



Clarence...
a brighter place

BUSHFIRE MITIGATION STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2024-2033





Clarence City Council pays respect to all First Peoples, including the Mumirimina (mu mee ree mee nah) of the Oyster Bay Nation whose unceded lands, skies, and waterways we are privileged to conduct our business on. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and we acknowledge the survival and deep spiritual connection of the Tasmanian Aboriginal People to their Country, and culture; a connection that has endured since the beginning of time.

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Bushfire Consultants were engaged to review council's bushfire planning framework, including council's Bushfire Mitigation Strategy, Reserve Bushfire Mitigation Plans, and develop a Bushfire Policy for council managed land.

As approximately 78% of the city of Clarence is mapped as bushfire-prone, the likelihood is high for the municipality to be impacted by bushfire. A key purpose of the project was to ensure council's bushfire planning framework (Fig.1) is aligned with regional priorities, the most up to date Tasmanian State Government bushfire risk policy and frameworks, and legislative requirements.

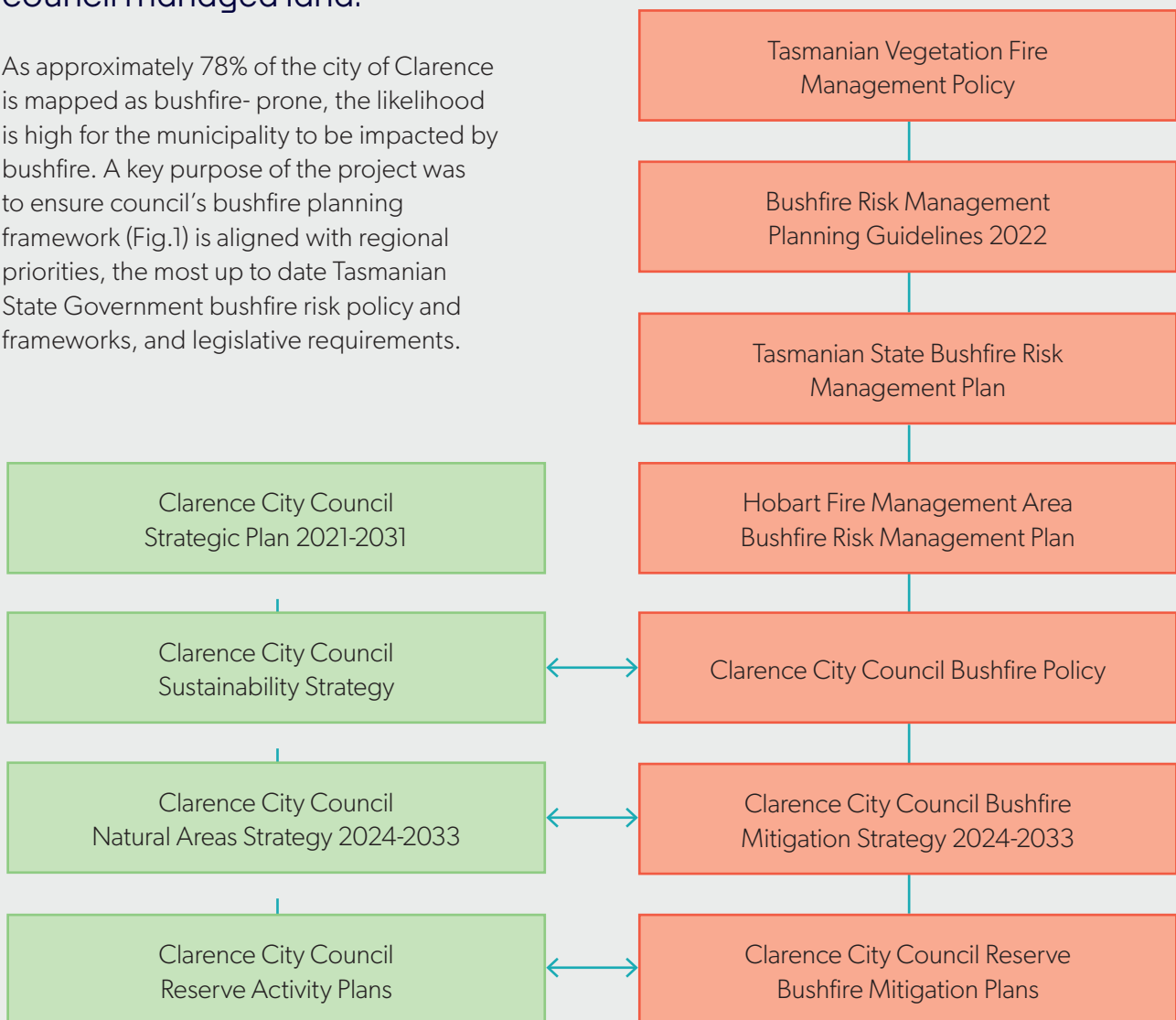


Fig.1 Council's bushfire risk reduction planning framework

BUSHFIRE RISK



Bushfire risk levels for human settlement areas within the city of Clarence are summarized in Table 2. Risk levels have been collated from the Hobart FMA Bushfire Risk Management Plan's Risk Register and are based on most current risk modelling in November 2022.

Bushfire risk measures how bushfire impacts change in response to fuel reduction from planned burns and bushfires, therefore three-yearly reviews of this strategy are essential to ensure human settlement areas identified within Table 2 are ranked the most current and appropriate level of risk.

Human Settlement Areas	Risk Level
Bellerive, Cambridge, Geilston Bay, Howrah, Lindisfarne, Mornington, Mount Rumney, Pilchers Hill, Risdon Vale, Rokeby, Warrane	High
Acton Park, Clarendon Vale, Clifton Beach, Downhams Hill, Dulcote, Grasstree Hill, Lauderdale, Opossum Bay, Roches Beach, Rosny, Sandford	Medium
Barwicks Rock, Beauvais Hill, Brinktop, Collins Springs Hill, Cremorne, Gathering Bush Hill, Hanslows Road, Honeywood Drive, Mount Mather, Mount Pleasant, Otago, Richmond, Seven Mile Beach, South Arm, Tranmere	Low
Calverts Hill, McKays Hill	Very Low

Fig.2 Bushfire risk levels for human settlement areas within the city of Clarence

Management of Bushfire Risk

The aim of council's bushfire planning framework is to reduce bushfire risk and impacts in priority bushfire-prone areas under council control whilst contributing to a coordinated approach centralized through the Hobart Fire Management Area Committee (FMAC).

The two primary objectives of council's bushfire planning framework are:



Minimisation

To minimize the impact of bushfires on human life, communities, essential and community infrastructure, industries, the economy, cultural values, and the environment. Human life will be afforded priority over all other considerations, and



Maintain & improve

To maintain and improve the resilience of natural ecosystems and their ability to deliver services such as biodiversity, water, and carbon storage.

Council's Bushfire Policy

Council's previous Bushfire Mitigation Strategy included a brief policy statement within the strategy, the new strategy builds on and expands the existing statement into a standalone Bushfire Policy that will guide council's decisions.

The new policy provides guidance and framework to assist council in reducing bushfire risk to human settlement areas whilst promoting and maintaining natural and cultural values. The underpinning principle of the policy is the protection of life.

The policy applies to any bushfire-prone area managed by council as identified on a planning scheme code overlay. It does not apply to land which is not owned and managed by council (including privately owned land).

Council's Bushfire Mitigation Strategy

Council's Bushfire Mitigation Strategy was first developed in 1997. The new strategy is the sixth revision and expansion and runs between 2024 and 2033. The review builds on previous methodologies and principles used and not only allows for the strategy to be further aligned and embedded with the most up to date Tasmanian State Government bushfire risk policy and frameworks including the Tasmanian Vegetation Fire Management Policy, but the most up to date bushfire risk planning at a national level. This sixth review uses a risk-based approach aligned with AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management Principles and Guidelines, and the Tasmanian Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (TERAG).

Council's Reserve Bushfire Mitigation Plans

Bushfire Mitigation Plans (BMP) are tactical level planning documents that focus on addressing bushfire hazards, enhancing biodiversity, and improving the survivability of communities and assets. BMPs identify key areas for fuel management, and provide tactical guidance regarding planned burning, fire trails, fuel breaks, hazard management areas, and asset protection work. BMPs function for a five-year period with a review to be implemented at year four. The reviewed BMPs will run between 2024 and 2028, Fourteen BMPs were reviewed and four new BMPs were developed namely Single Hill Bushland Reserve, Carbeen Bushland Reserve and Brinktop Bushland Reserves and Mays Point Coastal Reserve. The 18 will be available on council's website. Each BMP uses both planned burns and mechanical treatments for bushfire risk reduction, Aboriginal cultural purposes, natural values conservation, and weed control.

Planned Burning

Planned burns have been recommended within BMPs for a variety of purposes including:



Bushfire risk reduction



Aboriginal cultural purposes



Natural values conservation



Weed control

Planned burning will contribute to a mosaic of vegetation at different stages since fire, and reserves with no planned burning recommended will still play a part of the bigger landscape mosaic, in turn contributing to enhancing the biodiversity of flora and fauna species. Many plants and plant communities may benefit from, or even require, burning. Fire stimulates seed germination and growth in some native plant species, while reducing competition or over-growth of other plants. In addition, stimulation of plant growth can in turn increase food availability for foraging animal species (Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, 2023).

Understanding the Process

The project included a series of face-to-face engagement sessions with key stakeholders, a detailed gap analysis of the existing strategy, an update to the existing BMP template to align with TERAG, site assessments of eighteen reserves to determine bushfire risk levels and identify required works to reduce risk whilst maintaining biodiversity, and desktop natural and cultural value assessments. This resulted in a suite of new and revised documents tailored to council's current and future needs to reduce bushfire risk to the city of Clarence and in turn Greater Hobart. Prior to council endorsement the reviewed strategy and BMPs will seek approval from the Hobart Fire Management Area Committee.

Engagement process

The stakeholder engagement sessions and site assessments identified key themes for improvements. These improvements relate to completion of more planned burning, upgrades of fire trails and extension of mechanical treatments and their ongoing maintenance (hazard management areas, fuel breaks, vegetation adjacent to fire trails), and developing a fire specific vegetation monitoring program. An opportunity was identified to upskill existing core fire and bushland staff to assist in the planning, on-ground delivery, and monitoring of works prescribed within BMPs.

Implementation Plan

Upon completion of the project a series of recommendations were summarised into an Implementation Plan. Each recommendation included a description, priority level, specific stakeholders to engage with, and time frames to be implemented.

Key recommendations include:

- 1 Implementing a staged training program to provide core staff with required nationally accredited qualifications
- 2 Undertaking condition assessments of council-managed fire trails
- 3 Developing a fire specific vegetation monitoring program
- 4 Appointing a Bushfire Planner to deliver the Strategy
- 5 Implementing small scale cultural burning by developing partnerships with Traditional Custodians
- 6 Monitoring, assessing, and maintaining, where reasonably practicable, fire trails, hazard management areas, and fuel breaks to the standards prescribed within the Reserve Bushfire Mitigation Plans
- 7 Following the declaration of a Total Fire Ban, implementing the *Total Fire Ban Action Plan* for the closure of nominated reserves using social media and onsite entrance signage



