ Date: 08 08 2012 :
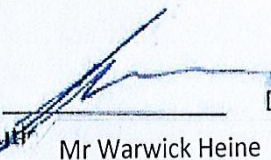
Mr Leo Tellefson

Chair
Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee
Buloke Shire Council

This Plan is endorsed by the Buloke Shire Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee.

Signed: _____ Date: 08-08-2012 ;

Mr David Pollard

Chair
Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
Buloke Shire Council

Signed: _____ Date: 8/8/12 :

Mr Warwick Heine

Chief Executive Officer
Buloke Shire Council

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1 Introduction

In response to the challenges that have emerged in fire management over the last decade, the Victorian Government has established an Integrated Fire Management Planning (IFMP) Framework for Victoria. The IFMP framework operates under existing fire and emergency management legislation. As part of implementing the IFMP framework, the Council is required to have a three year Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP or "*the Plan"*).

This Buloke Municipal Fire Management Plan has been prepared by the Buloke Shire Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC) in accordance with requirements in the *Emergency Management Act 1986* and the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* (CFA Act), and specifically addresses the matters prescribed in Part 6A of the *Emergency Management Manual of Victoria* (EMMV) and the State Fire Management Committee's guidelines for integrated fire management planning.

This MFMP is task focused and encompasses:
- The risks and vulnerabilities identified to be managed across the municipal footprint
- Reduction of the likelihood and consequence of fire hazards within local communities in the Shire
- Management of local priorities relating to protection of communities and physical, environmental, economic and social assets
- Development and implementation of works programs for the management of fires, including hazard removal and fuel management
- Community engagement activities
- Encouragement of shared responsibility by the community
- Consideration of planning across municipal boundaries.

1.1 The Integrated Fire Management Planning Framework

IFMP has adopted a planning process that is consistent with International Standard for risk management ISO 31000.

Stage of the IFMP planning cycle	Relevant aspect of the AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines
Engagement Plan	Communicate and consult
Environmental Scan	Establish the context
Risk Assessment > Analyse	Identify the risk > Analyse the risk > Evaluate the risk
Decide > Publish	Determine and document treatment options
Deliver	Treat the risk
Monitor and Improve	Monitor and review

Figure 1: IFMP Alignment with AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009

This can be found on the IFMP website: www.ifmp.vic.gov.au

1.2   Authority for Plan

The Buloke Shire has a legislative responsibility under the *Emergency Management Act* to develop a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) which is intended to address all risks arising from emergencies. Under the *CFA Act,* the Council is required to develop and implement a Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP) which will be a sub plan of the MEMP.

The final Plan as adopted by Council will be deemed to meet the requirements for a MFMP under section 55A (1) of the *CFA Act,* provided it contains provisions as set out in section 55A (2) of that Act.

1.3   Plan Endorsement and Adoption

The Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC), is a broad based committee consisting of representatives of the Council, CFA and various State Government Agencies such as Victoria Police, Vic Roads, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning have prepared this final Plan after review and consideration by relevant stakeholders and the community. At the conclusion of those processes, the Plan will be reconsidered by the MFMPC and the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC), who if satisfied that the requirements of the Plan have been satisfactorily addressed will recommend to the Council that the Plan be adopted. In addition, the Plan has been reviewed by the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee to ensure that it aligns with the overall regional objectives.

1.4   Period of Plan

Municipal Fire Management Plans have a three year "life". The Plan will be endorsed for a period of 3 years commencing from the date of Council adoption of the Plan.

1.5   Plan Review & Updates

This Buloke Shire MFMP will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) either annually in association with the MEMP or:

1. following significant incidents or change in risk exposure;
2. as directed by the State or Regional Fire Management Planning Committees; or
3. as required by legislation.

When a review is undertaken and amendments are made to the Plan, the amended plan is 'adopted' by the MFMPC and re-submitted to the Council for adoption and inclusion into the MEMP.

Further detail with regard to the ongoing monitoring and improvement processes are outlined in Part 6 of this Plan.

1.6   Plan Audit

This Municipal Fire Management Plan will be audited under section 55B of the *CFA Act.*

The audit assesses the Plan against the matters which must be included in it which are prescribed in section 55A (2) of the *CFA Act.* If the audit considers that those matters are appropriately addressed, the Plan will be deemed to meet the requirements for a Municipal Fire Prevention Plan under section 55A (1) of the *CFA Act.*

1.7   Planning Process

The Integrated Fire Management Planning framework enhances existing approaches to fire management planning and includes the following elements:

- Integration of plans and processes
- Consistency at State, Regional, Municipal and local levels
- Coordination of stakeholders and planning processes
- High levels of community and stakeholder engagement
- Performance management
- Monitoring and continuous improvement
- Supportive planning structure and environment
- Consistent identification and assessment of risk.

The IFMP planning cycle links the steps of contemporary planning and is consistent with the international Risk Management Standard.
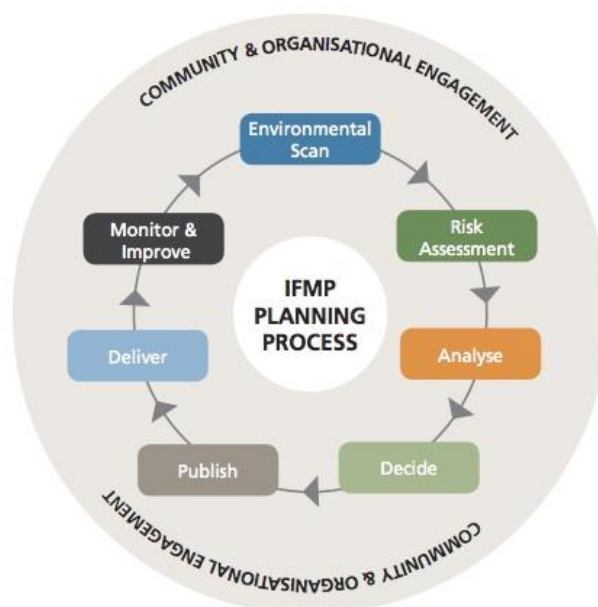
Figure 2: IFMP Planning Cycle[1]

1.8 *Committee Membership*

The Committee with the primary responsibility for developing the Municipal Fire Management Plan is the Buloke Shire Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee, a subcommittee of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee. The MFMPC is made up of core Committee members and associate members determined by the Buloke Shire MFMPC. The current MFMPC comprises of representatives from the following key agencies and organisations:

- Buloke Shire Council

  → Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO)

  → Municipal Emergency Response Officer (MERO)

  → Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC)

  → Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)

  → Environmental Compliance Officer

  → Executive Officer

  → Councillor – Community Representative

- Vic Police - Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC)

- Country Fire Authority   (CFA)

  → Operations Officer – District 18

  → Manager Community Safety - Loddon Mallee Region

  → Group Delegate –Buloke West Group

  → Group Delegate - Charlton Group

  → Group Delegate -Tyrrell Group

- State Fire Management Planning Committee – Fire Management Planning Coordinator Loddon Mallee Region (IFMPC)

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)- Manager - Fire Management

- Other organisations as required from time to time

Associate members of MFMPC comprises of representatives from the following key agencies and organisations:

- Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water   Regional Officer

- V- Line   Regional Officer

- PowerCor   Regional Officer

- Parks Victoria   Ranger in Charge

- Vic Roads   Road Maintenance Team leader

- CFA   Vegetation Management Officer

The Committee acknowledged the needs of individuals, community based organisations, business and industry while developing this Plan. Emphasis is being strongly focused on attempting to meet the needs of all groups within the community. As the integrated fire management planning approach becomes more entrenched in the process, the Committee may seek wider input from individuals, community based organisations, business and industry.

2   Engagement and Communications

Community and organisational engagement is required during all seven stages of the IFMP planning cycle. The aim is for the community and emergency management organisations to participate together in the development, delivery and monitoring of fire management plans.

2.1   IFMP Engagement Process

As part of the Project Management Plan a Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan was developed to provide the framework to achieve the objectives of community engagement in the development of the Municipal Fire Management Plan.

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Framework was used as a guide by the MFMPC to shape the community engagement process. The Committee focused on 3 key levels identified in the Framework – "consult", "involve", "collaborate" as the levels of engagement that would be used by it, which can be seen in the Table in Part 2.2 of this Plan.

Objectives of Community Consultation:
- Promote "shared responsibility" and foster community participation to engender a sense of "ownership" of the Plan by the community
- Build:

  $\rightarrow$ awareness of fire risks to the whole community
  $\rightarrow$ a process for future feedback
  $\rightarrow$ community confidence in the management of fire risk

- Identify community concerns
- Provide knowledge to the community and get feedback/ gather information
- Foster understanding of integration of agencies in development and process of MFMP (ensure fire management agencies are involved in the process)
- Review and identify deficiencies in the draft Plan
- Identify critical infrastructure and valuable community assets.

The following Table identifies the "rules of engagement" for the consultation process.

FOR COMMENT	FIXED PARAMETERS
- All parts of the Plan are open for comment but this does not include agency roles and operational matters that are fixed - Suggestions on ways MFMPC feedback to	- Final date of 31st October 2012 for the Plan to be in place - Legislative requirements on agencies - Roles and responsibilities of

the community • Identification of gaps in the Plan - such as risks • Identification of assets within the Community	emergency management agencies - Planning requirements - Council local laws - Building requirements Final decisions made by MFMPC & Council • 3 year plan with yearly review • Code Red/TFB day rules

The Engagement Plan includes:

Phase 1 - **Preliminary Stakeholder/community engagement**

→ Community survey undertaken - October 2011
→ Community information in *"Community Matters"* (a community newsletter published by the Council and mailed to residents of the Shire) - October 2011
→ Direct mail out to key community groups and organisations such as Town Forums and Progress Associations and service clubs - October 2011
→ Information and survey form on Council website - October 2011.

Phase 2 - **Development of draft Plan (October 2011 - May 2012)**

Meetings of the MFMPC to:

• define Council's vision, roles and responsibilities for integrated fire management
• identify risk and develop appropriate treatments
• propose Community Engagement Plan

Endorsement by the MEMPC and Council of the draft Plan to be released for discussion and comment (May 2012).

Phase 3 - **Stakeholder and community consultation (June 2012)**

Community consultation was undertaken over a 30 day period consisting of:

→ General community consultation through advertisement and website announcements
→ Information about the Plan published on Council's website along with a survey
→ Dedicated information on the draft Plan in *"Community Matters"*
→ Targeted consultation with key stakeholders and community groups/forums
→ Open invitation to Buloke residents to participate in information sessions in key towns - Charlton, Sea Lake and Donald.

Phase 4 - **Analysis and Assessment of submissions (July 2012)**

→ Committee evaluation of feedback received and submissions made
→ Make any necessary amendments to the Plan
→ MFMPC reconsideration and adoption of the Plan for recommendation to the MEMPC for inclusion in the MEMP.
→ Referral of the Plan to the LMRSFPC

BULOKE
SHIRE COUNCIL

$\rightarrow$ Adoption by MEMPC for recommendation to Council for adoption and inclusion as a sub-plan to the MEMP.

2.2 Stakeholder Analysis

The MFMPC has identified a list of stakeholders that need to be engaged as part of the Plan development, their relationship and functions in relation to fire management and intended engagement approach.

Table 1: Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder	Interest in Fire Management Plan	Engagement Approach[2]
Emergency Services		
• CFA – Organisation/volunteers	Response Agency EM	Collaborate
• Police	Response Agency EM	Collaborate
• SES	Response Agency EM	Consult
• Vicroads	Engagement	Involve
• MEMP	EMP	Collaborate
• Regional – LMRSFMP	Regional Perspective	Collaborate
• DELWP	Response Agency EM	Collaborate
Local Government	Response and Recovery Agency EM	Collaborate
Community Groups/Organisations		
• General Community	Awareness	Consult
• Aboriginal Affairs Victoria	Vulnerable assets	Involve
• Town Forum/Progress Associations	Awareness	Consult
• Church Groups	Awareness	Consult
• Childcare Agencies	Asset and vulnerability	Involve
• Education Facilities/schools	Asset and vulnerability	Involve
• VFF	Awareness	Consult
• Field & Game Associations (Donald & Wycheproof)	Awareness	Consult
Medical Services		
• East Wimmera Health Service including: • Aged Care Hospitals	Response & Recovery Asset and vulnerability	Involve

• Ambulance	Vulnerability	Involve
• Red Cross	Vulnerability	Collaborate
Industry/Employers / Business		
• Chamber of Commerce	Awareness	Consult
• Lakes Committees and Caravan Parks	Awareness	Consult
Utilities		
• Water Authorities - GWM Water	Asset based	Involve
• Powercor/SP Ausnet	Asset based	Involve
Adjoining Municipalities		
• Mildura Rural City Council	Cross border alignment	Involve
• Gannawarra Shire	Cross border alignment	Involve
• Loddon Shire	Cross border alignment	Involve
• Yarriambiack Shire	Cross border alignment	Involve
• Northern Grampians	Cross border alignment	Involve
• Swan Hill Rural City Council	Cross border alignment	Involve
Government Departments		
• DHS	Human vulnerability	Involve
• Parks Victoria	Response Agency EM	Involve
• V/Line	Asset based	Involve
• CMAs - NCCMA & MWCMA	Land management & control/assets	Involve

2.3   *Engagement Plan Process*

All phases of the Engagement Action Plan as detailed in the following Table have been completed.

Date	Activity
15 May 2012	MEMPC - final consideration of the draft Plan for recommendation to the MEMP that the draft Plan be recommended to the Council for release for community review.
21 May 2012	MEMP - consideration of the draft Plan and recommendation from the MEMPC that the Plan be referred to the Council for "endorsement" as a draft Plan to be released for community review.
28 May 2012	Draft Plan to be submitted to Special Council meeting for "endorsement" as a draft Plan to be released for community review.
Week 1 - June 2012	Press release to alert people of the opportunity to attend meetings for public input into the final Municipal Fire Management Plan and advertisement of dates of community meetings. (Subject to local newspaper schedules). Direct mailout to all households advising of availability of Plan for review and community meeting dates. Survey to be included in mailout. Dedicated article in Council's publication "*Community Matters".* Information about the draft Plan, the Buloke Shire Fire Management Plan and survey to be published on Council's website.
18 June 2012	Community Open House - Sea Lake Senior Citizens Centre, commencing @ 6.30pm to involve & consult on the draft Plan.
20 June 2012	Community Open House – Donald CFA, commencing @ 6.30pm to involve & consult on the draft Plan.
21 June 2012	Community Open House - Charlton Senior Citizens Centre, commencing @ 6.30pm to involve & consult on the draft Plan.
12 July 2012	Review of community comments received by MFMPC and endorsement of (amended) Plan for recommendation to the MEMP Committee for adoption.
23 July 2012	Consideration of the proposed Plan by the MEMP Committee for adoption and recommendation to the Council for approval.

2.4   Outcomes

The processes undertaken so far have not identified any significant community concerns. The surveys and distribution of information described in Phase 1 above (including direct mail of "*Community Matters*"), resulted in 2 submissions being made to Council. One submission was made by Wycheproof Vision and the other from the Berriwillock Community Development Group.

The concerns raised in the responses received were:

- → electrical fires in homes
- → maximised use of main roads and rail lines as fire breaks
- → risks from long grass and old vacant houses
- → the need for a proactive fire prevention approach.

Phase 2 of Community Consultation Process (June 2012)

Open house meetings were held at Sea Lake, Donald & Charlton with 13 members of the public attending those meetings. Questions asked at those meetings included :

- How the Plan deals with vacant/derelict properties

- How the Plan addresses rural cropping on land abutting township boundaries

- Steps to be taken to ensure adequate roadside slashing is undertaken to prevent spread of fire from roadsides to or from other land; and

- How does the Plan address watercourses that have a high fuel load as a consequence of recent floods

In addition, Council sent a direct mail out of a Municipal Fire Management Plan questionnaire to all landowners asking questions such as:

- What are the main fire risks in the Shire?

- Does the Municipal Fire Management Plan adequately identify the main fire risks?

- Does the Municipal Fire Management Plan deal with fire risks that are important to you and suggested treatments?

- Suggestions about how fire management should be dealt with in Buloke Shire.

Council received 130 responses to the questionnaire. All of the responses were assessed, identifying that the main concerns are:

- → Roadside vegetation
- → Static water supplies
- → Risks from long grass on urban blocks
- → Vacant derelict houses
- → Need for a proactive fire prevention approach.

The Committee was provided with an analysis of the responses received to the survey, and discussed the feedback provided.. The Committee concluded that the main concerns identified were adequately identified during the risk assessment process undertaken and are already recognized in the Plan.

As a part of the annual review process of the Plan any future feedback regarding new risks or proposed treatments will be taken into account by the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee.

3 Environmental Scan

3.1 Summary

Buloke is named after the 'buloke' or 'bulloak tree' - 'Allocasuarina Luehmannii', which is common in the area.

The Buloke Shire is located in north-west Victoria on the eastern edge of the Wimmera plains and southern Mallee, 300 km from Melbourne. It occupies an area of 8,001 square kilometres with an estimated resident population of 7,028.

Much of Buloke Shire is open grass plains with small areas of scrub bush usually along creeks and rivers. Agricultural production especially wheat and canola is the primary source of income in the area. The area is subject to high winds and high temperature in the summer period.

There are ten townships within the Shire; the largest being Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake and Wycheproof. The five smaller townships are Berriwillock, Culgoa, Nandaly, Nullawil and Watchem. The majority of residents live within these townships. Each town has recreational facilities and the 5 largest towns have swimming pools and facilities.

Agriculture, specifically grain production, is the primary source of income and employment in the area. Other forms of farming, education, retail, community service sectors and light industry also provide employment and income.

3.2   Demographics[3]

An estimated 7,028 people live in 2,746 households in the Buloke Shire, making it one of Victoria's most sparsely populated municipalities.

The following information (based on the ABS (2006) Census) have been calculated using the population figure of 6,855.

- The community of Buloke is made up of:
  → 1,914 people 60+ years or over **(28.6%)**,
  → 3,086 people between the ages of 18-59 **(46.1%)**,
  → 1,303 people between the ages of 5-17 **(19.4%);** and
  → 382 children under the age of 5 **(5.7%)**.

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[3] This information is sourced from the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan. For more detailed statistics and other information relevant to Council geographics refer to that Plan

Buloke is a homogenous community with 6,087 **(91.1%)** people born in Australia.

- The Buloke population is very stable with:
  → 5,105 **(76.3%)** living in the Shire for at least five years,
  → 889 **(13.2%)** moved to the Shire from another part of Victoria in the last five years,
  → 188 **(2.8%)** moved to the Shire from interstate in the last five years.

- The low household income category (less than $650 household income per week) accounts for more than 50% of households Buloke Shire.

- (6.3%) of Buloke residents are identified in the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan as in need of assistance and are reliant on family, social and health support services for daily living activity.

- The Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan shows that Buloke Shire has an elevated incidence of asthma and respiratory health admissions to hospitals.

Of particular relevance to fire management is that portion of the community which is most vulnerable due to ill health. This includes the following groups:

→ the aged and inform
→ the disabled
→ mentally ill
→ those suffering addictions; and
→ those suffering poor health which may be exacerbated by fire and smoke from bushfires.

Members of these communities, for varying reason, may have diminished capability to prepare for and prevent fires, respond during a fire or recover after a fire.

The level of social connectedness in the Buloke Shire is the highest in the Region and one of the highest in the State. The strength and connectedness of the community within Buloke Shire balances against a number of barriers to capability, providing for a resilient community.

3.3 Geographic Characteristics

The history of broad-scale agricultural use has changed the landscape significantly in the Buloke Shire. The higher than average likelihood for grass and forest fires reflects the long length of bushfire season of 147 days for the Shire.

Small and dispersed populations in the Shire means that there are few concentrations of human settlement that may be impacted by a fire and the primary industries of agriculture are robust to fire events. The *Victorian Fire Risk Register* (VFRR) assessment for human settlement for the Shire identified two sites of Extreme rating and 13 sites as Very High.
The history of land use change to broad-scale agriculture has altered the landscape significantly, affecting the fuel load distribution and biodiversity values. Endangered and vulnerable EVC remnants of native vegetation on roadsides are particularly vulnerable to roadside fire management activities.

The way in which fire is responded to and prepared for can also have an effect on many significant environmental assets within the Shire.

The Shire contains many sites of ecological significance. These significant sites may be home to individual species of flora and fauna or may be entire vegetation communities. Many of these species or vegetation communities may be listed under various acts of state and federal legislation or are protected by local planning provisions.

Fire regimes have an influence on the floristic composition and structure of vegetation. The presence, absence or frequency of wildfire and fuel reduction burning can also affect habitat and the faunal elements associated with it.

Moderate levels of fire sensitive Aboriginal artefacts are associated with riverine and lake systems. Non-aboriginal cultural heritage registrations are the lowest in the Region.[4]

3.4 Fire History

Buloke Shire has the lowest fuel hazard for the Region with 95.5 % of the Shire rated Low or Moderate fuel hazard. The average ignition level for the Shire is the lowest in the Region despite the number and ratio of Single Wire Earth Return power lines being the highest in the region by far. [5]

Figure 3: Incident Trends in Buloke Shire (2010-2011)

This is illustrated in the Figure[6] below which shows the numbers and types of incidents in the Shire over the last decade.

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[4] The information in this Part is resource d from the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Management Plan.

[5] Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan Aug 2011 (Annexe B page 8 Table 2)

[6] Data provided by CFA Loddon Mallee Region.

Incident Trends Buloke Shire
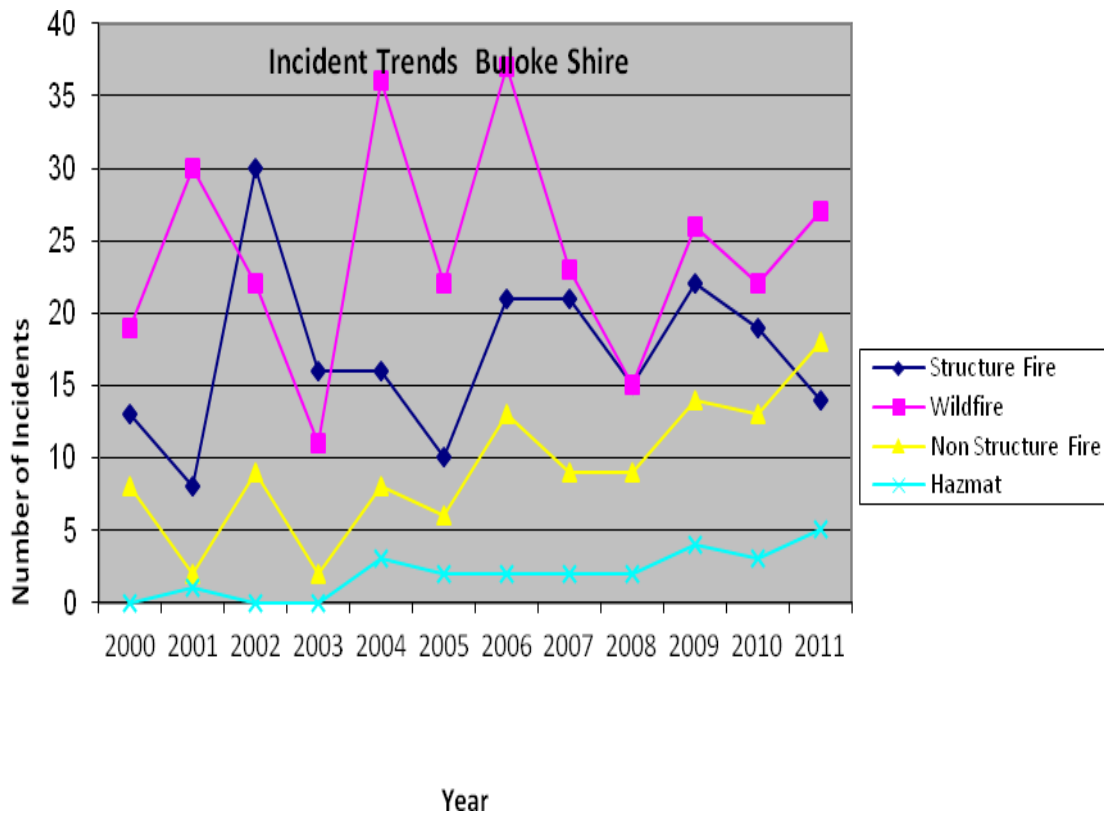
3.5   Bushfire Landscapes

The Shire has limited forested areas. Most of the land is used for cropping but there are examples of landscapes which fall within the bushfire landscapes identified in the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan being:

Landscape	Fuel hazard level	Topography	Primary driver	Spotting/ember potential
Mallee forest	Moderate to extreme	Flat	Wind/fuel/plume	Moderate/high
Grass, crop and stubble	Low to Moderate	Flat to undulating	Wind	Low
Urban	Low to high	Flat to undulating	Wind / fuel	Low

Within each of these landscapes, bushfires are influenced by four key elements;

- weather;
- fine fuels, their arrangement and how dry they are;
- topography; and
- ignition source and location.

Bushfires require an ignition source, suitable weather conditions and a fine fuel source. The spread and intensity of the subsequent fire will be determined by these three factors, and the topography and fuel arrangement. The arrangement and condition of the fuel will then determine how assets are impacted; either by direct flame contact, ember contact or both.

The most dangerous bushfires are those that have high flame intensity and high ember intensity that is distributed ahead of the fire front. Ember attack ignites buildings in which people are sheltering before the main fire front arrives.

3.6 Fire Hazard Areas

The MFMPC used the Loddon Mallee fire intensity maps as one of the key tools in the identification of risk, the basis for the risk analysis and determining the appropriate treatments. The maps allowed the Committee to understand the maximum fire intensity potential if a fire is to occur under optimal conditions. The MFMPC was then able to make appropriate decisions based on these maps, their local knowledge of the landscape and their understanding of fire behavior.

The map in Appendix A is indicative of probable fire behavior on an "Extreme" rated day (applying the fire danger ratings used by the State) in January or February in the Sea Lake area.

This map is only a model but it provides benchmarks on which strategies and actions can be built. The mapping has segmented the landscape to reflect the important fire management thresholds that were identified during the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

Traditionally, the following fire behavior may be evident during the declared fire danger period.

Grass and Cereal Crops

Fast moving fire in areas of higher fuel loads. Grass fires in the open plains country could potentially travel up to 10 Kmh under extreme FDRs with flame heights of 3 times of standing cured grass and crops.

Mallee Forest

Fast moving fires are expected during the fire danger period with some short to long distance spotting with intermittent crown fires where elevated fuels levels are present. This area is subject to prevailing northerly winds and late SW wind changes.

3.7 Assumptions about the future and implications for fire management in the Shire

The aim of the Buloke Shire Council is to manage its fire management responsibilities to protect life and property in the environment, but to use its best endeavours in doing so in an environmentally sustainable way. Areas within the Shire having significant conservation value will be identified through consultation with appropriate organisations such as the Department of Sustainability & Environment, Parks Victoria, community interest groups and public consultation processes.

The impacts of climate change cannot be accurately assessed, but even if the historical so called cyclical weather patterns continue, the challenge of adequate water supply remains, which in turn could impact on fire suppression activities. Buloke Shire is mindful however, of the CSIRO view

that there will be shorter but more intense weather events that may affect the way in which the Shire needs to respond and meet its fire management objectives.

An aging and reducing population could mean that fire management has to be approached on the basis of doing more with less. That is, finding alternatives to personnel who currently are involved in fire management and suppression.

The annual review process of the MFMP will assist in the identification of new and emerging risks which will be considered for inclusion in annual fire prevention works programs.

As part of the development of this Plan by the MFMPC the following key assumptions have been identified as part of the Shire's risk profile for the future.

ASSUMPTIONS	IMPLICATIONS
Population	
Shift of younger families from Shire	Declining numbers of volunteers, specifically CFA volunteers Longer response times
People abandoning farms and homes for city life	Unmaintained infrastructure due to absentee property owners
Rural lifestyle	
Increasing numbers of children (under 14) left alone and unsupervised	Increased risk of structural fires due to being left home alone without adequate supervision
Young adults in isolated farmhouses and without transport	Increased risk of inability to escape path of fire or house fire
Partners of emergency services personnel and those involved in emergency management functions are left to fend for self during emergencies	Limited numbers of volunteers, specifically CFA volunteers Could be exposed to increased risk
Aging population, potential vulnerability due to ill health and dementia	No ability to act independently and undertake evacuations if required
Increased costs of vehicle ownership will result in increased households/individuals without vehicles	No communications/internet access and power for fire fighting purposes
Loss of power and water for long periods of time	Increased risks particularly for vulnerable people
Health and wellbeing	

6.3% of population in need of assistance	Most vulnerable will require one on one support
Mental health	No adequate means of identifying those most in need of assistance and their location
	Potential significant impact on state of mental health due to fire incident
Land Use	
Farming will remain the dominant land use but farms will become larger and ownership will become more concentrated	Impact on volunteer base
	Absentee land owners
	Reduction in adequate property maintenance
Potentially increased vacant business and commercial properties	Potential for structural fires to increase because of low maintenance and illegal entry
Restrictions on water use & amount of irrigated land	Reduction in water for irrigation use resulting in increased dry land farming practices and potential increase in fire
Increased reliance on larger road transport for freighting produce from and to Shire	Potential increase in road transport accidents resulting in fire or hazardous spillages
Tourism	
Increased promotion of tourism	For specific large events there will be a need for specific fire plans
Increase of caravan, motor homes and camping resulting in longer stays in the area	Increased risk of fire from camp fires and tourism activity

4   Municipal Fire Management Objectives

4.1   *Alignment to Regional Objectives*

The MFMP provides input into, and is developed with reference and alignment to the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan. The MFMP is principally a plan that coordinates and aligns the fire management activities in a manner that is consistent with the Regional Plan.

REGIONAL FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES	*BULOKE SHIRE MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN OUTCOMES*
Healthier Environment	Protection of community assets Protection of assets – lifestyle expectations A better prepared community Protection of community assets – cultural and natural
Safer Communities	A better prepared community

	Preservation of life Protection of all community assets (built)
Prosperous Community	Protection of agricultural assets Protection of community assets – cultural and natural
Cohesive fire management system	Better understanding of fire risk Robust partnership between Council, community and emergency services Clearer framework for fire management that clarifies roles and responsibilities
Positive response from the fire management community	Compliance with legislated responsibilities

4.2   Objectives and Outcomes Proposed

Vision:

Our vision is to manage the risk of fire to all life, property, environmental and agricultural assets within the Buloke Shire for a safer community.

Outcomes:

The Committee through this plan intends to achieve these outcomes:
- Preservation of life and increased recognition of vulnerable groups within the local environment;
- Protection of agricultural assets to maintain the local economy and expectations around the lifestyle;
- Protection of all community assets, cultural and natural values/assets;
- A better prepared community;
- A clearer framework for fire management throughout the Shire that assists with clarity of roles and responsibilities;
- A robust partnership between Council, community and emergency services and other government agencies;
- Better understanding of fire risk and development of effective risk treatments to mitigate and minimise risk; and
- Compliance with legislated responsibilities.

4.3   Strategic Directions

To assist in the development of this plan the MFMPC developed these key strategies

1. Communication - increased community understanding and capacity building through education and awareness programs and involvement in development of plans;

2. Shared responsibility through the integration of agencies and the community; and

3. Development of risk treatments for the preservation of life and protection of all assets including built, cultural & environmental, agricultural.

4.4   Links to Other Business Programs

Buloke Shire has endeavoured to undertake the development of the MFMP in consultation with key stakeholders, each doing so in recognition of the requirements in section 43(1) of the *CFA Act.* Under that provision councils and public authorities are required to take all practicable steps (including burning) to prevent the occurrence of fires on and minimise the danger of the spread of fires on and from any land vested in it or under their control or management and any road under their care and management.

The following agencies have participated in the development of the draft MFMP and risk management strategy workshops as part of that process:

- Country Fire Authority (CFA) - www.cfa.vic.gov.au
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) - www.delwp.vic.gov.au
- VicRoads - www.vicroads.vic.gov.au
- Victoria Police - www.vicpol.vic.gov.au

4.4.1   Other Supporting Legislation and Policies

Council's role in fire management planning is prescribed in the Country Fire Authority Act and the Emergency Management Act and in a range of documents including State Government Policy. The Municipal Fire Management Plan results from those requirements and is only one of the many resources that Council has the responsibility to develop and maintain.

This Plan has been prepared in consultation with various community and statutory bodies and is supported by:

- Brigade Operational Plans

- Municipal Fire Hazard Mapping Reports

- Road Management Plans

- Victorian Planning Provisions and the Municipal Planning Scheme

- Fire Prevention, Preparedness, Response & Recovery strategies and codes of practice of Statutory Authorities and MFMPC member organisations

Elements from these supporting documents have been used in the development of this Plan.

To ensure that the MFMP has strategies and outcomes of value, the Plan will be presented to the CFA for review to ensure that the document meets the assessment of compliance with safety criteria.

The MFMP is intended to complement the following plans and the Victorian Fire Risk Register:

- Municipal Emergency Management Plan

    → Municipal Emergency Recovery Plan

    → Heatwave Plan

- Municipal Neighbourhood Safer Places Plans

In addition to using many different types of data and risk assessment tools to build a risk profile for the Buloke Shire, the Committee has also reviewed other stakeholders Fire Management Plans and strategic documents that are listed below:

- The State Fire Management Strategy (2009)

- The Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan

- DELWP Fire Operational Plans

- DELWP Code of Practice for Fire Management on Public Lands

- Vic Roads – Roadside Fire Management - utilising the Terramatrix Guidelines

- Powercor Bush Fire Mitigation Strategy

- SPAusnet Bushfire Mitigation Transmission Plan

- CFA Buloke Shire Bushfire Response Plan

5   Fire Management Risk Strategy

5.1   Analysis and Determination

To determine the bushfire risk within Buloke Shire, assessment was undertaken using the assets identified within Victorian Fire Risk Register (VFRR). (The VFRR application is a systematic process that identifies assets at risk from bushfire and assesses their level of risk on a statewide basis using ISO: 31000 2009 Risk Management.)

While the VFRR was used, the MFMPC applied the Crichton Risk pyramid in fire management to better understand the idea of fire risk in greater detail.
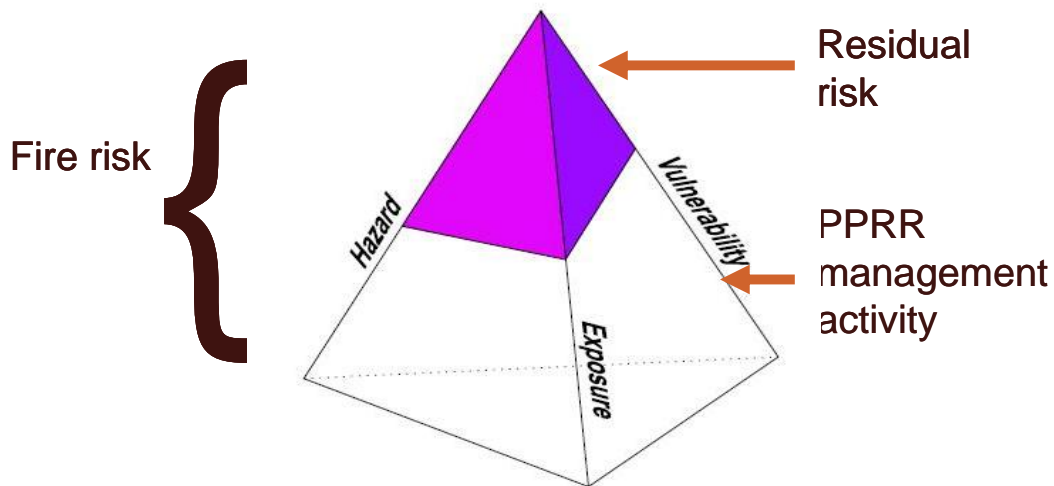
Figure 4: Risk Pyramid

The pyramid identifies the relationship between the amount of risk generated by the hazard* exposure* vulnerability relationship and the values (people, property, infrastructure, social and economic, biodiversity, the economy and heritage) of a location.

Typically fire management activities, sometimes categorised as prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR) activities, are applied across the pyramid to effectively:

- Reduce the incidence and severity of the hazard;
- Reduce the exposure of assets and values to the hazard; and
- Build the resilience (reduce vulnerability) of the assets and values within society.

In applying this methodology, this Plan applied the following risk statements in determining the degree of risk and the appropriate PPRR activity to be applied to them:

1. The risk of a bushfire igniting spreading and impacting upon assets and values.
2. The risk that the management (PPRR) of fire is in line with level of exposure and vulnerability of assets and values.
3. The risk of a structural fire igniting spreading and impacting upon assets and values.
4. The risk of a hazardous materials incident occurring, catching fire, spreading and impacting upon assets and values.

With the development of appropriate tools the Committee will have the opportunity to further consider risk statements associated with structures and hazardous material fires.

The Committee has undertaken a risk analysis process where it has:

- Identified the characteristics, values and directions of the Shire;
- Established the 3 fire intensity scenarios for the Shire on days of severe, extreme and code red fire danger ratings;
- Identified the primary risks to life, property, the environment, the economy and social values and their contributors;

- Reviewed these risks in line with Statewide likelihood and consequence tables (Appendix C – 7.3) and prepared a risk register which:
    i. identifies the current fire management strategies and treatments that are in place
    ii. considers the adequacy of those strategies and treatments for each scenario
    iii. identifies alternate strategies or treatments where treatments are identified as inadequate
    iv. reviews the risk level to establish the perceived effectiveness of the alternate strategies or treatments
    v. agreed on a process to establish improved fire management.

To further support this approach GIS mapping techniques have been developed. Mapping of fire hazards, history, treatments, assets, demographics and zoning information has been an important tool used in the risk management process.

As part of the on-going review process required for the Plan, all participating agencies will be encouraged to supply further information or data for any identified treatments which can be placed in a GIS mapping format to be built up over time. The MFMPC will undertake an annual update to reflect changes in information or identified treatments.

5.2 *Physical, Geographical and Systems Risks*

As part of the risk management process the MFMPC identified a list of fourteen Risk Categories which it considered needed to be addressed as part of this Plan.

Under each risk category appropriate "Risk Contributors" were attributed to the risk. Risk contributors were developed using the VFRR, as a basis for key, social, built and environmental assets within the Shire. The MFMPC then identified further risk contributors based on knowledge and understanding of fire risks within the Shire.

The MFMPC has considered the broad range of risks that may occur and undertook specific analysis for bushfire on days of severe, extreme or code red bushfire danger rating. The analysis has considered the effectiveness of the current treatments that are in place.

It is important to note that the criteria used in the level of consequence is undertaken in a Statewide context. The consequence of even a single fatality is significant to the family, community and emergency services, however combined with likelihood of its occurrence in the Shire means that many ratings are rated as "low" against the State based Bushfire Consequence Table. While most bushfires occur on days at lower Fire Danger ratings they are generally manageable and rarely create significant damage to life, property or natural /cultural values.

The following Risk Contributors were identified through the risk identification processes and detail some of the higher risk assessments for the Shire.

All townships within the Shire were assessed as being "Low", however these community assets have a higher risk rating;

- The East Wimmera Health Hospital at Wycheproof has a risk assessment of "Moderate" on a Code Red scenario because of the potential for higher consequences if a fire was to impact on the hospital.

- Similarly the Sea Lake Hospital and Hostel has a "Moderate" risk rating against all 3 scenarios. This is again due to the consequences if a fire was to impact on the hospital.

In the "Loss or Damage to Communications Infrastructure" risk category, all risk contributors identified were assessed as being "Moderate". While the likelihood of fire was considered "Unlikely", again the consequences if the asset was destroyed would be high.

Similarly the Charlton Substation has a risk assessment as "Moderate" for the same reasons as above.

The Charlton Feedlot has a risk assessment of "Moderate" in its risk category. While the likelihood of a fire is also considered "Unlikely", the consequences should the asset be impacted on is considered to have a "Serious" consequence rating.

In most cases the Risk assessment results for the CFA precincts in the Structural Risk Category resulted in a risk assessment of "Moderate".

The Hazmat Risk Category in most cases was a "Low" risk assessment. These determinations were completed on the MFMPC's current limited information and further work on Structural and Hazmat risks will be given greater focus in future reviews of this Plan as a priority.
The Green Lake Caravan and camping ground was assessed as "Moderate" on all 3 scenarios in the "Lack of suitable access /egress" risk category. It is noted that Green Lake Committee of Management and other committees managing a number of lakes in the Shire are currently in the process of developing fire management plans for these lakes and reserves.

For specific risk assessments and treatments for all identified risks see Risk Management Register *Appendix C – Attachment 7.3.*

Due to Low or Moderate risk assessments in most Risk Categories the MFMPC determined that further proposed treatments would be developed where the Committee identified a specific gap or where a need for further treatments was identified to alleviate the risk. Where there was nothing further proposed the MFMPC accepted this as the "residual risk".

In the future, there will be a focus in the Plan towards further achieving the vision articulated by the MFMPC. As such the management of fire risks to all life, property, environmental and agricultural assets will continue to be the key focus.

Risk Categories and Risk Contributors will be monitored through this Plan and changed where appropriate. Loss of Human Life is a key risk category and will continue to be the primary focus of the Plan. The MFMPC is aware of vulnerabilities within the Shire with regard to fire and will continue to build their understanding and look at opportunities to alleviate these risks to life. These issues have been identified for further consideration in the Assumptions Table in Part 3.7 of this Plan.

Flora and fauna risks were assessed as being "Low" during the risk management process, however these matters will continue to be another focal point in future reviews of the Plan, having regard to Council's roadside management programs.

The Committee identified that the diminishing resources within the community and the time community members have to commit to volunteering will be an increasing challenge. While the

Shire currently has a high level of volunteerism, this will be difficult to sustain. This is very important from a CFA perspective in relation to the continuing viability of volunteer brigades.

Risk ID	Risk Category	Risk Contributor	Risk Assessment Result
R01	**Loss of human life**	Towns in Shire	Low
		Residents on isolated rural properties and villages	Low
R02	**Loss or damage to property**	Schools	Low
		Hospitals	Moderate
		Aged Care Facilities	Low
		Caravan Parks	Low
R03	**Loss of or damage to transport infrastructure**	Airfields	Low
		Rail Lines	Low
		Highways throughout Municipality	Low
R04	**Loss of or damage to communications infrastructure,**	Communication Towers	Moderate
R05	**Loss of or damage to electricity infrastructure & supply**	Transmission Lines	Low
		Sub Stations	Moderate
R06	**Lack of awareness or understanding or fire risks and associated responsibilities**	Camping Grounds	Low
		Transient Works	Low
		Travellers driving through	Low
R07	**Loss of significant cultural, social and natural assets**	Fauna species on public land	Low
		Fauna species on private land	Low
		Flora species on public land	Low
		Flora species on private land	Low
		Flora and fauna on roadsides	Low
RO8	**Loss or damage to water infrastructure which affects access to water supply**	Water Treatment Plants / WPS	Low
R09	**Loss of community infrastructure that supports social connectedness (eg social hub)**	Racecourses	Low
		Recreation Reserves	Low
		Theatre/Pub/ Church	Low

RO10	**Loss of agricultural & horticultural infrastructure, which affects productivity and viability**	Ingham Chicken	Low
		Industrial Estate	Low
		Feedlot	Low
RO11	**Risk of structural fire occurring which causes impact to industrial/commercial/residential properties**	Interface Living	Moderate
		Township Living	Moderate
		Industry and State Infrastructure	Low
		Business and Community Activity Centres	Moderate
		Farming and Rural Living	Moderate
RO12	**Risk of hazmat incident occurring which causes impact to business/industry/community**	Interface Living	Low
		Township Living	Low
		Industry and State Infrastructure	Low
		Business and Community Activity Centres	Low
		Transport	Moderate
		Farming and Rural Living	Low
RO13	**Loss of life or impact upon prevalent vulnerable groups**	Kids in farm houses	Low
		Isolated elderly	Low
		Family of emergency services personnel	Low
RO14	**Lack of suitable access, egress from areas of high fire danger**	Green Lake Caravan Park and Camping Ground	Moderate

Another focus of the Plan will be to utilise local community knowledge when emergency events are occurring. The MFMPC considers that local knowledge is a valuable resource that all agencies should source when required. A matter for further consideration will be how agencies can build better linkages with community members.

The Table below details the Risk Categories the Committee has developed as part of the Plan. Under each category applicable "Risk Contributors" have been grouped together. The Table also outlines the results of the risk assessments for the grouped risk contributors. For more specific details, refer to the Risk Management Register in *Appendix C – Attachment 7.3.*

5.3   *Treatments and Actions*

Many organisations undertake treatment activities in the Shire in an attempt to keep fire related risks at a lower level. These actions may reduce the potential for loss of human life and assets, reduce the size of a fire or stop it occurring or reduce the exposure of people, places and things to fire that are important or valuable.

The MFMPC acknowledged that no single action or treatment will effectively manage fire risk and that it takes a partnership approach that relies on the participation of all relevant agencies to undertake their responsibilities in the Shire.

The treatments completed by agencies were compared together through the risk process to determine the "control effectiveness" of those treatments in place against the risk contributor.

Further treatments were proposed during the risk process where the Committee identified gaps or where there was an identified need. All treatments and programs form the works program as part of this Plan. The Plan will be monitored and identification of improved treatments will be a key deliverable in achieving the objectives in the Plan.

Some of the programs that conducted in the Shire are:

Prevention Activities

These are undertaken by agencies to reduce and prevent the possibility of fire within the Shire. Activities include slashing programs by Council, DELWP vegetation management on public land. Various education programs run by CFA to educate the community about fire.

Bushfire

Land managers and owners have a responsibility to take steps to prevent bushfires. In addition to roadside works undertaken by the Council, VicRoads have a slashing program on road sides under their control within the Shire to reduce the incidence of fires started from road users.

Where camping is popular, particularly along the rivers and around lakes, DELWP, Council and Parks Victoria provide community education to reduce campfire escapes. Victoria Police enforce regulations and undertake patrols throughout the Shire on Total fire Band days and Code Red days, even though on Code Red days many public land areas are closed. The CFA including volunteers provide community education and advertising about bushfire.

Structural Fire

CFA is the lead agency for suppressing structural fires when they occur. CFA works closely with the building industry and Council to ensure structures are built to comply with regulations to reduce the incidence of structural fires. In addition CFA provides education programs to children and adults about fire safety within the home and has many publications and programs to facilitate home fire safety plans.

A full list of treatments completed against the risks is included in the Risk Management Register (*Appendix C)*, and the Multi Agency 'MERI' Work Plan *(Appendix C1)*.

5.4 Cross Boundary Arrangements

Buloke Shire is located in north western Victoria and is bounded by Mildura and Swan Hill Rural Cities in the north, Gannawarra and Loddon Shire in the east, Northern Grampians Shire in the south, and Yarriambiack Shire in the west.

Fire does not recognise municipal boundaries, so it is important that appropriate strategies and arrangements exist to ensure that there is consistency of approach to fire management in cross boundary incidents. This is achieved in part through a collaborative approach and the use of consistent processes and tool.

The response agencies have clear arrangements through Memorandums of Understanding, the EMMV and operational requirements.

The Loddon Mallee RSFMPC will review this Plan along with others in the Region to ensure as far as practicable, that common risks or risks shared across municipal and agency boundaries are addressed consistently.

5.5 Planning Support Activities

There are a number of complementary arrangements and procedures in place that support the Municipal Fire Management process by addressing risks that have been identified within the Plan. These include:

5.5.1 Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP) – Place of last resort

Neighborhood Safer Place - Places of last resort during a bushfire are currently designated for the following communities:

- → Donald (Donald Showgrounds)
- → Charlton (Charlton Shire Hall)

5.5.2 Hazardous Trees

One of the main areas of concern highlighted during the Bushfires Royal Commission was hazardous trees and their relationship with powerlines. As a result, section 86B of the *Electrical Safety Act* 1998 was amended and requires that Municipal Fire Prevention Plans must specify procedures for the Identification of trees that are hazardous to electric lines

The detailed Hazardous Trees Procedure is located in ***Appendix 7.4.1***.

5.5.3 Township Protection Plans and Community Fire Refuges

There are currently no Township Protection Plans that have been prepared for Buloke Shire.

There are currently no community fire refuges in the Buloke Shire.

The generally low fire risk rating for the Shire reduces the priority need for TPPs or fire refuges, but consistent with the Plan, that need must be kept under review.

5.5.4 Local Laws

The Community Local Law contains restrictions on burning in the open air. A permit is required to burn in the open air in townships identified in the Local Law. Despite being granted a permit, no fires can be lit in the open air on a declared total fire ban day.

During the declared fire danger period under the CFA Act, the Council may issue permits to burn under the authority of that Act.

The Community Local Law also contains requirements on an owner or occupier of land to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to minimize the spread of fire from land by keeping it free from dangerous levels of vegetation growth and dangerous substances. Penalties can be applied for contravention of the Local Law.

5.5.5 Fire Prevention Property Inspections

Council carries out property inspections under the CFA Act to identify land with vegetation that may become a fire risk during the declared fire danger period. Notices to property owners are issued under the CFA Act and penalties can be applied for a failure to comply with the notices. In addition to a requirement to remove the fire risk, the notice requires the property owner to continue to keep the land maintained and free from fire risk.

The detailed *Fire Hazard Removal / Fuel Reduction standards* are located in **Appendix 7.4.5**.

6 Improvement and Plan Reporting and Review Process

The legislative requirements of the Emergency Management Act and section 55A of the Country Fire Authority Act require the development of a Municipal Emergency Management Plan and the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan, a sub plan of the MEMP. The Country Fire Authority Act contains a broad prescription of the matters that must be addressed in the Plan. Further, section 55B of the Country Fire Authority Act requires that the MFMP be audited at least once every three years against the prescribed matters. These requirements achieve, in part, a continual improvement program in respect of the management of fire risks.

The following Table identifies Buloke Shire's approach to ongoing review and monitoring of the Plan.

Activities	Responsible Party	Frequency
Implement treatments in accordance with the Plan	All treatment owners	Ongoing
Continual review of risk environment and appropriate risk treatments with relevant stakeholders	MFMPC	
Progress report to MFMPC on the implementation of the Plan addressing matters such as adequacy of treatments including impact, effectiveness, continued relevance	All treatment owners	Twice a year
Update Risk Register & Work Plan to reflect treatment status as agreed by the MEMPC	MFMPC	

Activities	Responsible Party	Frequency
Conduct strategic review of risks and associated treatment program, addressing: • Whether the risks remain? • Whether the risk ratings are appropriate? • Are there new risks that need to be included? • Are the treatments appropriate and whether they adequately address the identified risks? • Are there any new or enhanced treatments required? • Assess participation of all agencies to ensure legislative obligations are being met	MFMPC	Once a year
Review and update Plan content and mapping to ensure that the basis on which decisions are made is on the most current information available	MFMPC	
Conduct detailed review of Plan	MFMPC	Every 3 years

As the MFMPC become more familiar with the Plan and the interaction of its various components, including revised approaches in the identification of risk and risk treatments, State legislation or directives, the approach identified in the above Table will become more refined.

7   Attachments

7.1   Appendix A – Extreme Rated Day, Sea Lake

7.2   Appendix B – MFMP Vision

7.3   Appendix C - Risk Management Register

7.3.1   Appendix C1 –Multi-agency 'MERI' Work Plan

7.4   Appendix D – Statutory Audit Obligations

7.4.1   Hazardous Trees
7.4.2   Township Protection Plans (TPP) – None currently exist
7.4.3   Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP)
7.4.4   Community Fire Refuges – None currently exist
7.4.5   Fire Hazard Removal / Fuel Reduction Standards

7.5   Appendix E – Engagement and Communications Plan

7.6   Appendix F – Maps

7.6.1   Map 1: Buloke Shire Map

7.6.2   Map 2: Fuel Loads - VFRR

7.6.3   Map 3: Treatment Map

7.7   Appendix G– Terminology used in this Plan

7.8   Appendix H – Acronyms used in this Plan

7.1 Appendix A : Extreme Rated Day, Sea Lake
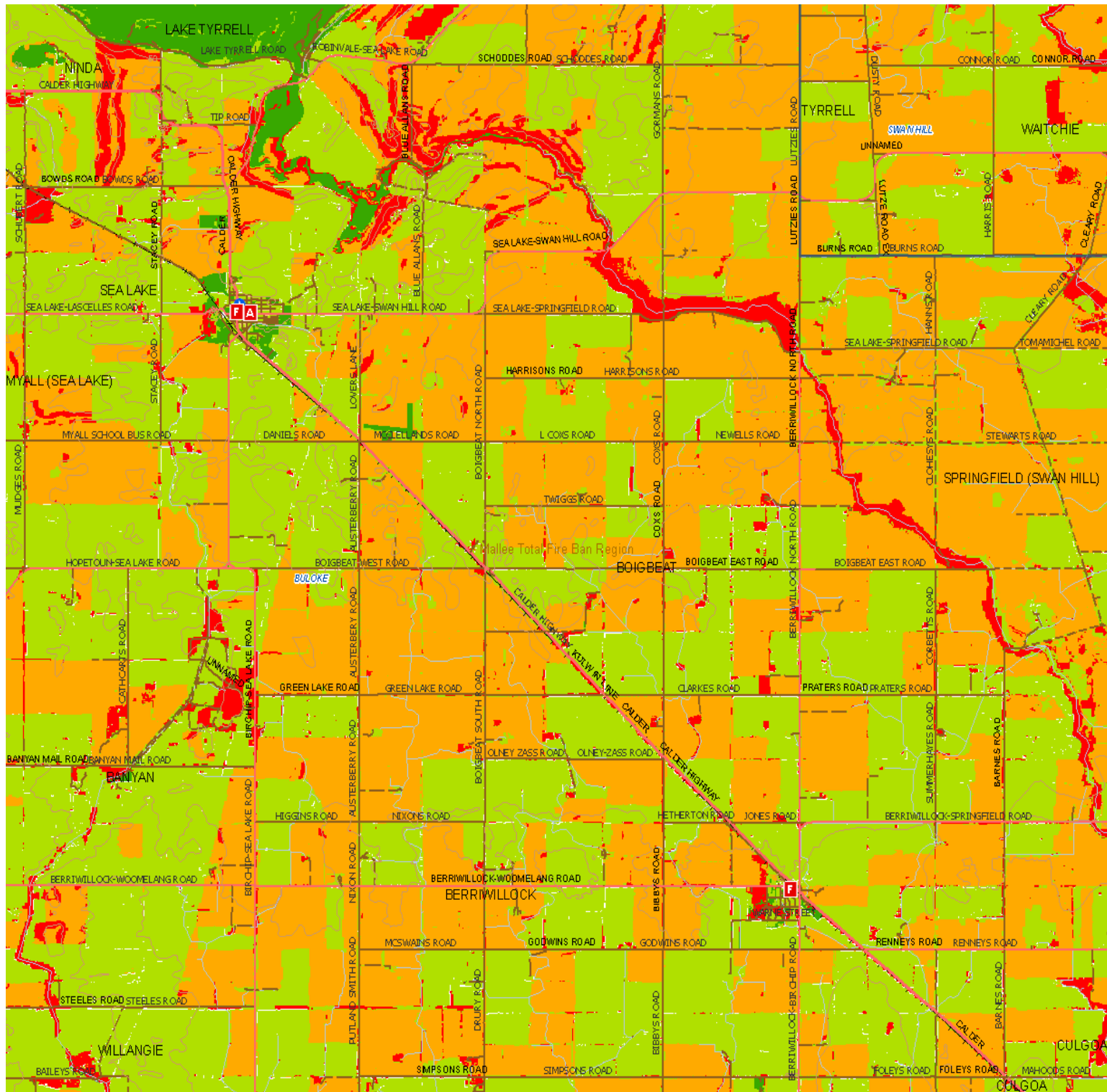
BULOKE SHIRE MFMP VISION	
OUR VISION IS TO MANAGE THE RISK OF FIRE TO ALL LIFE, PROPERTY, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND AGRICULTURAL ASSETS WITHIN THE BULOKE SHIRE AND PROVIDE A SAFE COMMUNITY.	
Strategy	Objectives
1. Communication - increased community awareness and capacity building through education and awareness	
	Vulnerability within the local environment is better understood by the community and emergency service
	A better prepared community
2. Shared responsibility through the integration of agencies and the community	
	Provides a framework for fire management throughout the municipality that assists with clarity of roles and responsibilities
	A robust partnership between Community, Council and Emergency Services and other government agencies
3. Development of risk treatments for the preservation of life and protection of all assets including built, cultural & environmental, agricultural)	
	To better understand the risk of fire and develop effective risk treatments
	Mitigation and minimization of risk
	Protection of all cultural and natural values/assets
	Protection of agricultural assets to maintain the local economy and expectations around the lifestyle
	Protection of all community assets (built)
	Preservation of life

BULOKE
SHIRE COUNCIL

7.3 Appendix C - Risk Management Register

Insert Risk Register

7.3.1 Appendix C1 – Multi-agency 'MERI' Work Plan

Insert Multi-agency 'MERI' Work Plan

7.4.1

Hazard Trees Identification and Notification Procedures

Hazard trees – identification and notification procedures

The Electricity Safety Act 1998 (Vic) (**ES Act**) provides that a municipal council must specify, within its Municipal Fire Prevention Plan:

(a)   procedures and criteria for the identification of trees that are likely to fall onto, or come into contact with, an electric line (**hazard trees**); and

(b)   procedures for the notification of responsible persons of trees that are hazard trees in relation to electric lines for which they are responsible.

Under the ES Act, the person responsible for maintaining vegetation and clearance space around power lines is referred to as the 'responsible person'.

The procedures outlined in this section of the MFPP seek to address the requirement detailed above.

Each responsible person should have its own internal procedure regarding the steps that will be taken when it receives notification of a potentially hazardous tree.

What is a hazard tree?

According to the ES Act, a hazard tree is a tree which 'is likely to fall onto, or come into contact with, an electric line'.

The Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2010 further provide that a responsible person may cut or remove such a tree 'provided that the tree has been assessed by a suitably qualified arborist; and that assessment confirms the likelihood of contact with an electric line having regard to foreseeable local conditions.'

Due to legal requirements which require a clearance space be maintained around an electric line, hazard trees are usually located outside the regulated clearance space. Despite being outside the clearance space, the tree may still have the potential to contact the line due to its size or because of a structural fault or weakness which renders part, or all, of the tree likely to contact or fall onto the line.

Who is responsible for a hazard tree?

Under the ES Act, the person responsible for maintaining vegetation and clearance space around power lines is referred to as the 'responsible person'. This includes responsibility for keeping the whole or any part of a tree clear of the line.

Under the ES Act, responsibility is allocated between distribution businesses and other owners of electricity infrastructure, land owners and occupiers, public land managers such as municipal councils and VicRoads.

Municipal councils are responsible for trees on public land within their municipalities, for which they are the land manager, where these are also within a Declared Area for the purposes of the ES Act. Primary responsibility for vegetation clearance and management within the municipality, for areas which are not within a Declared Area, will usually fall to the relevant electricity distribution company.

Responsible Persons within Buloke Shire Council

There are a number of organisations that have responsibility for line clearance in Buloke Shire Council, including:

- Powercor

- Vic Roads

- Buloke Shire Council

Other relevant information

Responsible persons, other than private persons, must have an electric line clearance management plan in place for areas for which they have responsibility *(refer Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2010)*

Procedures and criteria for identifying hazard trees

In the course of everyday duties, potentially hazardous trees may come to the attention of staff or volunteer members of the entities with representation on the Municipal Fire Prevention Committee (**the Committee**), staff of the distribution business(es) or other persons, including members of the public.

There are a range of factors which may indicate that a tree is a hazard tree. That is, a tree which is likely to fall onto, or come into contact with, an electric line. Some of these factors will be obvious when looking at the tree but many may only be apparent when the tree is assessed by a person with specific expertise and training, such as an arborist.

The following criteria may be used to assist in identifying a hazard tree:

- The size of the tree suggests that it is likely to come into contact with the electric line, for example because it appears to be encroaching or growing into the line clearance space.

- There is an excessive lean on the tree, or branches hanging off the tree and the tree is in proximity to an electric (power) line.

- The size or appearance of the tree suggests it could come into contact with the line including under foreseeable local conditions.

If a potentially hazardous tree is identified, the notification procedure outlined below should be followed. Where a responsible person becomes aware of a potentially hazardous tree for which they have responsibility, they must follow their own applicable internal procedure and the notification procedure described below does not apply.

Procedures and criteria for notifying hazard trees

To ensure that information regarding potentially hazardous trees is captured in an efficient manner and, as appropriate, referred to the responsible person for action, the following procedure for the notification of hazardous trees should be followed:

▪ The person with responsibility for the highest percentage of lines within the municipality (**the primary responsible person***)* is Powercor and therefore the person to whom potentially hazardous trees should be reported.

▪ The primary responsible person (or their representative) is referred to in these Procedures as the primary responsible person representative (**PRPR**).

- Where any person becomes aware of, or receives a report of, a potentially hazardous tree within the municipality, this should be referred to the PRPR. Where the Committee becomes aware of, or receives a report of, a potentially hazardous tree within the municipality, this must be referred to the PRPR.

- Reports of potentially hazardous trees must be provided to the PRPR for action as soon as practicable. Reports must include, at a minimum:

  o The name and contact details and any relevant qualifications where known of the person making the report

  o As much detail as possible about the location of the tree (including, where known, GPS coordinates, details of numerical/name plate on nearest pole, name of nearest road or crossroads, closest landmark, whether tree is on private land or road reserve etc.)

  o A description of the tree (including, if known, the genus and species of tree)

  o The primary reasons given for the tree being identified as potentially hazardous (eg. tree is in proximity to an electric line AND there is evidence of structural weakness and/or excessive lean and/or appears to be encroaching into line clearance space etc.)

  o An indication of whether or not urgent action is required.

- The PRPR must take all necessary steps to advise the person responsible for the tree that it may be hazardous.

Primary Responsible Person Representative (PRPR)

For the purposes of this part of the Plan, the primary responsible person is Powercor

Contact details for the Powercor are as follows:

Agency name	Powerco*r*
Position title of contact person	Hazard Tree Coordinator
Telephone Number	03 53383300
Email address	haztrees@vemco.com.au (Powercor Contractor VEMCO)
Facsimile Number	#03 8648 5621
After hours	13 24 12

Step 1	Report provided to PRPR.	
Step 2	PRPR to determine who the responsible person is in relation to the reported tree. (If necessary, the PRPR can seek assistance from ESV for this step.)	
Step 3	Is the responsible person the primary responsible person?	**Yes =>** applicable internal procedure for referral and assessment of potentially hazardous tree to be followed.
		No => proceed to Step 4.

Step 4	Did the report indicate that urgent action is required?	**Yes =>** the responsible person should be notified as soon as possible, and by the close of the next business day.
		No => the PRPR must advise the responsible person of the existence and location of a potentially hazardous tree in accordance with the timelines below.*

Procedures for Notification of Responsible Persons

Where a potentially hazardous tree has been reported to the PRPR, the PRPR should follow the procedure outlined below.

* The PRPR should put in place mutually agreed arrangements for the manner in which it passes on reports of potentially hazardous trees to responsible persons.

Reporting Timelines

The PRPR should provide reports to the relevant responsible person as soon as practicable.

In circumstances where:

▪ the potentially hazardous tree is located within a high bushfire risk area (as per s.80 of the ES Act) and the potentially hazardous tree is reported during the fire danger period declared under the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 (Vic); or

▪ the report indicates that there is an imminent danger that the tree will contact or fall onto lines as a result of minor environmental changes;

the potentially hazardous tree must be referred to the relevant responsible person for action as soon as possible, and by the close of the next business day.

Each responsible person (other than the primary responsible person) must provide the PRPR with contact details of the person (position title) to whom reports should be provided. It is the responsibility of each responsible person to ensure that the PRPR is provided with up-to-date contact details.

Register

It is recommended that the PRPR maintain a register in which all notifications are recorded together with the date of receipt of the notification and the date the notification was reported to the responsible person.

It is recommended that responsible persons also maintain a register of notifications received of hazardous trees for which they are the responsible person.

PRPR Consultation

The Committee notes that the Primary Responsible Person was consulted in relation to the development of these procedures.

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES
PLAN

PLACES OF LAST RESORT DURING A BUSHFIRE

ENDORSED BY THE BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL ON 13 OCTOBER 2011

Buloke Shire Council acknowledges organisations shown below for assistance in providing information contained in this document.

Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)
Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner (OESC)
Country Fire Authority (CFA)

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4 February 2016

Introduction and Background

In its Interim Report, the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recommended that neighbourhood safer places, or **'NSPs'**, be identified and established to provide persons in bushfire affected areas with a place of last resort during the passage of a bushfire where primary bushfire plans have failed.[7]

In response to this recommendation, the Victorian Government has introduced the *Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Act* 2009 (Vic) (**'ESLA Act'**) which amends the *Country Fire Authority Act* 1958 (Vic) (**'CFA Act'**) and the *Emergency Management Act* 1986 (Vic) (**'EM Act'**). The effect of these amendments is to require the Country Fire Authority (**'CFA'**) to certify NSPs against the CFA's Fire Rating Criteria, and Victoria's Councils to identify, designate, establish and maintain suitable places as NSPs in their municipal districts.

NSPs are not community fire refuges or emergency relief centres. NSPs are **places of last resort** during the passage of a bushfire, and are intended to be used by persons whose primary bushfire plans have failed. NSPs are places of relative safety only. They do not guarantee the survival of those who assemble there. Furthermore, there may be serious risks to safety encountered in travelling, and seeking access, to NSPs during bushfire events. Depending on the direction of a particular fire, it may not be a safer place to assemble than other places within the municipal district. At that point in time it almost certainly will be a matter for individual judgement and decision as to which, if any, NSPs a person or persons should travel in the presence of a fire.

NSPs are assessed by Council and CFA as providing some protection from immediate risk of direct fire attack, but not necessarily from other risks, such as flying embers. Where a potential NSP which is used for an operational purpose at many times meets the CFA's criteria, then the CFA considers that those operational activities will be able to continue (to the extent practicable in the circumstances) while the place is being used as an NSP.

This Plan is a neighbourhood safer places plan for the purposes of the legislation, and contains guidelines which have been developed by the Municipal Association of Victoria (**'MAV'**) to assist the Council in:

- identifying;

- designating;

- establishing;

- maintaining; and

- decommissioning

places as NSPs within its municipal district.

This Plan also identifies other matters that should be taken into account in identifying, designating, establishing and maintaining NSPs within the municipality.

This Plan contains a step-by-step methodology for identifying, designating, establishing, maintaining and decommissioning NSPs. The Council must consider each of the factors set out in this Plan. It

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[7] Recommendation 8.5, 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Interim Report

should also consider other factors which are specific to the Council's circumstances, including the resources available to the Council.

Structure of this Plan

This Plan is divided up into four distinct sections.

Section 1 contains a flow chart which summarises the process namely, identifying, designating, establishing, for adopting and maintaining NSPs within the municipal district.

Section 2 contains a more detailed summary of the steps summarised in the flow chart found in Section 1.

Section 3 contains a summary of the factors for Council to consider in assessing potential NSP locations, prior to designation.

Section 4 contains details of content of signage that Council is required to erect at designated NSP locations.

SECTION 1

IDENTIFYING, DESIGNATING, ESTABLISHING, ADOPTING AND MAINTAINING NSPS.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS FOR ESTABLISHING, IDENTIFYING, ADOPTING AND MAINTAINING NSPs

Step 1 – Council's Municipal Emergency Response Officer (MERO) and the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO) to identify potential NSP locations or conduct annual review using CFA Current Fire Ratings and Council's Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan (NSPP) and submit to CFA for certification.

Step 2 - CFA to assess and certify potential NSP locations having regard to CFA current Fire Rating Guidelines. Must be completed as soon as possible after receiving the proposed NSP.

Proposed NSP meets CFA Fire Rating Criteria and is certified by CFA as suitable for a NSP.

Proposed location does not meet CFA Fire Rating Criteria and is not certified by CFA - CFA to report to Council. Proposed NSP location must not be designated.

Step 3 – MERO and MFPO prepare report for Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) to consider CFA report and submit their report to Council with a recommendation of whether CFA and Council designation of NSP is warranted.

Council formally reviews MEMPC and CFA report.

MEMPC and CFA have recommended that assessment and designation of NSP is warranted and meets the NSPP criteria.

Council considers the MEMPC and CFA recommendation that designation of NSP is not warranted or does not meet the NSPP criteria.

Step 4 – Council formally adopts and endorses the recommendation to establish NSP and sends reports to CFA.

Council accepts the recommendation not to designate the NSP.

Council establishes NSP; erects signs at/near NSP; undertakes required prepatory work, and; administers any other requirements identified in the report.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF DESIGNATED NSPs AND DECOMMISSIONING OF NSPs

Step 5 - Annual review of NSPs by Council and CFA

NSP passes CFA and Council review. Council maintains site designation as NSP.

NSP does not pass Council/CFA review. Council rejects site designation as NSP.

NSP does not pass Council/CFA review. Loses designation as NSP

Decommissioning a NSP

Council endorses decommissioning of NSP through the MEMPC meeting *(NB. can be out of session).*

Council revokes the NSP at a Council meeting. Council's website and community bushfire information, including relevant township protection plans, are updated.

Council amends MEMP and MFPP and demonstrates the site has been decommissioned.

Council removes or conceals the NSP signage at the site.

Council notifies CFA the site has been decommissioned through the CFA NSP Online Business System.

SECTION 2

PROCESS FOR IDENTIFYING, ADOPTING, MAINTAINING & REVIEWING NSP'S.

OVERVIEW OF THE STEPS ASSOCIATED WITH NSPs

1. Identification of Potential NSP Locations

7.2 Responsibility identifying places as potential NSPs

The Municipal Emergency Response Officer (MERO) and the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO) jointly identify potential locations for NSPs. The initial focus is upon identification of proposed NSPs within the Buloke Shire where CFA Township Protection Plan ('**TPP**') areas are in place. However, identification efforts can be expanded beyond these localities.

The Buloke Shire Council is responsible for identifying potential places as NSPs within the Buloke Shire. Section 50G of the CFA Act requires Council to identify potential NSP locations.

7.3 Identification timing

Council should identify potential additional places as NSPs by 31 May in each year. This should allow sufficient time for:

7.4.1 CFA Certification: assessment and certification of the potential NSP by the CFA;

7.4.2 Council Designation: designation of the potential NSP location by the Council; and

7.4.3 Establishment: subject to the outcome of the assessment and designation process, establishing the NSPs, including the erection of signage and other steps by Council.

The process of NSP identification is ongoing. Following each fire season, Council, in consultation with the MEMPC and MFPMC should assess whether any additional potentially suitable NSP locations can be identified within the Buloke Shire.

7.4 Factors to be considered when identifying potential NSP locations

When identifying potential NSP locations, Council will consider matters such as:

7.4.1 the environment surrounding the potential NSP;

7.4.2 what other uses are made of the potential NSP, and whether or not those uses could be inconsistent with its designation as an NSP;

7.4.3 whether the land on which the potential NSP is located is Council-owned or non-Council owned land;

7.4.4 whether consideration should be given to other activities/uses being conducted on a NSP

7.4.5 whether there are clear means of access and egress to and from the potential NSP; and

7.4.6 whether the potential NSP is in close proximity to population centres.

7.5   Council's responsibility in making a determination of a NSP.

Under the CFA Act, all Councils whose municipal district is located wholly or partly in the 'country area' of Victoria are required to identify and designate NSPs.

Council should ensure that the following actions are completed prior to making any determinations regarding the assessment, designation and certification of NSPs:

(a) A risk assessment considering the matters outlined in Section 1.3 (above) must be undertaken by **"MERO"** and **"MFPO"** using information such as Integrated Fire Management Planning data and/or Victorian Fire Risk Register data and any other applicable information.

(b) The MEMPC must review the results of the risk assessment, as summarised in the MERO's and MFPO's report prepared under Section 1.4(a) (above), and submit a written report to Council with a recommendation as to whether CFA assessment and Council designation of the potential NSP is warranted in the area under consideration.

(c) Council should formally review the MEMPC report. Council should only decide that NSP assessment and designation is not warranted in the area under consideration where Council is satisfied that:

(i) The risk assessment undertaken by the MERO and MFPO has addressed the matters raised in Sections 1.3 of this MNSPP; and

(ii) The MEMPC has recommended that assessment and designation of the NSP is not warranted.

CFA to Assess and Certify Potential NSP Locations

7.6 Responsibility for assessing potential NSPs against guidelines issued by the CFA ('CFA Fire Rating Guidelines')

Under section 50G(5) of the CFA Act, the CFA is responsible for assessing potential NSP locations against the CFA Fire Rating Guidelines.[8] This will be done by appropriately qualified and experienced CFA personnel.

Council is not responsible for the assessment and certification of potential NSPs by the CFA.

7.7 CFA assessment criteria

The CFA must consider the criteria and other considerations as set out in the CFA's Fire Rating Guidelines as issued from time to time by the CFA.

The key matters to be considered by the CFA under the current CFA Fire Rating Criteria are:

7.4.1 For Open Spaces:

7.7.1.1 the appropriate separation distance between the outer edge of the potential NSP and the nearest fire hazard ('Buffer Zone')[9] should be at least 310 metres; or

7.7.1.2 an alternative Buffer Zone distance may be prescribed by the CFA, which will ensure that the maximum potential radiant heat impacting on the site is no more than 2 kw/m^2.

7.4.2 For Buildings:

7.7.2.1 The Buffer Zone between the outer edge of the building and the nearest fire hazard should be at least 140 metres; or

7.7.2.2 an alternative Buffer Zone distance may be prescribed by the CFA, which will ensure that the maximum potential radiant heat impacting on the building is no more than 10 kw/m^2.

7.8 CFA assessment timeframe

Following identification of a place which may be suitable as an NSP, the potential NSP is assessed by the CFA as soon as practicable. This is likely to occur shortly after identification.

7.9 CFA certification process

Once the assessment of a potential NSP is completed by the CFA, the CFA will certify the potential NSP if the place meets the CFA Fire Rating Criteria. The CFA will provide a copy of the CFA

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[8] The CFA Act refers to "Country Fire Authority Assessment Guidelines". For ease of reference in the context of this MNSP Plan, these guidelines are referred to as the CFA Fire Rating Guidelines.

[9] The CFA Guidelines refer to "separation distances". However, for ease of understanding, the term "Buffer Zone" is used throughout this MNSP Plan.

certification in relation to a potential NSP to Council upon completion of certification, and a summary of the criteria and assumptions upon which the assessment is based.

Council should ensure that the boundaries of both the potential NSP as certified by the CFA, and any Buffer Zone surrounding it, are clearly defined in the CFA assessment.

For reasons of community safety, it is a requirement of the CFA Act, and it is also Council policy, that only those places assessed and certified by the CFA may be considered for designation as NSPs by the Council. The Council must not designate a place as an NSP unless it has CFA certification.

8 Council Assessment of NSPs Following CFA Certification

8.3 Factors applied by Council in assessing the suitability of a place as a potential NSP location

Council must assess the place in accordance with the factors outlined below to determine whether it is suitable to be designated as an NSP. Unless a potential NSP satisfies each of the criteria outlined below, it should not be designated by Council as an NSP.

The factors to determine the suitability of the place as an NSP are as follows: ('**Council NSPP Criteria**'):

8.4.1 Consents and rights of access

There must be appropriate land access and tenure arrangements so that Council has the right to:

- use the place as an NSP;

- access the site and surrounding areas for maintenance; and

- erect appropriate signage at the NSP, including Office of Emergency Services Commissioner (OESC) signage and additional NSP information signage.

If the potential NSP is on land owned or controlled by Council, appropriate rights of land access and tenure will not be an issue. However, Council will need to ensure that where Council land is leased or licensed to a third party, it must be possible to put in place appropriate arrangements on reasonably satisfactory and acceptable terms with the tenant or licensee permitting Council to use the land as a potential NSP. In taking these matters into account, Council should consider what alternative uses may be made, whether temporarily or semi-permanently, of land under Council control or management.

If the potential NSP is on Crown land not owned or controlled by Council, then the consent of the Crown land manager is likely to be required. If the land has been leased or licensed to a third party, such as a caravan park operator, then the consent of the tenant or licensee to use the place as a potential NSP will also be required. In obtaining the consent of the relevant Crown land manager, it will be necessary to consider whether or not the Crown Grant or reservation authorises the place to be used as a potential NSP.

Where it is proposed that a place on privately-owned land is to be used as an NSP, then the consent of the relevant landowner (and, where applicable, occupier) for the place to be designated and used as an NSP is required. If the landowner (or occupier) does not consent to the place being designated and used as an NSP on terms which are reasonably satisfactory and acceptable to the Council, it must not be so designated and used.

Where a potential NSP is located on non-Council land, with the result that consent and rights of access need to be negotiated with the owner and (where necessary) occupier, Council officers responsible for negotiating such consent and rights of access should provide a draft form of consent to the owner/occupier for their consideration. The form of consent will be required to be approved either by Council (through a formal resolution), or by the CEO acting under delegation.

Any amendments to the form of consent which may be requested by the landowner or occupier would need to be thoroughly considered before they are agreed to by Council. If it is not possible or appropriate for Council to agree on amendments that may be requested to the consent document, then the proposed NSP should not be designated by Council.

8.4.2 *Access and Egress*

Council must assess whether there is sufficient access to the potential NSP which will allow:

- anticipated potential numbers of people to move to and from the place; and

- the CFA and other emergency services to attend the place for asset and personnel protection activities and operations.

Council must assess potential access and egress routes, bearing in mind the fact that NSPs are **places of last resort**.

As people may be seeking access to an NSP in a rushed or panicked state, a number of people could be seeking access in a relatively short time and visibility could be affected by smoke, easily navigable routes to and from an NSP are crucial.

In considering whether access and egress routes are adequate, consideration should be given to issues such as:

8.3.2.1   **the condition of the road surface;**

8.3.2.2   **the proximity of the NSP to major roadways and population centres;**

8.3.2.3   **the type and amount of vegetation along any access routes, and whether that vegetation could be affected by fire and pose a risk of harm to those seeking access to the potential NSP, or otherwise block access to the NSP;**

8.3.2.4   **the capacity of access routes to accommodate potentially large numbers of vehicles, and to accommodate potential vehicle break-downs;**

8.3.2.5   **parking at the place;**

8.3.2.6   **any hazards that may exist for persons accessing the place by foot, including in the buffer zone; and**

8.3.2.7   **any relevant matter contained in Council's Road Management Plan prepared pursuant to the *Road Management Act* 2004 (Vic); and**

If appropriate and satisfactory access and egress routes are not available, then the proposed NSP should not be designated by Council.

8.4.3   *Maintenance of potential NSP in accordance with CFA assessment criteria*

Council must ensure that the potential NSP can be maintained in accordance with the criteria taken into account by the CFA in arriving at its fire rating assessment.

If additional information is required from the CFA to understand the criteria they have considered in arriving at their fire rating assessment, Council should seek this information from the CFA. If necessary, Council may request the CFA to undertake a further assessment to provide Council with additional information.

8.4.4   *Opening of the NSP*

Council must consider

8.3.4.1   whether it will be possible or practicable to open the potential NSP or otherwise make it available for use on a 24 hour basis during the declared fire danger period;

8.3.4.2   the potential for damage to the place during times that it is open and available for use, but is not being used as an NSP;

8.3.4.3   the potential costs to Council associated with (i) and (ii) above; and

8.3.4.4   the possibility that a potential NSP could be used for unintended purposes, such as an emergency relief centre.

8.4.5   *Defendable space and fire suppression activities*

CFA have advised that there is no guarantee that fire units will attend an NSP, and that individuals who use NSPs are doing so at their own risk. There should be no expectation that fire units or other emergency services personnel will attend an NSP during a bushfire.

Despite this, the potential NSP should be surrounded by sufficient open space to enable the CFA and other fire services to conduct asset protection and fire suppression operations around the area.

Any open space should be reasonably free of obstacles which could hinder fire suppression activities. Obstacles may include, amongst other things:

- fences;

- buildings and sheds;

- steep inclines in close proximity to the potential NSP;

- **vegetation, particularly large trees;**

- **other land formations, including rocks, boulders or knolls which could substantially hinder fire suppression operations.**

If necessary, advice should be sought from the CFA about their defendable space and fire vehicle access requirements.

When assessing the defendable space factor, Council must consider whether or not approval to clear or disturb flora and/or fauna could be required, whether under legislation such as the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) ('EPBC Act'), *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (Vic) ('FFG Act') or the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic) ('PE Act'). If such approval is required, then it must be obtained before the potential NSP location is designated.

If the proposed NSP does not have adequate defendable space around it, or if approval to clear or disturb flora and/or fauna is required but cannot be obtained before the NSP is required to be established, or cannot be obtained on reasonably satisfactory conditions, it should not be designated as an NSP by Council.

8.4.6 *Defendability of Buildings*

If the potential NSP is a building, Council must consider whether or not it is likely to be subject to risk from ember attack.

As the CFA is not required to assess the risk of ember attack to a building in undertaking the CFA fire rating assessment when certifying NSPs, Council should consider this issue. In considering this issue, Council may need to seek expert advice from appropriately-qualified CFA personnel.

If there is an appreciable risk of the proposed NSP being compromised by ember attack which cannot be satisfactorily defended, then the building is unlikely to be suitable as an NSP and should not be designated by Council.

8.4.7 *Signage*

- Council must assess whether it will be possible to have signage at the entry to, and in the vicinity of, the potential NSP. Such signage must generally be in accordance with the Signage Template, which is at **Section 4** of this Plan.

Council must refer to the Signage Template when considering whether or not appropriate signage can be erected.

If signage must be placed on private land, then the consent of the landowner will be required.

8.4.8 *Maintenance and maintainability*

Council must assess whether ongoing maintenance of the proposed NSP, and the surrounding area, is both possible and practical, having regard to the resources reasonably available to Council. This factor should be considered by the Council not only in relation to the suitability of a proposed NSP, but also as to the total number of proposed NSPs that can be reasonably maintained within the municipal district. This is needed to ensure that the place remains suitable for use as an NSP during each fire season.

Specifically, the place must be capable of being maintained so as to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council NSPP Criteria. It is Council policy that if it is not possible to maintain a potential NSP, then it must not be designated as such.

When assessing the maintainability of the potential NSP, both the NSP and the Buffer Zone may require various maintenance activities to be undertaken on a periodic basis. The potential introduction of hazards into the Buffer Zone, such as structures, animals and vehicles, should be taken into account.

There may be cases where maintenance activities can only be undertaken by, or with the consent of, an adjoining landowner. This may, in turn, require assurances from such landowners that the place, and areas surrounding it, will be maintained to a satisfactory level.

When assessing the maintainability of a potential NSP, Council must consider whether or not approval to clear or disturb flora and/or fauna could be required, whether under legislation such as the EPBC Act, FFG Act or the PE Act. If such approval is required, then it must be obtained before the potential NSP location is designated.

If the proposed NSP is not capable of being satisfactorily maintained, then it should not be designated by Council.

8.4.9 *Disabled access*

Council must consider whether or not there are clear means of access for disabled and mobility-impaired persons to the potential NSP.

In considering this issue, regard should be had to such matters as whether or not it would be necessary for cars or other vehicles to enter the NSP area to allow persons with disabilities to be dropped off within the place.

8.4.10 *Alternative Uses of potential NSP*

Council must consider what other uses may be made of the potential NSP which could impact upon its ability to properly function as an NSP.

Where a potential NSP which is used for an operational purpose at many times has been assessed by the CFA as meeting the criteria in the CFA Fire Rating Guidelines, and has been certified by the CFA, then the CFA has advised that those operational activities will be able to continue (to the extent practicable in the circumstances) while the place is being used as an NSP.

If the place is used for other uses which could compromise its ability to be used as an NSP, then it should not be designated as an NSP by Council.

8.4.11 *Communication with the community*

Council must be able to communicate the location of the potential NSP to the community. There should be good community awareness of the location of the place, together with the risks that relate to the use of the potential NSP, and the risks associated with travelling to the potential NSP in the event of a bushfire.

8.4.12 *Public liability insurance*

As a matter of prudent risk management, Council should have regard to:

8.3.12.1   any additional factors which are relevant to Council's maintenance of insurance coverage for legal claims relating to the identification, designation, establishment, maintenance and decommissioning of a place as an NSP, as well as travel to an NSP; and

8.3.12.2   any statutory defences to claims.

8.4 *Responsibility for Council assessment of potential NSPs*

A report prepared by the MERO and MFPO detailing whether or not the potential NSP meets the above criteria should be prepared and provided to:

8.4.1   the MEMPC, where it is practicable for the MEMPC to be involved in the Council assessment process; and

8.4.2   the Council.

The MEMPC must assess the potential NSP, taking into account the MERO's report, and make a recommendation to Council as to whether or not to designate the potential NSP.

8.5 *Council assessment timeframe*

Any potential NSPs certified by the CFA should be assessed by Council no later than 30 June each year, so as to allow time for the places to be designated and established as NSPs by Council, and for any appropriate amendments to be made to the MEMP and MFPP prior to the commencement of the bushfire season. This timing is obviously subject to the CFA assessing and certifying the potential NSP location in a timely manner.

9 Council Designation of NSPs

9.3 Council designation of NSPs

Council must formally determine whether or not to designate a place as an NSP. Council should not designate a place as an NSP unless it is satisfied that the place is suitable, having regard to the Council NSPP Criteria.

An NSP may only be designated by a resolution of the Council.

9.4 Timeframe for consideration of NSPs

Following preparation of an assessment of a potential NSP by the MEMPC, Council should determine whether or not to designate a potential NSP location by no later than 31 July. This will enable any necessary establishment works to be undertaken.

9.5 Responsibility of MFPO

Once the Council has designated a place as an NSP, the MFPO must provide an updated list of all designated NSPs within the municipality to the CFA under section 50K of the CFA Act. This updated list must be provided by no later than 30 September in each year.

10 Establishment and Maintenance of NSPs Following Designation

10.3 Responsibility for establishing NSPs

Following designation, Council will establish all designated NSPs within the municipal district.

10.4 Establishing NSPs

To establish a NSP after its designation, Council must:

- erect appropriate signage at and near the NSP;

- undertake any necessary preparatory works, including the construction or establishment of any required infrastructure and the clearance of vegetation, so as to enable the area to be used as an NSP;

- publish the location of the NSP on the Council website; and

- update Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan and Municipal Fire Prevention Plan to include the location of the NSP.

The MFPO must provide an up-to-date list of NSPs to the CFA no later than 30 September each year under section 50K of the CFA Act.

Following designation, all designated NSPs within the municipality must be identified in:

- the MFPP, under section 55A(2) of the CFA Act; and

- the MEMP, under section 20(2) of the EM Act.

10.5 Timeframe for establishment

NSPs should be established no later than **30 October** each year.

10.6   *Maintenance of NSPs*

NSPs within the municipality need to be maintained by Council. Maintenance activities must include vegetation management, hazardous tree removal and the maintenance of infrastructure required for the satisfactory functioning of the place as an NSP. If additional works have been required to establish the NSP, then those works should be subject to periodic review.

The fuel load in the vicinity of the NSP must not increase so as to affect the fire rating of the NSP.

Council must ensure that defendable spaces, the Buffer Zone and access and egress routes are appropriately maintained.

Council must inspect the NSP, Buffer Zone and access and egress routes on a periodic basis, and in any event not less than once every month during the declared fire danger period, to ensure that the NSP continues to be capable of functioning as an NSP. If Council identifies issues that may impact upon the functioning of the place as an NSP, then Council must:

10.4.1 address the issue;

10.4.2 take reasonable steps to have the issue addressed, such as requesting the owner of the land on which the NSP or Buffer Zone is located to address the issue; or

10.4.3 consider decommissioning the NSP and revoking the designation of the place as an NSP.

11   Annual Inspections of NSPs

11.3   *Responsibility for the annual review of NSPs*

Council must undertake an annual review of all designated NSPs within the municipality.

Council must also request the CFA to undertake an assessment against the CFA Fire Rating Criteria of each NSP within the municipality on an annual basis.

These reviews are intended to ensure that each NSP remains suitable for use as an NSP during the up-coming fire season.

11.4   *Considerations when undertaking inspections*

NSPs should be assessed annually against the Council NSPP Criteria. The CFA will assess NSPs against the CFA Fire Rating Criteria.

If an NSP no longer meets:

11.4.1 the CFA Fire Rating Criteria, then it must be decommissioned; and

11.4.2 the Council NSPP Criteria, then Council must determine whether or not it wishes to address any of the identified non-compliances. If it does not, then the NSP must be decommissioned.

11.5 *Inspection timeframes*

NSPs must be inspected prior to 31 August each year under section 50J of the CFA Act.

SECTION 3

SUMMARY OF FACTORS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER IN ASSESSING POTENTIAL NSP LOCATIONS PRIOR TO DESIGNATION

FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN ASSESSING POTENTIAL NSPs

Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
Consents and rights of access *See section 2.1(a)*	If the potential NSP is located on Council-owned land, can Council use the land as an NSP if required? Consider whether or not Council allows the land to be used for potentially inconsistent purposes, such as for farmers markets, fetes, circuses etc.		
	If the potential NSP is on private land, or public land under the control of a Crown Land Manager (other than Council), can Council enter into arrangements which allow it to use the land as a potential NSP on reasonably satisfactory terms? Also consider whether Council has the right to: • access the site and surrounding areas for maintenance; and • erect appropriate signage at the NSP.		
Access and egress *See section 2.1(b)*	Do access routes to the potential NSP allow for: • the anticipated potential number of people to move to and from the place; and • the CFA and other emergency services to attend the place for asset and personnel protection activities?		
	Are access routes easily navigable, bearing in mind they could be affected by smoke? Consider the condition of the road surface, proximity to population centres and major roads, capacity of access routes to accommodate large numbers of vehicles, the availability of car parking at the place and any other relevant matters.		

Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
Maintenance of NSP in accordance with CFA assessment *See section 2.1(c)*	Can Council maintain the potential NSP in accordance with the criteria taken into account by the CFA in arriving at its fire rating assessment? *If the CFA have not provided sufficient information in relation to the criteria it has taken into account in arriving at its fire rating assessment, it may be necessary for Council to seek further information from the CFA.*		
Opening of the NSP *See section 2.1(d)*	Will it be possible and practicable to make the potential NSP available for use on a 24 hour basis during the declared fire danger period? This is a particular issue where the potential NSP is a building. Consider the potential for damage to the NSP which could result during times that it is open and available for use, but is not being used as an NSP.		
	What costs could be incurred by Council in making the potential NSP available on a 24 hour basis during the declared fire danger period? Are these costs reasonable, and capable of being borne by Council?		
	Could the potential NSP be used for an unintended purpose which could impact upon its use as an NSP (such as an emergency relief centre)?		
Defendable space and fire suppression activities *See section 2.1(e)*	Is the potential NSP surrounded by sufficient open space to enable the CFA to conduct asset protection and fire suppression operations? Is that open space reasonably free of obstacles (such as fences, buildings, steep gradients, vegetation and other land formations)? *Council should seek CFA advice concerning the defendability of the potential NSP and the Buffer Zone, including in relation to fire vehicle access requirements.*		
	Will approval be required under legislation such as the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* 1999 (Cth), *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* 1988 (Vic) and the *Planning and Environment Act* 1987 (Vic)? Can such approval be obtained before the NSP is established?		
Defendability of buildings *See section 2.1(f)*	If the potential NSP is a building, has Council has sought expert advice from the CFA to determine whether the NSP is likely to be subject to risk from ember attack? If it is subject to such a risk, can that risk be safely managed?		
Signage	Can appropriate signage be erected at the entry to the potential NSP,		

Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
See section 2.1(g)	and in its vicinity?		
	If signage needs to be placed on private land, can Council obtained the consent of the relevant landowner to the erection of the signage?		
Maintenance and maintainability *See section 2.1(h)*	Is the potential NSP capable of being maintained to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council NSPP Criteria? Where relevant, consider whether adjoining land owners and occupiers will provide Council with an assurance that both the potential NSP and the Buffer Zone can be maintained to a satisfactory level.		
Disabled access *See section 2.1(i)*	Are there means of access for disabled and mobility-impaired persons to the potential NSP, including vehicle access to drop off people with disabilities?		
Alternative uses of potential NSP *See section 2.1(j)*	Can Council manage alternative uses which may be made of the potential NSP so as to ensure that those uses will not compromise the function of the place as a potential NSP? *The CFA has advised that where a potential NSP which is used for an operational purpose at any time meets the CFA Fire Rating Criteria, then the CFA considers that those operational activities will be able to continue (to the extent practicable in the circumstances) while the place is being used as an NSP.*		
Community Communication *See section 2.1(k)*	Will it be possible to ensure that there will be good community awareness of the location of the potential NSP, and the risks associated with using the potential NSP?		

SECTION 4

NSP SIGNAGE TEMPLATE

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY ACT 1958

SECTION 50H

SIGNAGE GUIDELINES FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES

1.   Under section 50H of the *Country Fire Authority Act* 1958 (the Act), municipal councils are required to:

>   (1)   Ensure that appropriate signs are provided at each designated Neighbourhood   Safer Place in its municipal district; and in meeting that obligation; and

>   (2)   Have regards to signage guidelines issued from time to time on the internet of   the Office of Emergency Services Commissioner (OESC).

2.   The OESC has, in consultation with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Municipal   Association of Victoria (MAV), developed a standard sign for designated neighbourhood safer   places.

3.   The specifications for the standard sign are set in schedule 1.

4.   Nothing in these guidelines prevent municipal councils from providing additional information on the signpost displaying the standard sign. For example, such information may relate to the capacity or use of the place.

5.   These guidelines come into effect on the 9 December 2009 and continue to apply until otherwise replaced or varied.

Sign specifications are 450mm by 450mm

7.4.5　　　　Fire Hazard Removal / Fuel Reduction Standards

On-going liaison must be maintained between the MFPO, Group Officers and local Fire Brigades to ensure that fire hazards are minimised throughout the year. The MFPO should note any conditions or circumstances during their normal inspections which may constitute a fire hazard. When such a hazard is identified the MFPO will instigate appropriate measures to have the hazard removed.

Fire hazards and risks associated with commercial and industrial properties are controlled by legislation, such as the Building Code of Australia and the Planning and Environment Act. Where hazards are identified at these locations this specialist legislation should be used, in addition to the powers provided under the CFA Act.

Property owners or occupiers must complete fire hazard removal, reduction and isolation, including the clearing of land pursuant to Section 41 of the CFA Act prior to the introduction of the Declared Fire Danger Period. This includes land that has been cleared and has regrown.

Process applied to Fire Hazard Removal

Letters will be posted in month August (dependant on seasonal conditions[10]) to absentee landowners advising them of their responsibilities for the removal of fire hazards from private land and the consequences of non compliance. This is appropriate as it generally corresponds with the launch of the CFA's Summer Fire Safety campaign.

Public Notices must be placed in local newspapers in Buloke Shire in early September (dependant on seasonal conditions) advising the public of their responsibilities for the removal of fire hazards from private land and the consequences of non compliance. This is appropriate as it generally corresponds with the launch of the CFA's Summer Fire Safety campaign.

Depending on seasonal conditions it is expected that the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer will commence formal inspections of the Townships in the Shire in late spring, generally October/ November, to determine which land requires clearance. The inspections must be undertaken prior to the declaration of the fire danger period. Landowners who have not undertaken the works will then be issued with a Fire Prevention Notice. Following the expiration of the allowed time for the work to be undertaken (generally two weeks), the MFPO will undertake a further inspection of the Townships.

Where landowners have failed to undertake the required clearance, the MFPO may direct that the work be undertaken by others and the landowner will be issued an infringement notice for failure to comply with the earlier notice. The Brigade or contractor will be paid for undertaking this by the Buloke Shire who will recoup the cost of the work from the landowner in accordance with the powers under the Local Government Act 1989.

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[10] Each year an assessment will have to be made about the risk of fire from vegetation based on growth that has or is likely to occur during Spring and during the declared fire danger period. Timing of notices and inspections may vary depending on the level of risk assessed.

Public Authorities

MFPO shall liaise with public authorities that are landowners to ensure that they, as landowners/managers take responsibility for land under their control to ensure that appropriate works are undertaken to remove fire hazards from their land.

It is a requirement in the Community Local Law that land be maintained and kept in a condition that prevents the risk of fire or minimises the spread of fire. The Fire Prevention Notice requires that land must continue to be maintained in a condition that minimises the risk of fire.

Standards to be applied

The following standards are applied to minimise the risk of fire throughout the Municipal District.

Urban Allotments

Urban allotments should have all the grass, weeds and undergrowth cut to a height of less than 100 mm including all grass up to and against fences, buildings and trees. However it is recognised that special circumstances may require a variation to this standard. Any dead wood or other flammable refuse from the allotments and the adjacent half width of the street is to be removed at the direction of the MFPO.

Larger Allotments in Urban Areas

Larger allotments and rural land adjoining urban areas generally should have the vegetation and potential fire fuel reduced by cutting, effective grazing and/or ploughing for a distance of 20m around dwellings and other assets (including adjoining properties), and a strip of 3m to 6m width within the boundary. Fuel reduction may be required over all of the property if it is considered necessary by the MFPO. Spraying, if undertaken at the appropriate time can be used to make these breaks.

Rural Allotments

The MFPO may use his or her discretion when undertaking hazard assessments, in accordance with the CFA Act.

Any fire breaks should be contained on the property, or in accordance with the current Buloke Shire Roadside Management Plan. It is recognised that the procedure of ploughing breaks on roadsides has occurred in the past. The 2003 Roadside Management Plan discusses that no new ploughed breaks should be formed on road reserves unless permitted by the Manager of Technical Services. Any existing break must be maintained within guidelines.

Grassland

In grassland areas fuel reduction should be undertaken by cutting, grazing and/or ploughing for a distance of 20m around buildings and assets and other installations requiring protection. A 3m to 6m minimum width break within the perimeter of the property should also be undertaken where practical. If necessary the MFPO may issue further directions.

Municipal Land

Municipal reserves and municipal public land within townships will be maintained and have the same standards applied as Larger Allotments in Urban Areas. For municipal reserves and municipal public land in rural areas they shall be assessed the same as Rural Allotments with fire breaks maintained around buildings. This may be varied as deemed necessary by the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer. Access for fire fighting vehicles should be provided where required.

2nd and subsequent inspections
Depending on seasonal conditions, the MFPO may consider it necessary to undertake further inspections of land in Townships during the declared fire season. These are likely to occur in December, January and February to determine if new fire risks have developed on land, whether land identified as a fire hazard in the first round of inspections has been cleared in accordance with the fire prevention notice or if there has been regrowth and the land has not been maintained in accordance with the requirements in the first notice. Landholders who have not undertaken the works or maintained the land will then be issued with a Fire Prevention Notice and the processes applied in the first round of inspections, including having the land cleared by a contractor if necessary and recovering the costs of the work, will be followed.

7.5 Appendix E – Engagement and Communications Plan

Engagement and Communications Plan

1. Overview of Buloke Shire's Engagement and Communications Approach

1.1 Introduction

The revised approach to fire management planning means that there needs to be far greater involvement of a range of "players" in the planning and development phase. This means that fire management planning is just not the role and function of councils and the emergency service bodies. Other Government organisations and agencies such as Victoria Police, Department of Sustainability and Environment, VicRoads, VLine and the water authorities all have an obligation to be part of the process. So too does the community. Everybody shares the responsibility to plan for and be aware of the risk from fire.

Buloke Shire has a particular challenge in asking the community to give more of their time to the fire management planning process.   Many people were affected by the severe floods that occurred in 2011 and many are still participating in the processes associated with that, including planning for the management of future events. With this in mind, Council still believes that the community has valuable local knowledge and experience to add to the process.

1.2 Stakeholder Analysis

There are 3 key Stakeholder components, being:

- "Core" members of the MEMPC and associate members
- A wider stakeholder "group" identified in Table 1 of the Plan consisting of community groups and organisations, health and medical services, industry and employer bodies and other government bodies such as the Department of Human Services and utilities, such as water authorities.
- The Buloke community.

Core members of the MEMPC meet on a regular basis, but other agencies or people with specialist knowledge may be consulted and participate on a "needs" basis.

The ability to refer the proposed Municipal Fire Management Plan to the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee means that the Plan will be able to reviewed from a "higher" level so that matters of regional significance or cross boundary issues not identified to the MEMPC during the engagement and communications process will be able to be addressed.

A wider stakeholder "group" are identified in Table 1 of the Plan and will be asked for their review and contribution to the Plan during the Engagement and Communications phase.

Residents of Buloke Shire have and will be asked for their views through the development of the Plan and as part of the continual review of the Plan.

1.3 Engagement and Communications Objectives

Two way sharing of information is essential for proper fire management planning. Input to the Fire Management Plan is needed from people with local knowledge and experience. So too though is the need to share information with the community so that awareness of fire risk and management of all aspects of it is increased. This results in communities being better prepared and able to respond and recover from bushfire. With these broader objectives in mind, the following objectives will guide community consultation and engagement:

- *Promote "shared responsibility" and foster community participation to engender a sense of "ownership" of the Plan by the community*

- *Build:*
  - → *awareness of fire risks to the whole community*
  - → *a process for future feedback*
  - → *community confidence in the management of fire risk*

- *Identify community concerns*

- *Provide knowledge to the community and get feedback/ gather information based on local knowledge*

- *Foster understanding of integration of agencies in development and process of MFMP (ensure fire management agencies are involved in the process)*

- *Review and identify deficiencies in the draft Plan*

- *Identify critical infrastructure and valuable community assets.*

1.4   Scope of consultation

Many of the matters now part of broader "fire management" is prescribed by legislation or by State government policy. These include the broad process to be applied, building and planning requirements and restrictions, risk assessment standards, the designation of neighbourhood safer places, Township Protection Plans and the broad process around fire management planning.

Specific review of the Plan by the community is needed in the following areas:

- Whether all the risks have been identified
- Are there other assets that should be included
- Are the prescribed treatments proposed to be applied appropriate
- How does the community want to stay involved in fire management planning and be consulted in the future
- How does the community want feedback from the Plan development process.

1.5   Analysis of community submissions

At the conclusion of the consultation period, all submissions received will be:

- reviewed and assessed by the MFMPC

- referred to another agency for comment if a submission involves another agency

- referred to the Loddon Mallee RSFMPC if a submission raises matters that are of regional or cross municipal/agency boundary importance.

If the assessment of the MFMPC concludes that a matter raised in a submission should be included in the Plan, the Plan may be amended as part of the current process or amendment deferred to a later stage to enable further investigation or analysis to be carried out.

Information about the outcomes of the Engagement and Communications process will be published on the Council website and in *"Community Matters"*.

The Final (and Council approved) Municipal Fire Management Plan will be published on Council's website – www.buloke.vic.gov.au
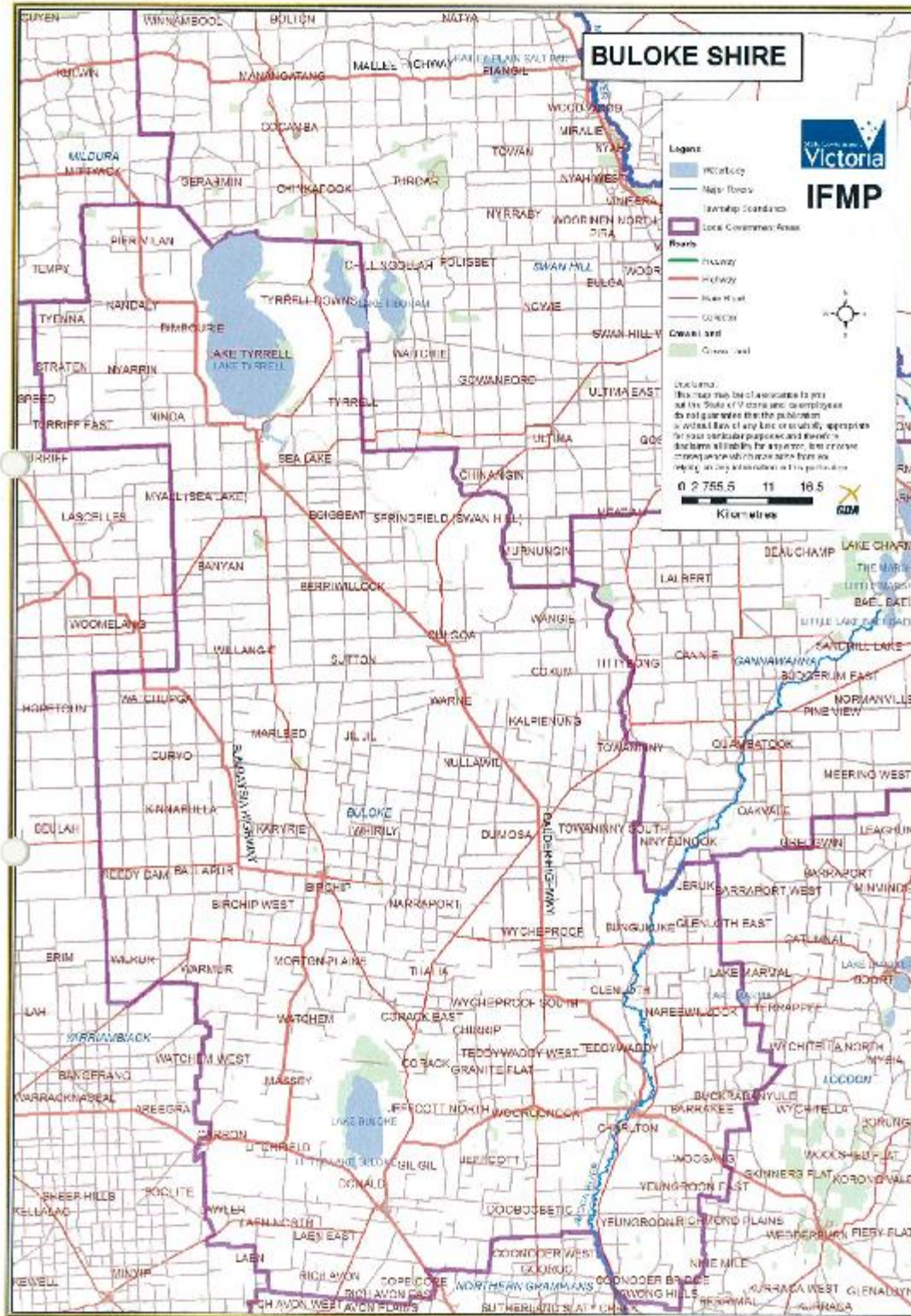
2.   *The Phases of consultation*

Preliminary consultation with the community was undertaken in October/November of 2011.

The following Table outlines the key phases remaining in the Engagement and Communications process, involving all stakeholders.

Phase 2 - Development of draft plan (October 2011 - May 2012) Endorsement by the MEMPC, MEMP and Council of the draft Plan to be released for discussion and comment (May 2012)	
Phase 3 - Stakeholder and community consultation (June 2012)	
Community consultation to be undertaken over a 30 day period consisting of: • Direct mail out to all Buloke Shire ratepayers and residents, including survey • General community consultation through advertisement and website announcements • Information about the Plan published on Council's website along with a survey • Dedicated information on the draft Plan in "Community Matters" • Targeted consultation with key stakeholders and community groups/forums • Open invitation to Buloke residents to participate in Information Sessions in key towns - Charlton, Sea Lake and Wycheproof	Members of MEMPC MFPO & Consultant Sea Lake Senior Citizens – 18 June 2012 @ 6.30pm Donald – CFA Station – 20 June 2012 @ 6.30pm Charlton Senior Citizens – 21 June 2012 @ 6.30pm
Phase 4 - Analysis and Assessment of submissions (July 2012)	
• Committee evaluation of feedback received and submissions made • Make any necessary amendments to the Plan • MFMPC reconsideration and adoption of the Plan for recommendation to the	MFMPC/LMRSFMPC MEMP Council

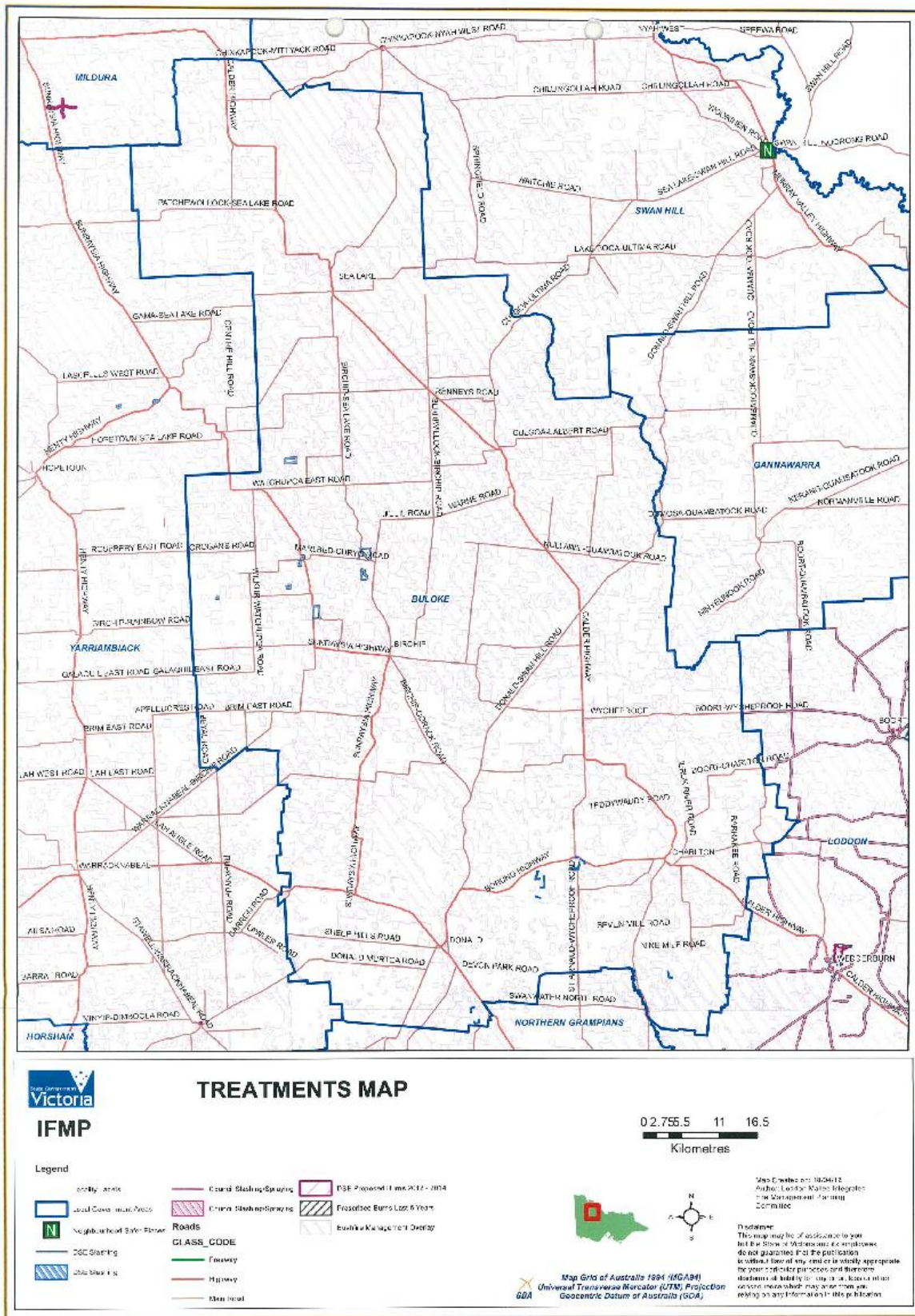| MEMPC for inclusion in the MEMP • Adoption by MEMPC for recommendation to Council for adoption and inclusion in the MEMP.	

7.6   Appendix F – Maps

7.6.1   Map 1: Buloke Shire Map

7.6.2 Map 2: Fuel Loads – VFRR

2011 FUEL LOAD & VFRR

7.6.3 Map 3: Treatment Map

TREATMENTS MAP

IFMP
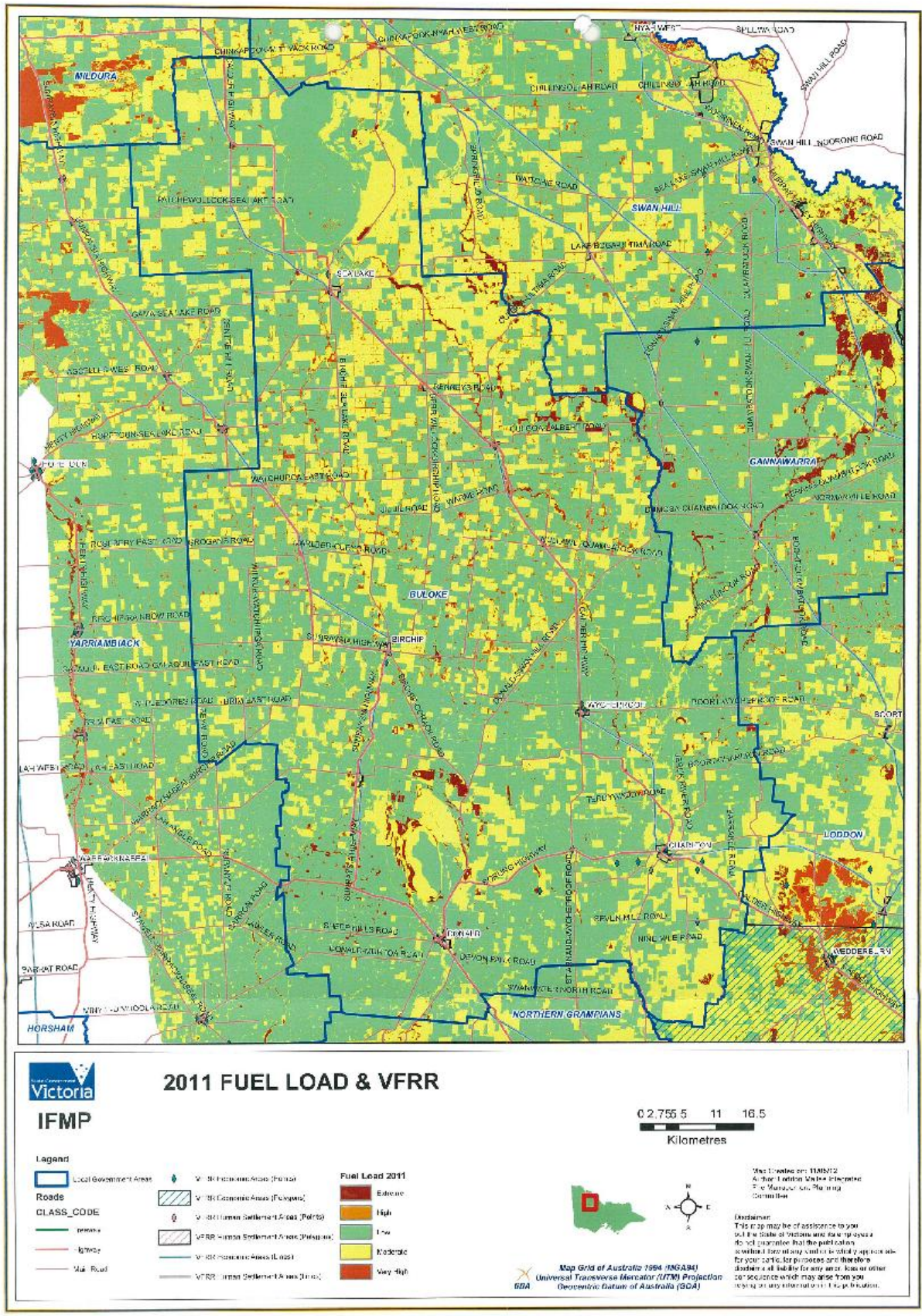
7.7 Appendix G– Terminology used in this Plan

Agencies
Refers to the agencies of the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee. These include key agencies and organizations such as the Buloke Shire Council, **DSE**, **CFA**, **HVP**, Victoria Police, **SES** and Water Authorities.

Agency Treatments
Refer to **Appendix C** - *Risk Management Register.*

Assets
Anything valued by the community which includes houses, crops, stock, heritage buildings and places, infrastructure, the environment, businesses, and forests, that may be at risk from fire.

Bushfire
A general term used to describe fire in vegetation, including grass fire.

Bushfire Risk
The chance of a bushfire igniting, spreading and causing damage to the community or the assets they value.

Community Safety
Community safety is the collaborative effort by community, government and non-government groups to ensure the safety, wellbeing and stability of society. These efforts are sustained by core values of sustainability, social cohesion, security, cooperation, self-reliance and an improved physical environment. Under such a regime, safer communities are locally organised and resourced, well informed about local risks, proactive in prevention, risk averse, motivated and able to manage the majority of local issues through effective planning and action.

Fire
Comes under the definition of an Emergency. The *Emergency Management Act* 1986 defines 'emergency' as: "… the actual or imminent occurrence of an event which in any way endangers or threatens to endanger the safety or health of any person in Victoria or which destroys or damages, or threatens to destroy or damage, any property in Victoria or in any way endangers or threatens to endanger the environment or an element of the environment in Victoria, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing and specific to integrated fire management and therefore includes:

A fire; and an explosion, A road accident or any other accident, A disruption to an essential service ("essential service" means any of the following services: transport, fuel (including gas), light, power, water, sewerage, or a service (whether or not of a type similar to the foregoing) declared to be an essential service by the Governor in Council) from the effect or impact of fire.

Fire Management
All activities associated with the management of fire (bushfire, structural, chemical), including the use of fire to meet land management goals and objectives. In simple terms, 'fire management' is **PPRR** as well as use of fire for ecological, agricultural and cultural purposes.

Integrated Fire Management Planning *(IFMP)*
Integrated Fire Management Planning is a holistic and integrated risk based planning framework for fire management, across all land tenures and boundaries including **PPRR** activities.

Preparedness
All activities undertaken in advance of the occurrence of an incident to decrease the impact, extent and severity of the incident and to ensure more effective response activities.

Prevention
All activities concerned with minimising the occurrence of incidents, particularly those of human origin.

Recovery
The coordinated process of supporting emergency affected communities in reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing.

Response
Actions taken in anticipation of, during and immediately after an incident to ensure that its effects are minimised, and that people affected are given immediate relief and support.

Risk Assessment
The overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation.

Risk Environments
There are four types of risk environments based on the **VFRR**s risk tool which are Human Settlement, Economic, Environmental and Cultural Heritage.

Risk Identification
The process of determining what, where, when, why and how something could happen.

Victorian Fire Risk Register *(VFRR)*
Victorian Fire Risk Register is a systematic map based process that identifies assets, assesses assets and provides a range of treatments which contribute to the well being of communities and the environment, which suffer the adverse effects of bushfire.

Vulnerability
The susceptibility of an asset or community to the impacts of fire.

7.8   Appendix H – Acronyms used in this Plan

AFAC	Australasian Fire and Emergency Authorities Council
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DET	Department of Education and Training
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DEDJTR	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
EMMV	Emergency Management Manual Victoria
EVC	Ecological Vegetation Class
FDR	Fire Danger Rating
FFDI	Forest Fire Danger Index
GFDI	Grassland Fire Danger Index
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
IFMP	Integrated Fire Management Planning
KBDI	Keetch-Byram Drought Index
IAP2	International Association of Public Participation
LGA	Local Government Area
LMR	Loddon Mallee Region
LMRSFMPC	Loddon Mallee Region Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee
LMRSFMP	Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MERI	Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement
MFMPC	Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee
MFMP	Municipal Fire Management Plan
MFPP	Municipal Fire Prevention Plan
NSP	Neighbourhood Safer Place
PPRR	Prevention, Preparedness, Response, Recovery
RSFMP	Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan
SWER	Single Wire Earth Return
TFI	Tolerable Fire Interval
TPP	Township Protection Plan
VBRC	2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission
VEAC	Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
VicPol	Victoria Police
VicSES	Victoria State Emergency Service
VROT	Vulnerable Rare or Threatened

8   Annual Review Amendments

Amendment	Page/s	Date
1. Insertion of signatories name, Authorisation page	3	4-9-14
2. Change of reference throughout plan from DSE to DELWP Including risk tables	7,9,12,24,25,32	23-4-15
3. Correct numbering of Appendices in Table of contents	5	23-4-15
4. Remove incorrect footnote reference	12	23-4-15
5. Amend reference number for Hazardous Trees appendix 7.4.1	33	23-4-15
6. Amend reference number for Fire hazard removal / fuel reduction standards Appendix 7.4.5	34	23-4-15
7. Amend numbering of appendices	36	23-4-15
8. Amend Appendix H – Acronyms	42	2-2-16
8. Update of Appendix C1 – Multi-agency 'MERI' Work Plan	1	2-2-16

Buloke Shire Municipal Fire Management Plan
Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee, August 2012