



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL

The Heart of Gippsland

BUSHFIRE PLACES OF LAST RESORT PLAN

(formerly titled *Neighbourhood Safer Places – Place of Last Resort Plan*)

Version 9.0

Wellington Shire Council

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	Emergency Management		
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Authorisation

This Bushfire Places of Last Resort Plan (formerly titled the *Neighbourhood Safer Places – Place of Last Resort Plan*) has been produced by and with the authority of the Wellington Shire Council to support the general requirements of the *Emergency Management Act 1986* section 20(1) and the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* section 50F to section 50O.

The Bushfire Places of Last Resort Plan supports the Wellington Municipal Emergency Management Plan via the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee and is endorsed by the Chair of the Committee:

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Signed: **Date:** 26 November 2020



Sharon Houlihan
Chair Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee

Version Control

November 2009	Draft template sent to all council CEOs for comment
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September 2020	General review and update of annual recertification documents

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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 a bushfire¹.

In response to this recommendation, the Victorian Government introduced the *Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Act 2009* (ESLA Act) which amended the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* (CFA Act) and the *Emergency Management Act 1986* (EM Act). The effect of these amendments requires the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to certify BPLR's against the CFA's NSP-BPLR Assessment Guidelines, and Victoria's Councils to identify, designate, establish and maintain suitable sites as BPLRs in their municipal districts.

In 2015, Emergency Management Victoria changed the name of NSPs to Bushfire Places of Last Resort. Wellington Shire Council has chosen to utilise this new terminology throughout this document review and hence forth; the term 'Bushfire Place of Last Resort' (BPLR) better reflects how these sites are to be used.

BPLRs are not community fire refuges or emergency relief centres. BPLRs 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. BPLRs 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 BPLRs 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 will up to the individual's own judgement and decision about the best place to shelter or travel to in the presence of a bushfire.

BPLRs will be assessed by the CFA as providing some protection from immediate risk of direct fire attack, but not necessarily from other risks, such as flying embers.

This Plan is a "Municipal Council Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan" for the purposes of the CFA Act 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

sites as BPLRs within its municipal district.

¹ Recommendation 8.5, 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Interim Report

This Plan also identifies other matters that should be considered in identifying, designating, establishing and maintaining BPLRs within the municipality.

The Plan and any documents incorporated into it are available at Council's municipal offices for public exhibition during normal office hours free of charge under section 50F(4)(b) of the CFA Act and published on Council's website under section 50F(4)(a) of the CFA Act.

Structure of this Plan

This Plan has been divided into five distinct sections:

Section 1 contains process maps that summarise the key activities and tasks for identifying, designating, establishing, reviewing, maintaining and decommissioning BPLRs within Wellington Shire municipal district.

Section 2 contains a more detailed summary of the steps summarised in the process maps in Section 1.

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

Section 4 contains requirements for signage that Council is required to erect at designated BPLR locations.

Section 5 contains details of Wellington Shire Council's designated BPLR locations.

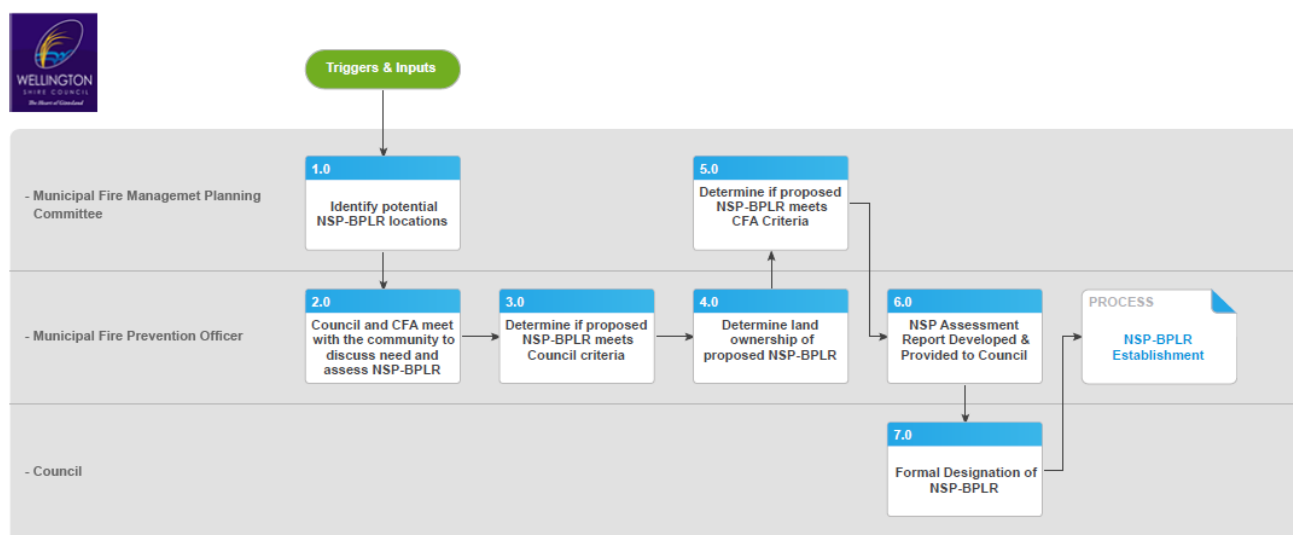
Appendices information and processes which provide guidance to the designation of each BPLR, as well as locations that have been previously assessed.

SECTION 1 – BPLR PROCESS MAPS

Overview of the processes for identifying, designating, establishing, reviewing, maintaining and decommissioning BPLRs after adoption of this Plan by Council.

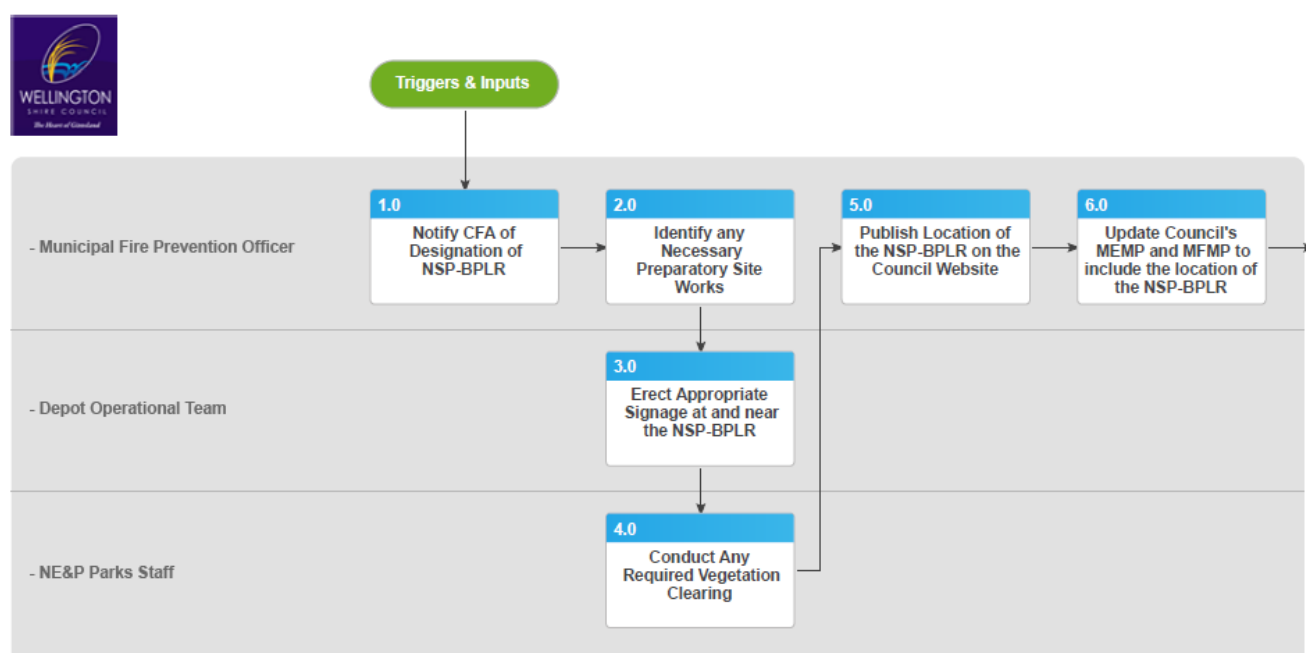
1.1 Identification and Designation

Overview of the process for identifying and designating BPLRs:



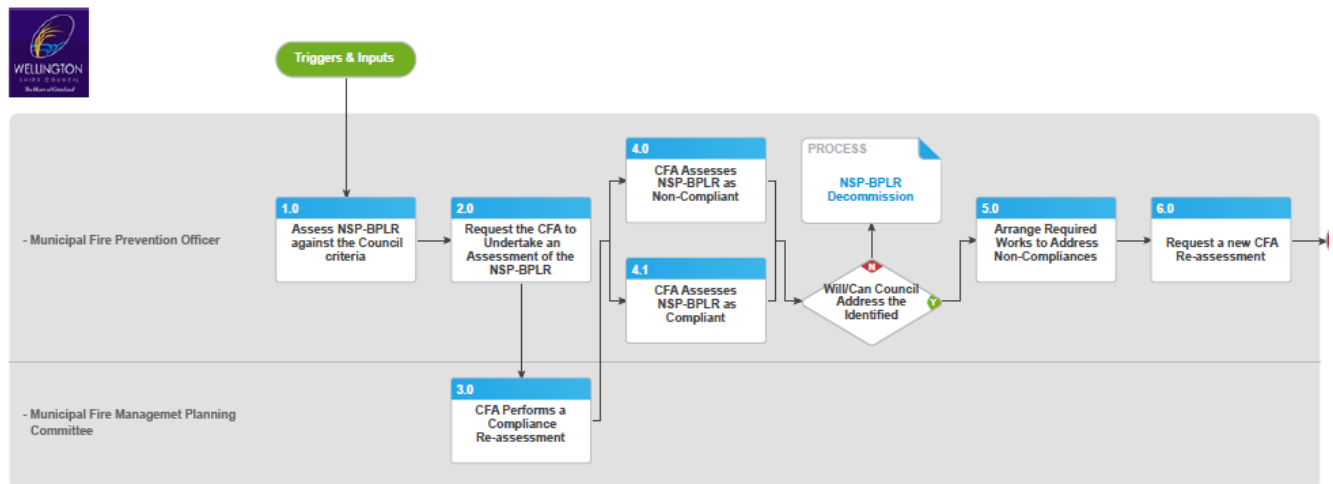
1.2 Establishment

Overview of the process to Establish a BPLR:



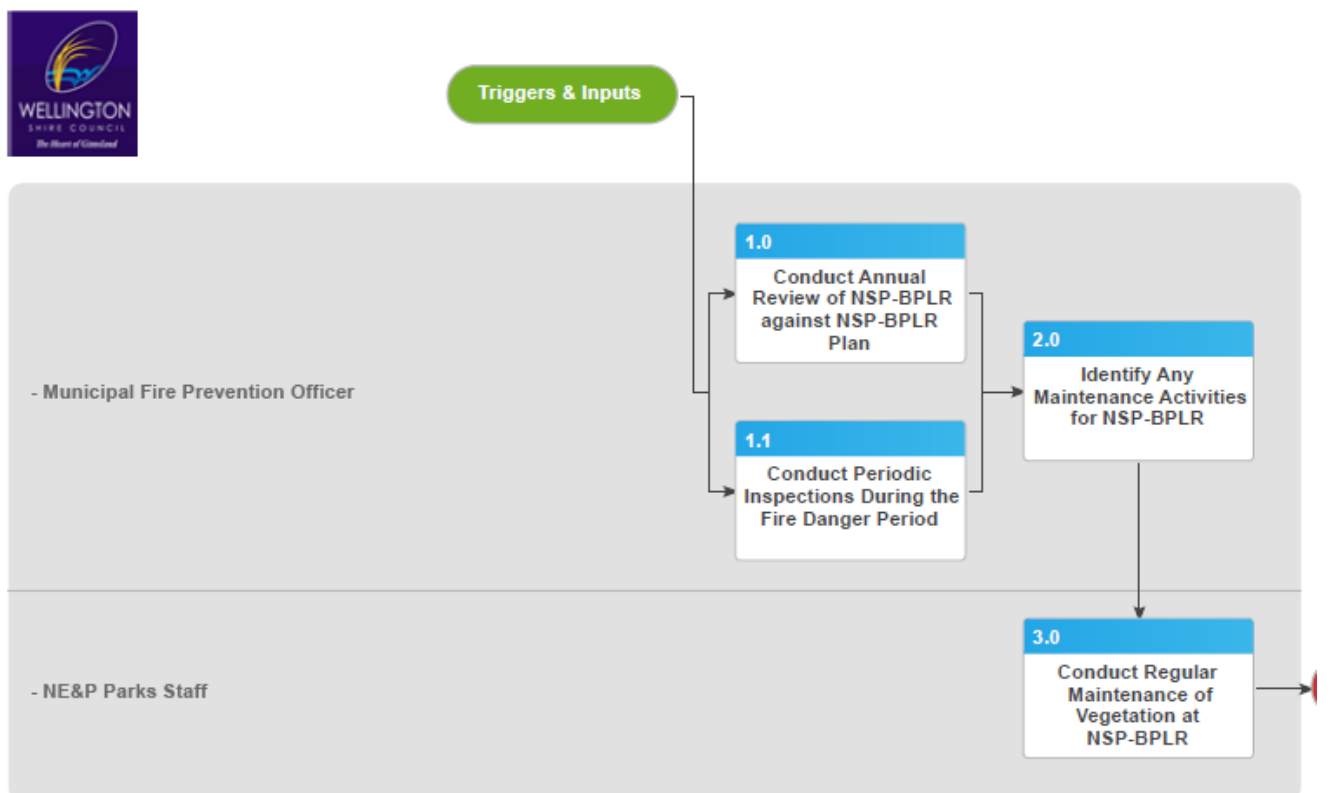
1.3 Annual Reassessment

Overview of the annual reassessment requirements and procedures for designated BPLRs.



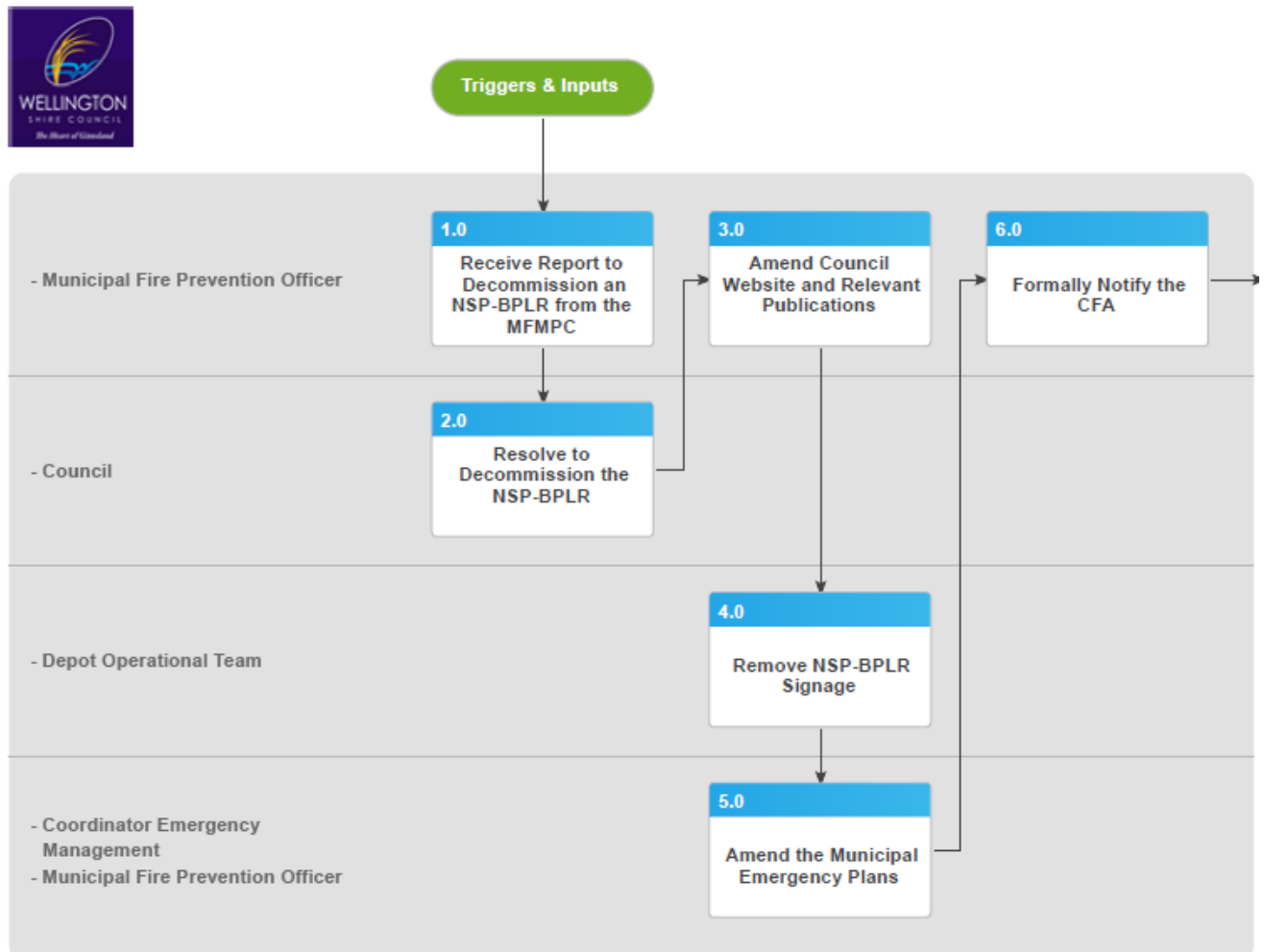
1.4 Maintenance

Overview of the maintenance requirements and procedures for designated BPLRs.



1.5 Decommission

Overview of the decommissioning requirements and procedures for designated BPLRs.



SECTION 2 – DETAILED SUMMARY OF STEPS

2.1 Identification of Potential BPLRs

Who is responsible for identifying potential BPLR locations?

Wellington Shire Council has undertaken identification and management of the BPLR process in consultation with the Council and the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee. The Country Fire Authority (CFA) has assumed the responsibility for assessing the potential radiant heat flux of proposed BPLR locations. Council will consult with Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMV) to undertake ember attack assessments, where required.

What must be considered when identifying potential BPLR locations?

Council's identification of potential BPLR locations should be undertaken by the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO) and the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO), with input from other relevant Council officers as appropriate.

When identifying potential BPLR locations, Council should consider matters such as:

- Community risk profile utilising data such as the Victorian Fire Risk Register (VFRR) human settlement assets identified within the municipal district. Including consideration of 'neighbourhood' catchments within identified areas of risk;
- Use of open space as a BPLR in the first instance before the consideration of the use of buildings;
- The environment surrounding the potential BPLR;
- What other uses the potential BPLR has and whether or not those uses could be inconsistent with its designation as a BPLR;
- Whether the land on which the potential BPLR is located is Council-owned or non-Council owned land;
- Whether there are clear means of access and egress to and from the potential BPLR; and
- If there is a determined need for a BPLR identified by the community.

The criteria, by which CFA assesses an NSP-BPLR, provides a framework to assist councils to identify locations within their municipality as places of last resort for people to gather to shelter from the immediate life-threatening effects of a bushfire. Refer to section **Error! Reference source not found.**, for more information.

Refer to SECTION 3 – COUNCIL ASSESSMENT TOOL.

Ideal Identification Timing

Wellington Shire Council no longer actively identifies new BPLR locations. However, Council will continue to receive and assess suggestions for new BPLRs within the municipality from the community or emergency agencies.

Any new BPLR locations must be identified prior to 30 June each year. This should allow sufficient time for:

- CFA Certification - assessment and certification of the potential BPLR by the CFA;
- Council Designation - designation of the potential BPLR location by the Council; and
- Establishment - subject to the outcome of the assessment and designation process, establishing the BPLRs, including the erection of signage and other steps by Council.

This timing is obviously subject to the CFA assessing and certifying the potential BPLR location in a timely manner and agreement with the site owner/occupier to use the site as a BPLR.

Community Consultation

The community may be the 'driver' of a BPLR in their community, however the CFA assessment and other factors may preclude the communities preferred site. Before council chooses locations for assessment as a BPLR, community meetings should take place to consult directly with communities regarding the need for a BPLR in a given area.

Engaging the community via the consultation process will ensure the community understands the outcome of the assessment process to identify, designate, establish and maintain a BPLR.

2.2 Council Assessment of Potential BPLRs

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

The BPLR subcommittee will be responsible for coordinating the inspection process utilising the membership's expertise to assist with the audit and assessment of potential BPLRs.

Key Site Suitability Criteria

➤ Consent and Rights of Access

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

- Use the site as a BPLR;
- Access the site and surrounding areas for maintenance; and
- Erect appropriate signage at the BPLR, which includes the approved additional BPLR information.

➤ Community consultation

The community, through consultation with Council and CFA, understands the risks associated with a potential BPLR location in their neighbourhood.

➤ CFA involvement

Ensure that CFA is satisfied with the location of BPLRs that are placed in their brigade areas.

Land Tenure

Council Land

If the potential BPLR is on land owned or controlled by Council, appropriate rights of land access and tenure are unlikely to 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 reasonable terms with the tenant or licensee permitting Council to use the land as a potential BPLR. In taking these matters into account, Council should consider what alternative uses or arrangements may be made, whether temporarily or semi-permanently, of land under Council control or management.

Crown Land

If the potential BPLR is on Crown land not owned or controlled by Council, then the consent of the Crown land manager is 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 site as a potential BPLR 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 site to be used as a potential BPLR.

Private Land

Where it is proposed that a site on privately-owned land is to be used as a BPLR, the consent of the relevant landowner (and/or occupier) is required. If the landowner (or occupier) does not consent to the site being designated and used as a BPLR on terms which are reasonable to the Council, it must not be designated and used.

Deed of Consent

Where a potential BPLR 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 BPLR should not be designated by Council.

The form of consent may require a contractual licence. This licence may need to address issues such as responsibility for damage, and maintenance of the BPLR.

Access and Egress

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

- anticipated potential numbers of people to move to and from the site; and
- the CFA and other emergency services to attend the site for asset and personnel protection activities and operations.

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

As people may be seeking access to a BPLR 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 a BPLR are crucial.

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

- The condition of the road surface.
- The proximity of the BPLR to major roadways and population centres.
- 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 BPLR, or otherwise block access to the BPLR.
- The capacity of access routes to accommodate potentially large numbers of vehicles, and to accommodate potential vehicle break-downs.

- Parking at the site, considering that a separate area or adequate space may need to be available to ensure pedestrians can move away from areas where vehicles may enter or park.
- Any hazards that may exist for persons accessing the site by foot, including in the buffer zone.
- Any relevant matter contained in Council's Road Management Plan prepared pursuant to the Road Management Act 2004.

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

Preference of Open Space over Buildings

When establishing a BPLR, Council will always preference an open area rather than a building. The preference of open spaces over buildings is predicated upon potential access and egress issues associated with entry to buildings during a fire. If for example, Council officers cannot safely travel to a BPLR building during a fire to open it for community access due to fire blocking travel, this may place the community at a high level of risk if they are dependent on it in their fire plan. Therefore, open spaces (ovals, sporting grounds etc.) will be given preference over buildings.

Where a building is nominated as a BPLR, consideration must be given to how the community can access the building as a BPLR without the need for a Council officer to attend and open the building. Coded key locks may be an option with the key code held by the MERO or local Police station.

Opening of the BPLR

Council must consider:

- Whether it will be possible or practicable to open the potential BPLR or otherwise make it available for use on a 24-hour basis during the declared fire danger period.
- The potential for damage to the site during times that it is open and available for use, but is not being used as a BPLR.
- The potential costs to Council associated with (i) and (ii) above.
- The possibility that a potential BPLR could be used for unintended purposes, such as an emergency relief centre.

Defendable Space and Fire Suppression

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

Despite this, the potential BPLR 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 site.

Any open space should be 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 site;
- 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 defensible space and fire vehicle access requirements.

When assessing the defensible 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* (Cwlth), *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* or the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. If such approval is required, then it must be obtained before the potential BPLR location is designated.

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

Defendability of Buildings

If the potential BPLR is a building (see Preference of Open Space over Buildings above), 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 BPLRs, the Council should consider this issue. In considering this issue, Council may need to seek expert advice from FFMV or appropriately-qualified CFA personnel.

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

Signage

Council must assess whether it will be possible to have signage at the entry to, and in the vicinity of, the potential BPLR. Such signage must be in accordance with the [EMV Neighbourhood Safer Places - Bushfire Place of Last Resort Signage Manual October 2015](#).

Council must refer to the Manual when considering whether or not appropriate signage can be erected. Council may also wish to provide further signage and information at the location to inform and support potential users of the BPLRs.



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

Maintenance and Maintainability

Council must ensure that the potential BPLR can be maintained in accordance with the criteria considered 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.

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

When assessing the maintainability of the potential BPLR, both the site and the surrounding areas may require various maintenance activities to be undertaken on a periodic basis. The potential introduction of hazards into the surrounding areas, such as structures, animals and vehicles, should be considered.

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 site, and areas surrounding it, will be maintained to a satisfactory level.

When assessing the maintainability of a potential BPLR, 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* (Cwlth), *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* or the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. If such approval is required, then it must be obtained before the potential BPLR location is designated.

Specifically, the site must be capable of being maintained so as to ensure continuing compliance with the [CFA Neighbourhood Safer Place – Bushfire Place of Last Resort Assessment Guidelines June 2016](#) and the Council BPLR Plan. If it is not possible for Council to maintain a potential BPLR, then it must not be designated as such.

Disabled Access

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

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 BPLR area to allow persons with disabilities to be dropped off within the site.

Alternative Uses of Potential BPLR

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

Where a potential BPLR which is used by CFA for operational purposes, and has been assessed by the CFA as meeting the criteria in the [CFA Neighbourhood Safer Place – Bushfire Place of Last Resort Assessment Guidelines June 2016](#), and has been certified by the CFA, then the CFA advises that those operational activities will be able to continue (to the extent practicable in the circumstances) while the site is being used as a BPLR.

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

Communication with Community

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

Public Liability Insurance

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

- 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 site as a BPLR, as well as travel to a BPLR;
- any indemnity provided by the State of Victoria; and
- any statutory defences to claims.

2.3 CFA Assessment and Certification of Potential BPLRs

The CFA² is responsible for assessing potential BPLR locations against the [CFA NSP-BPLR Assessment Guidelines](#), following a request from council through the NSP-BPLR Online Business System³. Assessment will be undertaken by appropriately qualified and experienced CFA personnel.

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

CFA Assessment Criteria

In assessing potential BPLR locations, the CFA must consider the criteria and other considerations as set out in the [CFA NSP-BPLR Assessment Guidelines](#) as issued from time to time by the CFA.

The key matters to be considered by the CFA under the current [CFA NSP-BPLR Assessment Guidelines](#) are:

a. For open spaces

- i. the appropriate separation distance between the outer edge of the potential BPLR and the nearest fire hazard (Buffer Zone) should be at least 310 metres; or
- ii. 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/m².

b. For buildings

- i. The Buffer Zone between the outer edge of the building and the nearest fire hazard should be at least 140 metres; or
- ii. 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/m².

Councils may identify a suitable BPLR site in a grassland area that can only meet the assessment criteria with active management of the site, over the fire danger period, with treatments including slashing, mowing or grazing.

In these circumstances CFA may certify the site as meeting the assessment criteria provided that appropriate, specified and prescribed treatments are in place throughout the fire danger period. This must include prescriptions for management of the grassland secured by agreed terms entered into by the landholder. The landholder may be the council, a public authority, an agency or a private person.

CFA publishes on their [website](#) the [CFA NSP-BPLR Assessment Guidelines](#) which is available for public use.

² Country Fire Authority Act 1958 Part IIIA Division 3 s50E

³ NSP-BPLR Online System access: <http://www.saferplaces.cfa.vic.gov.au/cfa/authen/default.htm>

Notification to CFA of potential BPLR locations

Following identification of a site which may be deemed suitable as a BPLR by Council, the potential BPLR site is sent to the CFA for assessment. This is likely to occur shortly after identification.

Notification of CFA Assessment Results to Council

Once the assessment of a potential BPLR is completed by the CFA, the CFA will certify the potential BPLR if the site meets the [CFA NSP-BPLR Assessment Guidelines](#). The CFA will provide a copy of the CFA certification in relation to a potential BPLR 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 BPLR 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 a requirement of this Plan, that only those sites assessed and certified by the CFA may be considered for designation as BPLRs by the Council. The Council must not designate a site as a BPLR unless it has CFA certification.

2.4 Designation of BPLRs

A BPLR audit and assessment report prepared by the BPLR subcommittee detailing whether or not the potential BPLR meets the BPLR criteria should be prepared and provided to Council.

Prior to any finalisation of a BPLR designation by Council and if practicable to do so, the MEMPC and the MFMPC should have endorsed the BPLR.

Once such endorsement has been received Council must formally determine whether or not to designate a site as a BPLR. Council should not designate a site as a BPLR unless it is satisfied that the site is suitable, having regard to the Council BPLR Plan and the [CFA NSP-BPLR Assessment Guidelines](#).

A BPLR may only be designated by a resolution of the Council.

Communicating a Designated BPLR

When the Council designates a BPLR, the community must be informed of the use and location of the BPLR. Council will normally promote the BPLR via the media and other means appropriate to meet community needs.

Council will include on its website the location of designated BPLRs.

2.5 Establishment and Maintenance of BPLRs

Establishing BPLRs

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

To establish a BPLR after its designation, Council must:

- Notify CFA of designation (through the BPLR Online Business System) together with provision of Council minutes, outline completion of the criteria within the BPLR Plan, and landlord consent and agreed terms (grassland management) where applicable;
- Erect appropriate signage at and near the BPLR. Consideration should also be given if appropriate directional signage may be needed to assist in directing public to the site;
- 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 a BPLR;
- publish the location of the BPLR on the Council website; and
- update Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan and Municipal Fire Management Plan to include the location of the BPLR.

Maintaining BPLRs

BPLRs 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 site as a BPLR. If additional works have been required to establish the BPLR, then those works should be subject to periodic review.

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

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

Council must inspect the BPLR, 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 BPLR continues to be capable of functioning as a BPLR.

If Council identifies issues that may impact upon the functioning of the site as a BPLR, then Council must:

- address the issue;
- take reasonable steps to have the issue addressed, such as requesting the owner of the land on which the BPLR or Buffer Zone is located to address the issue; or
- consider decommissioning the BPLR and revoking the designation of the site as a BPLR.

2.6 Annual Inspection of BPLRs

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

Council must also request the CFA to undertake an assessment (through the CFA BPLR Online Business System) against the [CFA NSP-BPLR Assessment Guidelines](#) of each BPLR within the municipality on an annual basis.

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

Considerations when undertaking inspections

BPLRs should be assessed annually against the Council BPLRP, and CFA will assess BPLRs against the CFA BPLR Assessment Guidelines.

If a BPLR no longer meets:

- the CFA BPLR Assessment Guidelines, then it must be decommissioned; and
- the Council BPLR Plan, then Council must determine whether or not it wishes to address any of the identified non-compliances. If it does not, then the BPLR must be decommissioned.

Inspection Timelines

BPLRs must be inspected prior to 31 August each year under. Council will also undertake fire hazard inspections of the site prior to and during the fire danger period to ensure the site is being managed appropriately.

2.7 Decommissioning of BPLRs

By Council resolution:

- Council must decommission a designated BPLR if the CFA assessment of the site determines it is no longer suitable.
- The Council may decommission a BPLR even though it has CFA certification, if the Council is satisfied on reasonable grounds that it is not appropriate for the site to continue to be designated as a BPLR.
- The Council will decommission a BPLR that is not on council owned land if the occupier or the person in control of the land has withdrawn consent to the designation of the site as a BPLR.

Council should only decommission a BPLR once they have gone through the decommissioning procedure listed below.

To decommission a BPLR council must:

1. Receive report to decommission a BPLR through a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee meeting (can be out of session);
2. Be informed to decommission a BPLR at a Council meeting;
3. Amend the council website and council community bushfire information (including relevant township protection plans) to reflect the fact that the site is no longer designated as a BPLR;
4. Remove or conceal (in cases where site is being temporarily decommissioned) signage at the site;
5. Amend the Municipal Emergency Management Plan and Municipal Fire Management to show that the site has been decommissioned; and
6. Notify CFA of the site's decommissioned status (through the [CFA's BPLR Online Business System](#)), which removes the BPLR location from the CFA website.

If a BPLR receives a non-compliant assessment during the Annual Review the CFA will contact that council and discuss options.

Once the non-complaint assessment is input into the [CFA BPLR Online Business System](#) the BPLR will be removed automatically from the CFA website but will not be decommissioned until council formally notifies CFA of decommissioning through the CFA BPLR Online Business System.

SECTION 3 – COUNCIL ASSESSMENT TOOL

3.1.BPLR - Potential Site Assessment Tool

Assessment Details

Day:		Date:	/ /	Time:	am/pm
Assessors Name:					
Assessors Signature:					
Agency:					

Location

Place name & Specific Location:				
Distance from nearest town centre (km):		Map Reference:		
Controlling (owner) authority:				
Owner Details:				
Contact Name / Position:				
Organisation:				
Postal Address:		Post Code:		
Phone:	W	M		
Email:				
Tenant Details:				
Contact Name / Position:				
Organisation:				
Postal Address:		Post Code:		
Phone:	W	M		
Email:				

Location Details			
Location Description			
Population of Township / Locality		Open Area or Building	
Estimated BPLR Capacity			
Reference Material Sited			
BPLR Inspection Details			
Officers Name:			Signature: <div></div>
Date of Inspection:		Recommendation:	Designate <div></div>
			Not Designate <div></div>
Officers Name:			Signature: <div></div>
Date of Inspection:		Recommendation:	Designate <div></div>
			Not Designate <div></div>

Factors to Consider in Assessing Potential BPLRs

Council BPLRP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
Consents and rights of access See section: Land Tenure	If the potential BPLR is located on Council-owned land, can Council use the land as a BPLR 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 BPLR 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 BPLR on reasonably satisfactory terms? Also consider whether Council has the right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> access the site and surrounding areas for maintenance; and erect appropriate signage at the BPLR. 		
Access and egress See section: Access and Egress	Do access routes to the potential BPLR allow for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 BPLRP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
Maintenance of BPLR in accordance with CFA assessment See section: 1.4 Maintenance	<p>Can Council maintain the potential BPLR in accordance with the criteria considered by the CFA in arriving at its fire rating assessment?</p> <p>If the CFA have not provided sufficient information in relation to the criteria it has considered in arriving at its fire rating assessment, it may be necessary for Council to seek further information from the CFA.</p>		
Opening of the BPLR See section: Opening of the BPLR	<p>Will it be possible and practicable to make the potential BPLR available for use on a 24-hour basis during the declared fire danger period? This is a particular issue where the potential BPLR is a building.</p> <p>Consider the potential for damage to the BPLR which could result during times that it is open and available for use, but is not being used as a BPLR.</p>		
	<p>What costs could be incurred by Council in making the potential BPLR available on a 24-hour basis during the declared fire danger period? Are these costs reasonable, and capable of being borne by Council?</p>		
	<p>Could the potential BPLR be used for an unintended purpose which could impact upon its use as a BPLR (such as an emergency relief centre)?</p>		
Defendable space and fire suppression activities See section: Defendable Space and Fire Suppression	<p>Is the potential BPLR 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)?</p> <p>Council should seek CFA advice concerning the defendability of the potential BPLR and the Buffer Zone,</p>		

Council BPLRP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
	including in relation to fire vehicle access requirements.		
	Will approval be required under legislation such as the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth), Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic) and the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic)? Can such approval be obtained before the BPLR is established?		
Defendability of buildings See section: Defendability of Buildings	If the potential BPLR is a building, has Council has sought expert advice from the CFA to determine whether the BPLR 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 See section: Signage	Can appropriate signage be erected at the entry to the potential BPLR, and in its vicinity?		
	If signage needs to be placed on private land, can Council obtain the consent of the relevant landowner to the erection of the signage?		
Maintenance and maintainability See section: Maintenance and Maintainability	Is the potential BPLR capable of being maintained to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council BPLRP Criteria? Where relevant, consider whether adjoining land owners and occupiers will provide Council with an assurance that both the potential BPLR and the Buffer Zone can be maintained to a satisfactory level.		
Disabled access See section: Disabled Access	Are there are means of access for disabled and mobility-impaired persons to the potential BPLR, including vehicle access to drop off people with disabilities?		

Council BPLRP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
Alternative uses of potential BPLR See section: Alternative Uses of Potential BPLR	<p>Can Council manage alternative uses which may be made of the potential BPLR so as to ensure that those uses will not compromise the function of the place as a potential BPLR?</p> <p>The CFA has advised that where a potential BPLR which is used for an operational purpose at many times 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 a BPLR.</p>		
Community Communication See section: Communication with Community	<p>Will it be possible to ensure that there will be good community awareness of the location of the potential BPLR, and the risks associated with using the potential BPLR?</p>		

SECTION 4 – BPLR SIGNAGE GUIDELINES

Under section 50H of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*, 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;
- (2) Have regard for signage guidelines published from time to time on the Internet site of Emergency Management Victoria (EMV)

The EMV Neighbourhood Safer Places - Bushfire Place of Last Resort Signage Manual October 2015 has been prepared and approved by Emergency Management Victoria. The signage in the manual may be used for the operation of a Bushfire Place of Last Resort (formerly Neighbourhood Safer Place - Place of Last Resort) only.

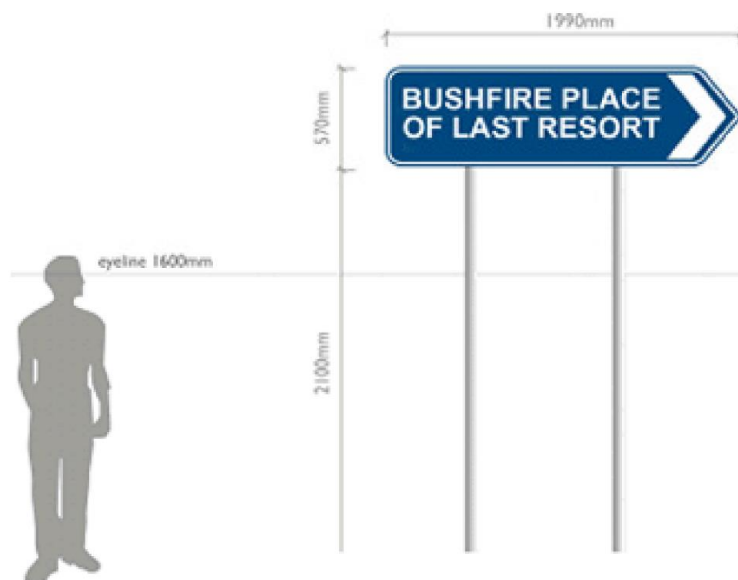
It is the responsibility of the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee or Emergency Management Planning Committee to ensure symbol site signage as a minimum is erected at each designated Bushfire Place of Last Resort and determine if road and parking signage is required based on a recommendation from CFA, Vic Police, council or the community.

There are four sign levels included in the manual as follows.

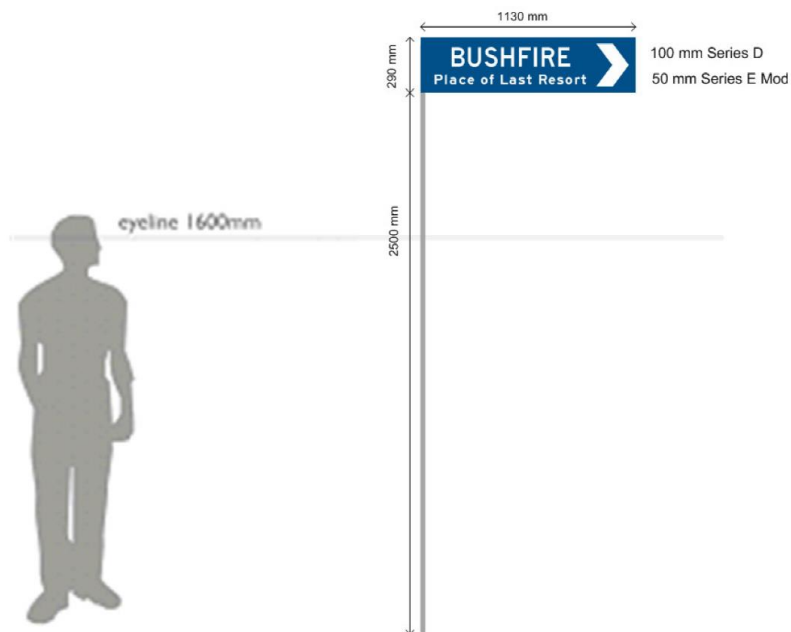
4.1 Level 1 Signs – Road Signs

This sign level is categorised as a services sign and consists of white reflective lettering on a blue background. These signs are intended for vehicle traffic.

Sign A – Opposite Entrance to BPLR

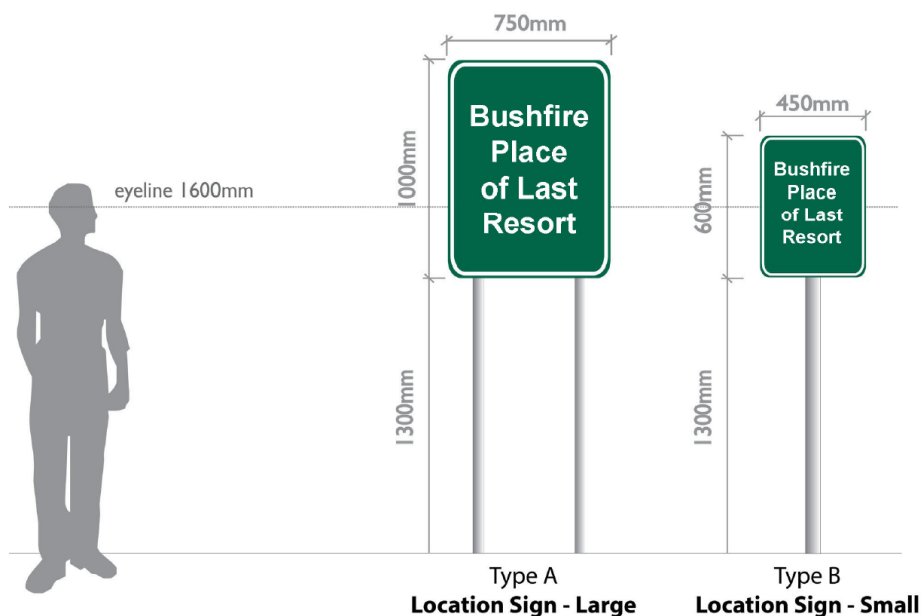


Sign B – Intersection where a Turn is Required from a Declared Road



4.2 Level 2 Signs – Location Signs at Entry Point

The Type A sign (Vehicle entrance sign) has been designed to attract attention at the vehicle entrance of the property boundary. The Type B sign (Pedestrian entrance sign) has been designed to attract attention and indicate the exact location of the Bushfire Place of Last Resort pedestrian entrance.



4.3 Level 3 Signs – Parking Signs

Parking signs define vehicle access to the designated parking area for the Bushfire Place of Last Resort. Type A defines the designated parking area. Type B is a directional sign to the designated parking area.



4.4 Level 4 Signs – Symbol Site Signs

Site signage defines the actual location of the Bushfire Place of Last Resort. Council must ensure that appropriate signs are erected at each designated site.



4.5 BPLR Symbol Site Sign Standard Text

WARNING

This designated Bushfire Place of Last Resort (BPLR) is a place of last resort during the passage of a bushfire. Whilst it may offer some protection from bushfire, the safety or survival of those who assemble here is not guaranteed.

Before deciding to head towards, or enter, this BPLR in the event of bushfire, be aware that:

- Many houses may offer better protection than this BPLR
- Travelling to this BPLR when there is bushfire can be extremely dangerous. There is no guarantee that you will be safe doing so.
- This BPLR may not prevent death or injury from fire, embers or radiant heat when you get here
- You should only use this BPLR when your primary bushfire plan has failed or cannot be implemented
- This BPLR only has limited capacity
- There is no guarantee that CFA or other emergency services will be present at this BPLR during a bushfire
- No facilities are provided for people with special needs, including those requiring medical attention
- This BPLR may be uncomfortable and no amenities such as food and drinks will be provided
- There is no provision for animals

VicEmergency Hotline - 1800 226 226

SECTION 5 – REGISTER OF DESIGNATED BPLR LOCATIONS

DESIGNATED BPLR Location Register

PORT ALBERT

Port Albert Boat Ramp, Car park and surrounds

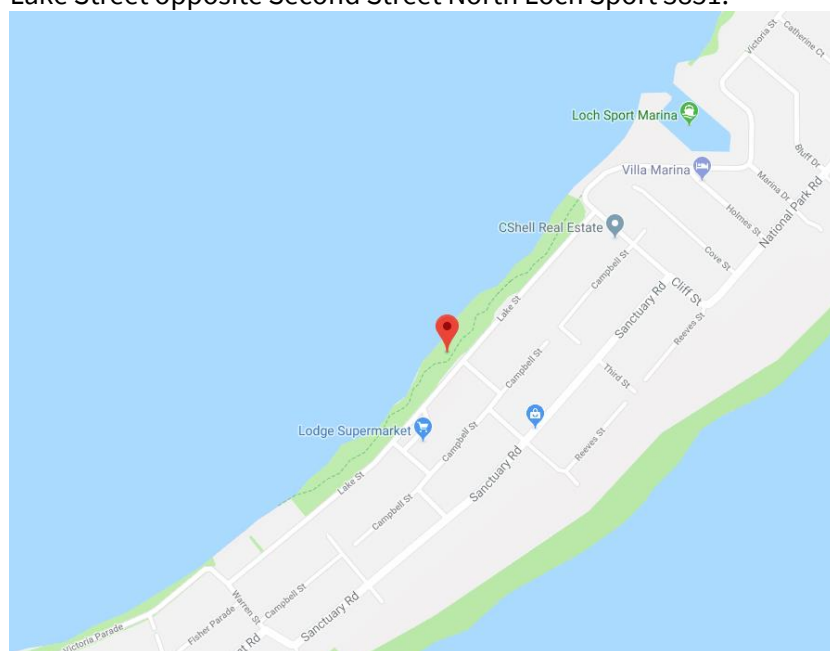
Corner of Wharf St (Yarram-Port Albert Rd) & Bay St Port Albert 3971.



LOCH SPORT

Lions Park

Lake Street opposite Second Street North Loch Sport 3851.



APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Port Albert BPLR – Council Assessment Checklist & Latest CFA Assessment Summary Report - Certification

Appendix 2 Loch Sport BPLR – Council Assessment Checklist & Latest CFA Assessment Summary Report - Certification

Appendix 3 Full List of Past and Current CFA Assessed BPLR Locations

Appendix 1 Port Albert BPLR – Council Assessment Checklist & Latest CFA Assessment Summary Report - Certification

Port Albert - Council Assessment Checklist

Checklist	Notes
Proposed BPLR Location	Port Albert Jetty/Boat Ramp carpark
Areas the BPLR is proposed to service	Port Albert/Langsbrough
Land Tenure	
Permission to use the land	Council owned
Access to perform maintenance	Good
Access and permission to erect signs	Council owned
Access and Egress	
Access to allow anticipated numbers of people	Good
Suitable for CFA or others to access site for protection	Good
Condition of road surface	Paved, good
Proximity of BPLR to major roadways and population centres	Good
Type and amount of vegetation along access routes	NIL
Capacity of roadway to handle traffic volume and breakdown of vehicles	Good
Parking at BPLR	Good
Suitable safe foot access Conforms to Road Management Act	Good
Maintenance	
Can maintenance be carried out to CFA requirements	Yes
Can it conform to Vegetation Control Acts and Regulations	Yes, but not really applicable
Can Council afford the necessary works (Budget etc)	TBA
Does the maintenance require the permission of an adjacent landholder and is this available	NO
Opening of BPLR	
Can it be available 24hrs a day during the fire danger period	Yes

Checklist	Notes
Is it locked, can the key be obtained easily and quickly	N/A
If it is open what is the potential for damage and indemnity whilst not being used as BPLR	N/A
Potential costs to Council for the above	N/A
Is the use as a BPLR the only non-conflicting use	Yes
Defendable Space and Fire Suppression Activities	
Is the area free of obstacles that may inhibit Fire protection activities?	Yes
(Fences, buildings, steep inclines, Vegetation, Rocks etc)	
Defendability of Buildings (if used as BPLR)	
Risk from ember attack, material, design etc	N/A carpark
Signage	
Location available for approved signage (entry etc)	Yes
Disabled Access	
Clear access for vehicles transporting mobility impaired people	Yes
Clear access for moving mobility impaired people around	Yes
Communication with the Community	
Ability to develop community awareness	Good
Location	Good
Risks of being there	Better than in house or shed
Risks of Travelling there	Low
Public Liability Insurance	
Risk Management, maintenance and suitability of Insurance	Council owned
Statutory defence claims	
MEMPC	
Is MEMPC Involved in Assessment	Representation from Committee involved. Police, Shire, CFA, Community
Has MEMPC approved the Assessment and recommended it to Council	Yes
Council	
Has Council Approved the BPLR	Yes

Checklist	Notes
Confirmation that Criteria has been met;	
MERO:	Confirmed by Thomas Weatherall on the 8 November 2010
MFPO:	Confirmed by Colin Pomroy on the 8 November 2010

Adopted By	On the
Wellington Municipal Fire Prevention Committee	9 November 2010
Wellington Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee	25 November 2010
Wellington Shire Council	7 December 2010
CFA re-certification (current)	29 June 2020



CFA Neighbourhood Safer Places Assessment Summary Report

NSP ID: 1000009297 Municipality: Wellington Shire
 Location: Port Albert Boat Ramp Car park and surrounds
 Address: Cnr Wharf St (Yarram-Port Albert Rd) & Bay St Port Albert 3971
 Location Type: Open Space CFA Region: SthEast
 Assessment Date: 29.06.2020 Assessed By: Stuart Bluck
 Result: Compliant

Assessment Factors		North Aspect	East Aspect	South Aspect	West Aspect
Vegetation Type		No Classified Vegetation Type / BAA N/A	No Classified Vegetation Type / BAA N/A	No Classified Vegetation Type / BAA N/A	No Classified Vegetation Type / BAA N/A
Separation Distance to Vegetation (m)	Actual	165	0	0	0
	Prescribed (Grassland areas only)				
Vegetation Height (m)		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Effective Slope (°)		0	0	0	0
Site Slope (°)		0	0	0	0
Prescribed or Deemed to Satisfy Requirements for distance achieved - (Distance equal to or greater than 140M structure 310M open space)		Y	Y	Y	Y
Deemed to Satisfy Requirements for slope achieved - (Effective Slope less than 20 degrees)		Y	Y	Y	Y
Deemed to Satisfy (DtS) Requirements Achieved		Y	Y	Y	Y
(If DtS not achieved) Calculated Heat Flux (kW/m2) (To be no greater than 2kw for open space or 10kw for a building)	Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Prescribed (Grassland areas only)				
Treatments & Prescriptions (For Grassland areas ONLY)					
Overall NSP Criteria Achieved		Y	Y	Y	Y
Result		Compliant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting the CFA assessment criteria on the day of assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting the assessment criteria provided that prescriptions of management of grassland over the fire danger period are secured by agreed terms entered into by the landholder. Non Compliant <input type="checkbox"/> Not meeting the CFA assessment criteria on the day of assessment			

Appendix 2 Loch Sport BPLR – Council Assessment Checklist & Latest CFA Assessment Summary Report - Certification

Loch Sport - Council Assessment Checklist

Checklist	Notes
Proposed BPLR Location	Lions Park, Lake Street, Loch Sport.
Areas the BPLR is proposed to service	Loch Sport
Land tenure	
Permission to use the land	Council owned
Access to perform maintenance	Good
Access and permission to erect signs	Council owned
Access and Egress	
Access to allow anticipated numbers of people	Good
Suitable for CFA or others to access site for protection	Good
Condition of road surface	Paved, good
Proximity of BPLR to major roadways and population centres	Reasonable, site is biased to the western edge of the town
Type and amount of vegetation along access routes	National Park Road and Cliff Street Vegetation works completed
Capacity of roadway to handle traffic volume and breakdown of vehicles	Good
Parking at BPLR	Good
Suitable safe foot access Conforms to Road Management Act	Good
Maintenance	
Can maintenance be carried out to CFA requirements	Yes
Can it conform to Vegetation Control Acts and Regulations	Yes
Can Council afford the necessary works (Budget etc)	Yes - through Fire Services Commissioner Funding Agreement
Does the maintenance require the permission of an adjacent landholder and is this available	No
Opening of BPLR	
Can it be available 24hrs a day during the fire danger period	Yes

Checklist	Notes
Is it locked, can the key be obtained easily and quickly	N/A
If it is open what is the potential for damage and indemnity whilst not being used as BPLR	N/A
Potential costs to Council for the above	N/A
Is the use as a BPLR the only non-conflicting use	Yes
Defendable Space and Fire Suppression Activities	
Is the area free of obstacles that may inhibit Fire protection activities?	Yes
(Fences, buildings, steep inclines, Vegetation, Rocks etc)	
Defendability of Buildings (if used as BPLR)	
Risk from ember attack, material, design etc	N/A Park
Signage	
Location available for approved signage (entry etc)	Yes
Disabled Access	
Clear access for vehicles transporting mobility impaired people	Yes
Clear access for moving mobility impaired people around	Yes
Communication with the Community	
Ability to develop community awareness	Good
Location	Good
Risks of being there	Open space subject to embers, smoke, darkness and noise during a bushfire. No facilities, i.e. water, shelter, etc.
Risks of Travelling there	Moderate
Public Liability Insurance	
Risk Management, maintenance and suitability of Insurance	Council owned
Statutory defence claims	As per Section 50 of the CFA Act
MEMPC	
Is MEMPC Involved in Assessment	Yes
Has MEMPC approved the Assessment and recommended it to Council	Yes
Council	

Checklist	Notes
Has Council Approved the BPLR	Yes, on 6 December 2011
Confirmation that Criteria has been met	
MERO:	Yes
MFPO:	Yes

Adopted By;	On the;
Wellington Municipal Fire Prevention Committee	27 Oct 2011
Wellington Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee	24 Nov 2011
Wellington Shire Council	6 Dec 2011
CFA re-certification (current)	17 August 2020



CFA Neighbourhood Safer Places Assessment Summary Report

NSP ID:	1000012711	Municipality:	Wellington Shire
Location:	Lions Park		
Address:	Lake Street opposite Second Street North Loch Sport 3851		
Location Type:	Open Space	CFA Region:	SthEast
Assessment Date:	17.08.2020	Assessed By:	Stuart Bluck
Result:	Compliant		

Assessment Factors		North Aspect	East Aspect	South Aspect	West Aspect
Vegetation Type		No Classified Vegetation Type / BAA N/A	No Classified Vegetation Type / BAA N/A	No Classified Vegetation Type / BAA N/A	No Classified Vegetation Type / BAA N/A
Separation Distance to Vegetation (m)	Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Prescribed (Grassland areas only)				
Vegetation Height (m)		n/a	n/a	n/a	N/A
Effective Slope (°)		0	0	0	0
Site Slope (°)		0	0	0	0
Prescribed or Deemed to Satisfy Requirements for distance achieved - (Distance equal to or greater than 140M structure 310M open space)		Y	Y	Y	Y
Deemed to Satisfy Requirements for slope achieved - (Effective Slope less than 20 degrees)		Y	Y	Y	Y
Deemed to Satisfy (DtS) Requirements Achieved		Y	Y	Y	Y
(If DtS not achieved) Calculated Heat Flux (kW/m2) (To be no greater than 2kw for open space or 10kw for a building)	Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Prescribed (Grassland areas only)				
Treatments & Prescriptions (For Grassland areas ONLY)					
Overall NSP Criteria Achieved		Y	Y	Y	Y
Result		Compliant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting the CFA assessment criteria on the day of assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting the assessment criteria provided that prescriptions of management of grassland over the fire danger period are secured by agreed terms entered into by the landholder. Non Compliant <input type="checkbox"/> Not meeting the CFA assessment criteria on the day of assessment			

Appendix 3 Full List of Past and Current CFA Assessed BPLR Locations

Designated BPLRs (as at September 2020)

The following is a list of locations designated by Council and maintained as Bushfire Places of Last Resorts:

Township	Location	Last CFA Assessment	Assessment Summary	Current Status	Comments
Port Albert	Port Albert Boat Ramp	2019	Compliant	Designated	BPLR since 2010
Loch Sport	Lions Park	2019	Compliant	Designated	BPLR since 2011

Decommissioned BPLRs (as at September 2020)

The following is a list of locations that have previously been designated by Council but were later decommissioned either due to the inability to meet CFA compliance, or other reasons as determined by Council.

Township	Location	Last CFA Assessment	Assessment Summary	Current Status	Comments
Dargo	Dargo Hotel	2013	Compliant	Decommissioned	BPLR was designated in 2010 and passed CFA compliance in 2013 but Phoenix modelling showed that potential ember attack for this site is too high for this open space BPLR to remain designated. Council decommissioned the site on this advice in 2014.

Not Designated BPLRs (as at September 2020)

The following is a list of locations that passed their first CFA compliance assessment but did not pass Council's suitability assessment and so were not designated.

Township	Location	Last CFA Assessment	Assessment Summary	Current Status	Comments
Dargo	Dargo Primary School	2009	Compliant	Not Designated	BPLR did not pass Council feasibility assessment.
Heyfield	Heyfield Apex & Lions Club	2010	Compliant	Not Designated	Community preferred a safety precinct however because this does not have legislative backing it was not a favourable option.
Heyfield	Heyfield Oval	2010	Compliant	Not Designated	Community preferred a safety precinct however because this does not have legislative backing it was not a favourable option.
Dargo	Paddock behind Dargo Hotel	2014	Compliant	Not Designated	Phoenix modelling has shown that this site maybe subject to a high ember load in the event of a bushfire. Campers also use this area and concerns were raised about the flammability of tents.
Dargo	Omeo Rd near Lind Ave intersection	2014	Compliant	Not Designated	Phoenix modelling has shown that this site maybe subject to a high ember load in the event of a bushfire.
Dargo	Open Space around Dargo River Inn	2015	Compliant	Not Designated	Phoenix modelling showed that potential ember attack for this site is too high for this open space BPLR to be designated.

Township	Location	Last CFA Assessment	Assessment Summary	Current Status	Comments
Golden Beach	Veronica Maybury Reserve	2010	Compliant	Not Designated	Community preferred a safety precinct however because this does not have legislative backing it was not a favourable option.

Non-Compliant BPLRs (as at September 2020)

The following is a list of locations that did not pass their first CFA compliance assessment, and so were not pursued as viable and safe options.

Township	Location	Last CFA Assessment	Assessment Summary	Current Status	Comments
Tarraville	Cricket Oval	2011	Non-Compliant	Non-Compliant	BPLR did not pass CFA Assessment.
Golden Beach	Community Centre	2011	Non-Compliant	Non-Compliant	BPLR did not pass CFA Assessment.
Seaspray	Rec Reserve Oval	2010	Non-Compliant	Non-Compliant	BPLR did not pass CFA Assessment.
Hollands Landing	Wharf & Boat Ramp carpark	2010	Non-Compliant	Non-Compliant	BPLR did not pass CFA Assessment.
Carrajung	Carrajung Memorial Park	2010	Non-Compliant	Non-Compliant	BPLR did not pass CFA Assessment.
Licola	Licola Lions Village	2010	Not Compliant	Not Compliant	BPLR did not pass CFA Assessment.
Loch Sport	Boat Ramp	2010	Not Compliant	Not Designated	BPLR did not pass CFA Assessment.

