

## Bushfire management on Crown land

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—Crown Lands is responsible for the management of NSW's Crown land, covering 42% of the state.

To protect our community and environment, the department manages and mitigates bushfire risks on Crown land by working with fire authorities, local stakeholders and other agencies.

### What we do

Crown Lands:

- meets its obligations under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*
- manages asset protection zones (also known as fire breaks) for existing development
- maintains fire trails and associated assets (gates, signs, fences)
- does not light or fight fires. We work with local fire authorities to identify and prepare sites for them to implement hazard reduction burns on Crown land.
- participates in NSW Emergency Management Response.

### Statutory obligations

As a public authority, Crown Lands has statutory obligations under the *Rural Fires Act 1997* to manage and mitigate the risks associated with bushfire on Crown land. We are required to take practical steps to prevent the occurrence of and to minimise the spread of bushfires on, or from, land under our control.

Generally, tenure holders and appointed Crown land managers are responsible for bushfire hazard reduction activities on the land under their care and control. We may need to provide approval for some bushfire hazard reduction activities.

### How we meet our bushfire management obligations

- Representation on the NSW Bush Fire Coordinating Committee
- Representation on local NSW Bush Fire Management Committees (57 across the state) and associated sub-committees
- Preparation of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans (BFRMPs) and Fire Access and Fire Trail (FAFT) Plans
- Implementation of an annual bushfire mitigation works program, including upgrade or maintenance of asset protection zones and fire trails, and implementation of hazard reduction burns
- Annual inspections of asset protection zones and fire trails including aerial inspection of fire trails in remote locations
- Prevention of arson in problem areas by implementing access management to Crown land and participation in other compliance-related activities
- Community education: letterbox drops, site visits, signage, BFRMP and FAFT Plan consultation, website information
- Hazard enquiries: We have a proactive approach to dealing with hazard enquiries. We work with the relevant fire authority to handle enquiries on a case-by-case basis.

## Bushfire mitigation

We spend up to \$6 million on bushfire mitigation works each year. The works are supported by funding from a variety of Australian and NSW Government sources.

### Our works program

- There are over 700 hectares of asset protection zones on Crown land, reducing the bushfire risk to approximately 21,000 properties across the state.
- Our establishment and maintenance of asset protection zones include slashing, mowing, tree pruning or removal.
- There are nearly 2,800 km of fire trails on Crown land. These trails form part of a network to provide access for firefighters during bushfires and hazard reduction burns.
- Fire trail works include grading, drainage and vegetation maintenance.
- We install and maintain infrastructure to facilitate access and compliance, as well as for educational purposes such as signage, bridges and culverts, fencing and gates.
- We facilitate hazard reduction burns on Crown land by local fire authorities.

## Emergency management role

Crown Lands has a limited emergency management role as it is not a fire-fighting agency.

Crown Lands plays an active role in bushfire management in line with the Prevention, Preparedness, Response, Recovery emergency management framework set out in the State Bush Fire Plan. Our focus is on the prevention, preparedness and recovery stages of emergency management. We also provide direct support to the NSW Rural Fire Service in the response stage. Interagency collaboration is a key action for Crown Lands at all stages of emergency management.

### Prevention

Crown Lands:

- participates actively on the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee and at local Bush Fire Management Committees
- develops BFRMPs and FAFT Plans
- establishes and maintains asset protection zones
- establishes and maintains fire trails
- encourages compliance through installing and maintaining gates, fencing and signage
- promotes stakeholder engagement and education.

### Preparedness

Crown Lands:

- actively manages stakeholder communication relating to risk and access to Crown land
- assists with response activities through the provision of staff and resources.

### Response

Crown Lands:

- reviews NSW Rural Fire Service Operations Plans

- provides staff to Incident Management Teams to assist with operations, planning, liaison, mapping, radio communications, logistics, on-site plant supervision and building impact assessment when formally requested by the NSW Rural Fire Service.
- provides support to the managers of Crown assets such as showgrounds and civic centres for use as incident management centres and response centres for emergency evacuation, animal storage, fodder distribution and safe places
- may protect public safety during a bushfire emergency by closing facilities and reserves until an assessment has been completed.

## Recovery

### Crown Lands:

- completes impact assessments of asset protection zones and fire trails
- identifies and mitigates hazards such as dangerous trees and illegal waste dumpsites
- provides information and guidance to affected tenure holders and Crown Land Managers regarding the repair and/or replacement of assets
- investigates options for financial relief for affected tenure holders.

## Useful references

- [Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—Crown Lands: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands/contact-us](http://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands/contact-us)
- [NSW Rural Fire Service: www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)
- [Office of Emergency Management: www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/publications/plans/sub-plans/bush-fire-plan.aspx](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/publications/plans/sub-plans/bush-fire-plan.aspx)

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