

Northern Beaches Bush Fire Prone Land Map
Frequently Asked Questions
(Updated May 2019)

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What is bush fire prone land?

Bush fire prone land is an area of land that can support a bush fire or is likely to be subject to bush fire attack, as designated on a bush fire prone land map.

What is a bush fire prone land map?

A Bush Fire Prone Land Map (BFPLM) is a map prepared in accordance with the [Guide for Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping, V5b, November 2015, NSW Rural Fire Service](#) and certified by the Commissioner of the NSW RFS under Section 10.3(2) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

The purpose of a BFPLM is to identify land that is at risk from bush fire attack. It also triggers additional [planning and development controls on bush fire prone land](#) for new development or building work.

New development or building work on this land must comply with the requirements of the [NSW Rural Fire Service's Planning for Bushfire Protection \(2006\)](#). This document outlines bush fire protection measures that may be required for new development, such as 'asset protection zones' and 'emergency access'.

A BFPLM is also used to give effect to the Building Code of Australia's Australian Standard AS 3959-2009 'Construction of Buildings in Bush Fire Prone Areas'.

Can I view the bush fire prone land maps?

View proposed changes to the Draft Map currently on Public Exhibition from 18 May 2019 to 14 June 2019: [HERE](#)

To view the Current Pittwater, Manly and Warringah Bush Fire Prone Land Maps and the Draft Northern Beaches Bush Fire Prone Land Map that was publicly exhibited from December 2018 to January 2019, go to the following link and scroll down to 'Bush Fire Maps' via the top left dropdown menu, enter and click on your property address and refer to the right hand legend to see how it affects your property: [Bush Fire Maps](#)

Why are the current bush fire prone land maps being reviewed?

In August 2002, the Rural Fires and Environmental Assessment Legislation Amendment Act 2002 (Amendment Act) came into effect. The Amendment Act amended both the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) and the Rural Fires Act 1997. The purpose was to ensure the protection of people, property and the environment against bush fires.

The Amendment Act requires councils to submit a Bush Fire Prone Land Map (BFPLM) for certification by the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) and for councils to review the map every 5 years.

Northern Beaches Council currently operates under three BFPLMs (Warringah BFPLM 2016, Pittwater BFPLM 2013 and Manly BFPLM 2010). There is a need to create one Northern Beaches BFPLM due to the amalgamation into one Northern Beaches Council and because the Manly BFPLM 2010 and Pittwater BFPLM 2013 are due for review.

Do I need to do anything if my property is bush fire prone land?

Future development on bush fire prone land is subject to specific building requirements as explained on the [RFS website](#).

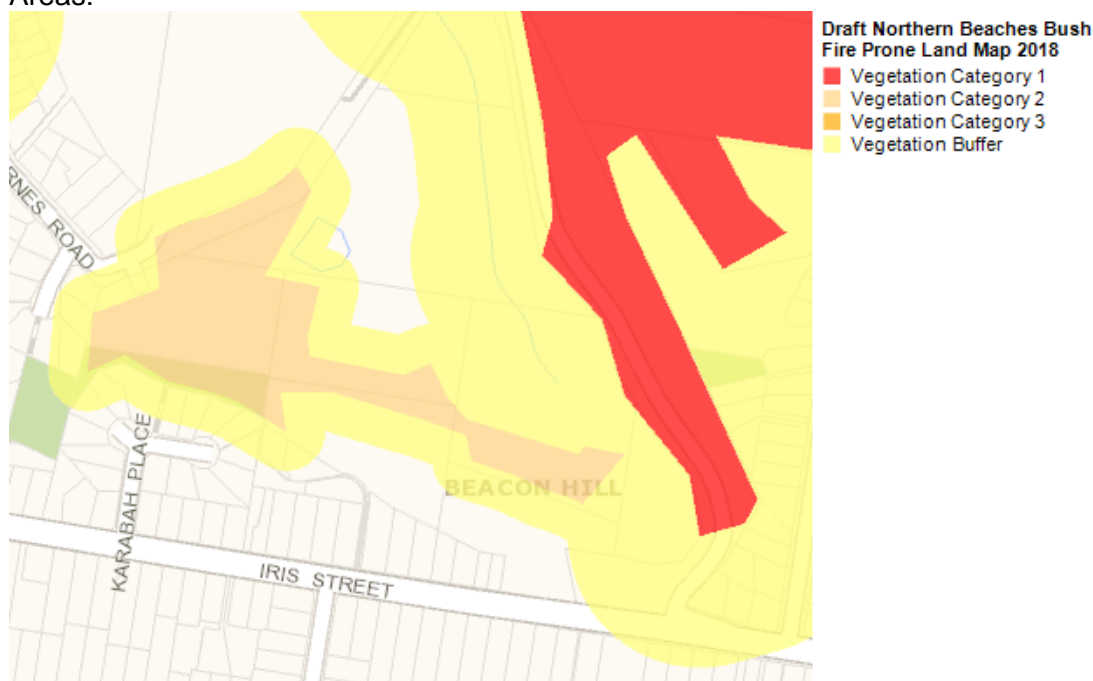
What do the red, yellow and orange colours on the Bush Fire Prone Land Map mean?

To view the detailed methodology used to categorise vegetation into vegetation types (colour coded) on the BFPLM please refer to: [Guide for Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping, V5b, November 2015, NSW Rural Fire Service](#).

In brief, the map is colour coded to classify vegetation into three categories based on vegetation type and potential risk and identifies buffer areas surrounding this vegetation as follows:

Northern Beaches Bush Fire Prone Land Map			
Vegetation Category	Map Colour	Bush Fire Risk	Buffer Area (distance and colour)
1	Red	High	100m - Yellow
2	Light Orange	Lower than Category 1 or 3	30m - Yellow
3	Dark Orange	Medium	30m - Yellow

Example map extract of Vegetation Category 1 and 2 areas and associated surrounding Buffer Areas:



It is generally understood from fires that have been extensively investigated, that approximately 90% of houses are lost in the absence of a direct interaction with the fire front itself, which means they burn down from more insidious activity like ember attack igniting the house directly or igniting fences and other details around the house which then impact the house (*Mr Justin Leonard, Committee Hansard, Melbourne, 25 March 2010, p. 74*). As such, the mapped buffer area identifies properties in the ember zone.

If a property is identified on a bush fire prone land map (whether it is coloured red, dark or light orange or yellow) this acts as a trigger to consider the requirement of a bush fire assessment report when undertaking [future development](#) works. A bush fire assessment report will determine the level of site specific risk and recommend how to manage this risk in association with the proposed development in line with the requirements of RFS's [Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006](#) and the Building Code of Australia's Australian Standard AS 3959-2009 'Construction of Buildings in Bush Fire Prone Areas'.

How has topography been considered when determining what is Bush Fire Prone Land?

The Bush Fire Prone Land Map review is undertaken following the NSW RFS document 'Guide for Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping' Version 5b (November 2015). This process maps the bush in different Categories. If a property is in a Category 1, 2 or 3 vegetation area or the adjoining buffer, it will be subject to a Bush Fire Assessment by an approved Bush Fire Consultant at the time a development application is submitted for any work on the site. This assessment is where the slope is factored in and the appropriate Bush Fire measure under AS3959 is applied.

Why are properties proposed to be added or removed from the Northern Beaches Bush Fire Prone Land Map (BFPLM)?

The Draft Map has been prepared according to the specifications of the [RFS Guide for Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping, V5b, November 2015](#) (Guide). The review has involved an analysis of satellite photography, site visits and historical research, in accordance with the Guide's updated methodology.

The review identified a number of inaccuracies in the former Manly BFPLM 2010, resulting in additional properties being identified as BFPL on the Draft Map. The inaccuracies are summarised as follows:

- Some areas of Category 2 vegetation have been reclassified as Category 1 vegetation (noting that often the vegetation is continuous with the adjoining Category 1 vegetation). This has resulted in an extension to the buffer area from 30m to 100m.
- Some additions to Category 1 vegetation areas that were not previously mapped.
- A GIS buffer error for Category 1 vegetation where the buffer varied between 50-60m but should have been 100m (southern side of Wakehurst Golf Club).
- Consideration was also given to the recent introduction of a new vegetation category (Category 3) under the RFS [Guide](#). Mapping of vegetation communities representative of the new Category 3 has been undertaken by Council in consultation with the RFS.

The main reason for the removal of land identified as BFPL on the Draft Map is that Vegetation Categories in the RFS [Guide](#) have changed slightly, resulting in some land being re-categorised from Vegetation Category 1 (which requires a 100m BFPL buffer) down to Vegetation Category 2 (which requires a 30m BFPL buffer).

The Draft Map was placed on public exhibition from Saturday 1 December 2018 until Sunday 27 January 2019. Following a consideration of submissions by NSW RFS and Council, the following changes are proposed to the Draft Map:

CHANGES PROPOSED TO THE DRAFT NORTHERN BEACHES BUSH FIRE PRONE LAND MAP PUBLIC EXHIBITION: 18 May 2019 to 14 June 2019	
LOCATION	PROPOSED DRAFT MAP AMENDMENT
Angophora Reserve, Bilgola Plateau	Vegetation in Angophora Reserve has been reviewed and it is proposed that the Category 1 Vegetation be expanded slightly along the southern boundary, resulting in several properties being added to the vegetation buffer area on the Draft Map in proximity to Bilwara Avenue and Bilambee Avenue, Bilgola Plateau.
Bilgola Plateau Public School and surrounds	The extent of bush fire prone vegetation is proposed to be reduced at Bilgola Plateau Public School resulting in a number of properties being removed from the Draft Map along the eastern side of Lower Plateau Road and southern side of Loblay Crescent, Bilgola Plateau.
Crown of Newport Reserve and surrounding land	The entire area of Crown of Newport Reserve has been reassessed and is proposed to be included as Category 2 vegetation. In this regard, a number of properties are proposed to be added to the 30m buffer area surrounding this Reserve in proximity to Daly Street, Monterey Road, Kanimbla Crescent, Hillslope Road and Sybil Street, Newport.
13 Fisher Street, Balgowlah Heights	Proposed amendment to reduce the extent of bush fire prone vegetation in proximity to this property, resulting in removal of the property from the Draft Map.

Ingleside / Elanora Heights	Various map amendments proposed to the Ingleside / Elanora Heights area based on the latest site inspections. Land has been added and removed from the map in various locations in Elanora Heights, resulting in several properties being added to the Draft Map in proximity to Powderworks Road, Wattle Road, Wilson Avenue, Mirbelia Pde and Wilga Street, Elanora Heights.
34 Judith Street, Seaforth	Proposed amendment to reduce the extent of bush fire prone vegetation in proximity to this property, resulting in removal of the property from the Draft Map.
8-10 Macpherson Street, Warriewood 53A Warriewood Road, Warriewood	Proposed amendment to reduce the extent of bush fire prone vegetation in proximity to these properties, resulting in the removal of these properties from the Draft Map.
Mona Vale Headland and surrounding land	Proposed change of vegetation category for bushland on Mona Vale Headland from Category 1 and Category 3 Vegetation to Category 2 Vegetation. In this regard, the buffer area is proposed to be reduced in some areas from 100m down to 30m. This would result in a number of properties to the north, south and west of the headland being removed from the Draft Map.
6 Narrabeen Park Parade, Warriewood	Proposed amendment to reduce the extent of bush fire prone vegetation in proximity to this property, resulting in removal of the property from the Draft Map.
Wyatt Avenue, Belrose (North Side) and 14 Wyatt Avenue, Belrose	Proposed amendment to expand the extent of Category 1 Vegetation north of Wyatt Avenue, Belrose, and to re-categorise vegetation to the rear of John Colet School from Category 2 to Category 1 vegetation. This would result in an amendment to the vegetation buffer area on the Draft Map and the inclusion of 14 Wyatt Avenue, Belrose on the Draft Map.

Can I build/renovate on bush fire prone land?

If you are looking to build or renovate on bush fire prone land, check out the NSW Rural Fire Service's helpful [on-line development tool](#), which will guide you in the right direction.

My property is cleared of vegetation, so why is it identified as bush fire prone land?

This may be because your property is located within a distance of 100m or 30m from vegetation that has been identified as having potential to support a bush fire.

Bush fire prone land is land that can support a bush fire or is likely to be subject to bush fire attack.

It is appropriate that people living in such areas are advised of such potential. Research has shown that 85% of houses are lost in the first 100m from bushland and that ember attack is a significant form of attack on properties.

My property has no history of bush fires so why is it identified as bush fire prone land?

The Bush Fire Mapping review is undertaken following the NSW RFS 'Guide for Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping' Version 5b (November 2015).

Bush Fires can occur at any time and it is not unusual for several decades to pass between events. Identification of land on a bush fire prone land map ensures that future building works close to bush fire prone areas is undertaken in line with the Building Code of Australia's Australian Standard AS3959-2009 'Construction of Buildings in Bush Fire Prone Areas', to maximise protection when a Bush Fire impacts.

When will the Northern Beaches Bush Fire Prone Land Map come into force?

All development applications will be assessed against the Northern Beaches Bush Fire Prone Land Map from the date of certification by the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service following Council's adoption of the Plan.

Bushland and bush fire hazard management

Due to the extensive amount of bushland that exists throughout the Northern Beaches, bush fire hazard management must be prioritised. Bush fire hazard management is therefore mainly focused in areas classified as being of high to moderate bush fire hazard. It is of greater importance that these bushland areas be managed for bush fire hazard to, for example, prevent the spread of bush fire from higher hazard areas to the lower hazard areas in the event of a bush fire.

Northern Beaches Council works in conjunction with the NSW Rural Fire Service to identify areas of Council land to be burnt as part of the hazard reduction program. The program is adopted annually, and burns are conducted as weather permits. Local residents are notified before the burns are conducted.

Council's Bushland and Biodiversity team manage over 350 sites across the Northern Beaches where bush regeneration contractors focus on reducing fire hazards and invasive weeds along the urban/bushland interface. Council also supports bushland regeneration initiatives such as the Bushcare Program where volunteers are supported to work in bushland areas to restore biodiversity by removing weeds, thereby reducing fuel levels. Bushcare volunteers work in a number of reserves across the Northern Beaches, and residents are encouraged to join to help conserve and restore our natural areas.

Rural Fire Service 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Entitlement Area

The Rural Fire Service's (RFS) 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Entitlement Area is generally aligned to land designated as bush fire prone on a Bush Fire Prone Land Map, with exceptions as outlined in Section 7.2 of the [10/50 Code of Practice](#). The Entitlement Area is governed by the RFS and allows clearing of vegetation in specific circumstances.

Section 10.7 Certificates (formerly known as Section 149 Certificates) under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979

The EP&A Act also requires Council to identify whether a parcel of land is located in a Bush Fire Prone Area on a Planning Certificate (previously known as Section 149 certificates) issued under Section 10.7 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979. Public access to BFPLMs allows owners, potential owners and other interested parties to be aware of the level of bush fire risk associated with a property.

The EP&A Act, 1979, requires that the information contained in a Bush Fire Prone Land Map (BFPLM) to be made available for public inspection during normal office hours.