

Applicability: PWS	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment	Date of first issue: 24/09/2009
Status: Approved	Fire Planning Policy PWS P-055	Date of last issue: 13/11/2014
		Version No: 1.1

**DEPARTMENT of PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, PARKS,
WATER and ENVIRONMENT**

PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



FIRE PLANNING POLICY

1 Purpose

Fire plans identify the actions required for preparedness, prevention, risk mitigation, response and recovery from bushfires. They are an essential part of the business of managing fire, to ensure that priorities are addressed and resources are directed as efficiently as possible. They aim to ensure the best possible level of fire protection while simultaneously maximising the nature conservation and land management outcomes.

The purpose of this policy is to identify the framework for fire management planning to be used by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) for reserved land and other Crown land that it is responsible for managing.

The policy aims to identify:

- the relationships between legislation, codes of practice, various fire plans and other administrative documents;
- the names, primary purposes and content of the various categories of fire plans within the multi-tiered framework; and
- the responsibilities for preparation, delivery and approval of the fire plans.

2 Background

2.1 Previous fire planning arrangements

The first version of this policy was written in 2009, prior to that time the PWS did not have a fire planning policy. Previously, documents called 'fire management plans' or 'fire management strategies' were prepared over a period of some 25 years on an *ad hoc* basis for individual reserves or groups of reserves. The production of these documents was reactive, usually in response to an identified need. Some of these plans and strategies are still useful today; however, most are now too old to be acceptable as approved documents with authority for proposed works and operations. Most reserves in Tasmania do not have any fire management plan or strategy.

2.2 Critical issues

The PWS is responsible for managing over 400 reserves. It will never have the resources to prepare separate fire management plans for all of these reserves and neither is it necessary to do so. Therefore an approach is required that offers the most efficient fire management planning and accommodates the many separate land parcels that comprise the reserve system. This is what this policy and framework aims to provide.

Another issue is the relationship between fire planning arrangements for reserved land and for neighbouring areas of private land and or land managed by Forestry Tasmania. Integration of fire planning across tenure boundaries is desirable and this should be pursued as far as practical. Indeed, this is the policy expressed in the Interagency Fire Management Protocol.

3 Contents

1	PURPOSE	1
2	BACKGROUND	1
2.1	PREVIOUS FIRE PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS.....	1
2.2	CRITICAL ISSUES	2
3	CONTENTS	2
4	DEFINITIONS	2
5	ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	4
6	POLICY	4
6.1	FIRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK	4
6.2	ELEMENTS OF THE FIRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK	5
7	POLICY OWNER	9
8	POLICY DOCUMENT APPROVAL	9
9	DOCUMENT HISTORY	9
10	SUBSIDIARY DOCUMENTS	9
11	REFERENCES	10

4 Definitions

Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS)	A nationally adopted structure to formalize a coordinated approach to emergency incident management.
Incident Controller	The individual responsible for the management of all incident control activities across a whole incident.
Incident Management Team	The group of incident management personnel comprised of the Incident Controller and any appointed Deputy Incident Controllers, the Safety Officer and any appointed functional officers leading the sections of Planning, Intelligence, Public Information, Operations, Investigation, Logistics and Finance and Administration. The Incident Controller has the power to co-opt others as members of the Incident Management Team from time to time.
Inter-Agency Fire Management Protocol	The operating agreement between the three organisations (Tasmania Fire Service, Forestry Tasmania and the Parks and Wildlife Service)

	most closely involved with the management of bushfires in Tasmania. The protocol underpins the cooperative spirit which exists to ensure that the management and suppression of fires in Tasmania is safe, efficient and cost effective.
Level 1 bushfire	A small, simple bushfire (or group of fires) which is generally controlled with local resources. The features of a Level 1 fire are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suppression efforts may include other agencies; • Incident Controller will usually undertake more than one function; • the fire can usually be contained within one twelve-hour shift; • mop up and patrol may be required for several days; • conducted under local oversight.
Level 2 bushfire	A developing or developed bushfire of medium size or complexity carrying moderate risk that will generally require the use of resources from outside the District /Region and could involve one or several agencies. The features of a Level 2 bushfire are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • probably will not be contained in less than 24 hrs; • Incident Controller may be undertaking more than one function but will normally have delegated at least the Operations function; • may require the deployment of the Planning and Logistics components in a small Incident Management Team; • conducted under single agency or District/Regional level multi-agency oversight.
Level 3 bushfire	A major bushfire carrying high risk that has one or more of the following complexities; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involves many resources and inter-agency operations; • involves multiple tenures; • requires involvement over an extended period of time (days or weeks) to resolve; • will require the incident to be managed from a dedicated Incident Control Centre; • will require the deployment of a well-resourced Incident Management Team; and, <p>Conducted under State level oversight, usually involving the SFOC/MAC Group.</p>
Planned Burning	The controlled application of fire under specified environmental conditions to a predetermined area and at the time, intensity, and rate of spread required to attain planned resource management objectives.
Reserve	Crown land set aside as reserved land under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2002</i>
Reserve Activity Assessment	A systematic way of assessing the environmental, social and economic impacts of an activity on land managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service.
Works	Includes any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land including the removal, destruction or lopping of trees and the

	removal of vegetation or topsoil, but does not include forest practices, as defined in the <i>Forest Practices Act 1985</i> , carried out in State forests.
--	---

5 Accountabilities and Responsibilities

The Manager Fire Operations is responsible for coordinating the implementation of this policy.

Responsibilities for the preparation and approval of the fire plans and other documents described in this policy are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

Plan or Document	Preparation delegated by	Approval
Code of Practice for Fire Management	State Fire Manager	Minister
Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan	State Fire Manager	General Manager PWS
Reserve Fire Management Strategy	Regional Manager	Regional Manager
Fire Works Plan	Regional Operations Manager	Regional Manager
Annual Planned Burning Plan & RAA	Regional Manager or State Fire Manager	Regional Manager
Fire Action Plan	State Fire Manager	State Fire Manager
Fire Emergency Response Plan	Regional Manager	Regional Manager
Planned Burning Form	Regional Operations Manager	Regional Manager or Parks and Reserves Manager
Incident Action Plan	Incident Controller	Incident Controller
Rehabilitation Plan	Incident Controller	Regional Manager

6 Policy

6.1 Fire planning framework

Appendix A presents the fire planning framework to be used by the PWS. This framework identifies the *primary* hierarchy and relationship between the legislation, policies and fire planning documents required for fire management. It is recognised that other legislation and government policies must be considered in the planning of fire operations – these are identified in the Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) process (refer to the *PWS Environmental Impact Assessment Policy*).

Any plan or document in the framework is bound by the instructions, direction and limitations imposed by legislation, codes of practice, policies, procedures, guidelines and other planning documents higher in the hierarchy.

6.2 Elements of the fire planning framework

6.2.1 National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002

Section 30 (3)(ca) of the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* gives authority to the PWS to:

‘to take any steps or undertake any activities that the managing authority considers necessary or expedient for the purposes of preventing, managing or controlling fire in reserved land, having regard to the management objectives for that reserved land’.

6.2.2 Code of Practice for Fire Management

It is anticipated that a Code of Practice for Fire Management will be prepared by the PWS in the future. Authority for such a code is in section 88A of the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*.

The purpose of a Code of Practice for Fire Management will be to establish principles, standards and guidelines that will apply to fire management on reserved land to ensure that, in a safe, effective and efficient manner:

- human life, property, and other assets are protected, as far as is practicable, from the deleterious consequences of bushfire;
- environmental values including the ecological health of the State’s Indigenous flora and fauna are protected and promoted, as far as is practicable, from the deleterious effects of successive bushfires, inappropriate fire regimes, and fire management activities;
- geodiversity, water catchment and waterways, air quality and landscape values are managed and protected; and
- Aboriginal, archaeological, historical and other cultural heritage values are protected.

Another primary purpose of the Code of Practice for Fire Management is to summarise the policies, procedures, guidelines and systems used by the PWS to make them accessible to the wider community and stakeholders. It is a way of stating publically ‘this is how we do our fire management’.

The Code of Practice for Fire Management will be approved by the Minister responsible for administering the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*.

6.2.3 Policies, procedures, guidelines and prescriptions

The PWS has policies, procedures and guidelines that must be followed in the development and implementation of fire plans. These policies, procedures and guidelines are generally approved by the General Manager, PWS if their application is specific to the PWS Division; or the Secretary, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment if they apply to the entire agency or if they are of a sensitive or contentious nature.

6.2.4 Regional Strategic Fire Management Plans

Each PWS region has a single Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan (RSFMP) that covers the entire region. The purposes of the RSFMPs are to:

- provide a consistent approach to fire management that addresses the bushfire risk to land managed by the PWS and neighbours;
- assess, identify, prioritise and manage the risk posed by bushfire hazard to or in relation to land managed by the PWS, utilising the Bushfire Risk Assessment Model (BRAM);

- identify fire management zones for land managed by the PWS, as a basis for setting priorities and strategy development;
- develop operational strategies and tactics for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery at a regional level that take into account environmental and cultural heritage requirements;
- provide guidance for the preparation of subordinate plans, including identifying which areas need such subordinate plans as a matter of priority; and
- engage community and stakeholder involvement.

The BRAM underpins the RSFMP. The BRAM is composed of spatial data stored and analysed in a Geographic Information System. The model is built from data on the consequences of wildfire (i.e. assets at risk, including economic assets and natural values) and the factors that contribute to the likelihood of these assets being impacted by bushfire: ignition potential, fire behaviour potential and suppression capability.

All reserved land will be assigned to fire management zones as follows:

- *Asset Zone* – assets of high strategic importance, including natural, cultural and economic values.
- *Asset Protection Zone* – area of high strategic importance to protect values in Asset Zones; bushfires will be managed on a priority basis to confine spread and extinguish.
- *Strategic Fuel Management Zone* – area of management that will increase the likelihood of controlling a bushfire within or the forward spread through the area, along with minimizing the potential for a bushfire to achieve a size greater than 5,000 hectares.
- *Land Management Zone* – fire management in the zone is to maintain appropriate fire regimes for the landscape vegetation communities, species diversity and cultural heritage.

The RSFMPs are technical documents and consultation during their development was with professional specialists and stakeholders, not with the general community. The RSFMP is approved by the General Manager, Parks and Wildlife Service.

6.2.5 Regional procedures and instructions

The PWS regions set procedures and instructions to facilitate the implementation of higher level policies, procedures, guidelines and the Regional Strategic Fire Management Plans.

All regional procedures and instructions are approved by the Regional Manager.

6.2.6 Reserve fire management strategies

Reserve Fire Management Strategies (RFMS) are a category of fire management plan that may be prepared for land managed by the PWS. Such strategies may encompass single reserves; groups of reserves within a defined area; or groups of reserves and other tenure within a defined area.

The purpose of the RFMS is to identify the fire management works program required within the defined area over a period of 5 to 10 years. This works program will typically include planned burning and the creation and maintenance of fire trails, fire breaks and waterholes. The RFMS will consist of a map or maps indicating the location of the required fire management works. A brief text will support these maps including an indication of when the works are proposed.

Not all reserves within a region will be covered by a RFMS. The need for and scope of these strategies will be determined by the Regional Manager, subject to the availability of staff

resources to prepare them, and guided by the priorities and zones identified in the Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan.

Reserve Fire Management Strategies are approved by the Regional Manager. The Regional Manager will determine the processes of stakeholder and community consultation required in the development of these strategies. The works identified in these strategies will, however, require separate approval via a Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) as indicated in sections 6.2.7 and 6.2.8.

6.2.7 Annual planned burning program

An Annual Planned Burning Program (APBP) will be prepared for each region. The purpose of these APBPs is to identify and gain approval for all the planned burning units that may be undertaken for the coming year. The yearly cycle will usually be the financial year because of the budget and business planning cycle used by PWS.

The APBP will usually include more planned burning units than can realistically be expected to be completed within the financial year because the capacity to complete the burning units depends on the availability of staff resources, suitable weather and fuel dryness.

The APBP will include:

- any burning units that are still proposed that had been planned and approved in previous years but not yet completed;
- burn units identified in Reserve Fire Management Strategies or the Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan; and
- burn units that have been identified from any other source.

The APBP will be submitted and approved by the Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) system using the Planned Burn RAA form that has been developed specifically for the purpose. In effect, the Planned Burn RAA form and attachments *is* the APBP.

In accordance with the *PWS Environmental Impact Assessment Policy*, the RAA that constitutes the APBP is approved by the Regional Manager.

6.2.8 Fire Works Plans

Fire Works Plans will be prepared for fire management works such as the creation and maintenance of fire trails, fire breaks, water holes and signs within the reserves of the region. The purpose of these plans is to identify the fire management works required for the specified period and gain approval for these works. The Fire Works Plans will not cover planned burning.

The Fire Works Plans will be prepared by or on behalf of the region. The number of Fire Works Plans and the period covered by these plans will be determined by the Regional Manager. The ideal would be for a single Fire Works Plan to be prepared on an annual basis for the region.

The Regional Manager will approve the Fire Works Plans and determine which of the specific works within these plans will require approval through the RAA system.

6.2.9 Fire Action Plan

A Fire Action Plan will be prepared and updated on an annual basis. The purposes of the Fire Action Plan are as follows:

- to identify the actions required by the PWS, on a routine daily and weekly basis, for the prevention and readiness to control bushfires and their impacts;
- to be a reference document for fire duty officers and regional staff; and
- to provide a source of useful information about external stakeholder contacts, initial bushfire response action and resources that will be required.

The Fire Action Plan will be a single document covering the entire state, but organised so that information specific to a single region can be readily identified. The Fire Action Plan will be approved by the State Fire Manager.

6.2.10 Fire Emergency Response Plans

Fire Emergency Response Plans are a category of fire management plan that may be prepared for reserves or groups of reserves managed by the PWS. The purpose of the Fire Emergency Response Plans is to identify the response actions required once a bushfire has started in an area that may be threatening the lives and wellbeing of visitors.

Fire Emergency Response Plans are a high priority for PWS because of the role that they play in protecting human life. However, not all reserves within a region will be covered by a Fire Emergency Response Plan. The need for and scope of these plans will be determined by the Regional Manager, subject to the availability of staff resources to prepare them, and guided by the priorities and zones identified in the Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan.

Preparedness, prevention and mitigation actions and strategies that contribute to visitor protection will not be included in the Fire Emergency Response Plans. Such actions and strategies are important but will be in other categories of fire management plans such as Fire Works Plans (e.g. the construction of signs, gates etc), Reserve Fire Management Strategies (e.g. fuel reduction burning) or the Fire Action Plan (e.g. closure of tracks at a prescribed trigger point level of Fire Danger Rating).

Fire Emergency Response Plans may be a part of Emergency Management Plans (*Emergency Management Act 2006*) or Emergency Response Plans that include other hazards.

Fire Emergency Response Plans are approved by the Regional Manager. The Regional Manager will determine the processes of stakeholder and community consultation required in the development of these plans.

6.2.11 Planned Burning Form

A separate operations plan will be prepared for every planned burn using the Planned Burning Form authorised as part of the PWS Planned Burning Policy. The purpose of the Planned Burning Form is to document all the operational detail necessary to ensure that a planned burn operation is conducted in a safe, reliable and accountable way.

The Planned Burning Form is approved by the Regional Manager if the risk level is assessed as high; or by the Parks and Reserves Manager if the risk level is assessed as low or moderate (refer to Planned Burning Policy).

6.2.12 Incident Action Plan

Incident Action Plans (IAP) will be prepared by Incident Management Teams for all level 2 and level 3 bushfires, in accordance with the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS). A streamlined one page IAP may be prepared for level 1 bushfires depending on the complexity of the incident.

The purpose of IAP's is to identify the objectives, strategies, resources and organisational arrangements for the operations associated with fire suppression operations.

Generally, a new Incident Action Plan is prepared for every day that control operations are being undertaken. In some situations two or more Incident Action Plans may be prepared within a 24 hour period, covering different shifts or operational periods, or if a change in situation necessitates new objectives and strategies.

The Incident Action Plan is approved by the Incident Controller.

6.2.13 Rehabilitation Plan

The purpose of a Rehabilitation Plan is to identify the issues that need to be addressed as a direct result of the impact of the bushfire (e.g. assessment of damage to natural values; replacement of signs; removal of dangerous trees) or as a result of the suppression operations (e.g. erosion control and closure of control lines; repairs to roads and tracks).

The preparation of the Rehabilitation Plan should be started by the Incident Management Team before the suppression operation has been completed. In some situations the Rehabilitation Plan may be completed by the PWS regional staff.

Rehabilitation Plans are usually approved by the Regional Manager who will also determine which components will require further assessment via the RAA process.

7 Policy Owner

State Fire Manager

8 Policy Document Approval

Approved by: Peter Mooney

General Manager Parks and Wildlife Service

Date: 26 November 2009

9 Document History

Version No.	Date of Issue	Changes
1.0	24/09/2009	New
1.1	13/11/2014	Add and update definitions and wording throughout document to ensure consistency with AFAC Bushfire Glossary. Change wording to reflect the completion of RSFMP's (4.2.4).

10 Subsidiary Documents

Documents serving to assist or supplement the implementation of this policy and procedures:

Doc. No.	Type	Title

11 References

- *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*
- *Fire Service Act 1979*
- *Emergency Management Act 2006*
- *Nature Conservation Act 2002*
- *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*
- *Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003*
- Interagency Fire Management Protocol (updated annually)
- Fire Action Plan (updated annually)
- PWS Policy – Fire Management (PWS P – 050)
- PWS Environmental Impact Assessment Policy (PWS P – 010)
- PWS Planned Burning Policy (PWS P – 052)
- General Management Plan for Tasmania’s Reserves 2013
- Southern, Northern and Northwest Region Strategic Fire Management Plans

Applicability: PWS	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment	Date of first issue: 24/09/2009
Status: Approved	Fire Planning Policy PWS P-055	Date of last issue: 13/11/2014
		Version No: 1.1

APPENDIX A: FIRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK OF THE PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

