



Department of  
Planning



Western  
Australian  
Planning  
Commission

# PLANNING IN BUSHFIRE PRONE AREAS

## BUSHFIRE POLICY FRAMEWORK



**SPP 3.7**  
Planning in  
**Bushfire**  
**Prone Areas**

**Guidelines** for  
Planning in  
**Bushfire**  
**Prone Areas**

# FACTSHEET

Version 3, April 2016

## BUILDING A HOUSE IN A REMOTE AREA

Development assessment requirements for a single house or ancillary dwelling on a site 1,100m<sup>2</sup> or greater and more than 50km from the boundary of a gazetted town site

## PLANNING IN BUSHFIRE PRONE AREAS

### BUSHFIRE POLICY FRAMEWORK

If you are proposing to build single house or ancillary dwelling (e.g. granny flat) on a site that is designated as bushfire prone on the *Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas*, you will be required to undertake a BAL assessment before you can commence development.

If your property is more than 50 kilometres from a gazetted town site you may undertake that BAL assessment yourself.

You can find out if you are more than 50 kilometres from a gazetted town site by checking the *Map of gazetted town sites and surrounding 50km boundaries*.

This fact sheet will not apply to you if you are in the Perth, Peel, South West or Great Southern regions as you will never be more than 50kms from a gazetted town site.

## WHAT IS A BAL ASSESSMENT

A **Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) assessment** is an assessment set out in *Australian Standard 3959 Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-Prone Areas* (AS 3959) which determines the BAL for a proposed building.

A BAL is one way of determining a proposed building's potential for bushfire exposure and is used to establish the construction requirements you can use to improve the protection of your building from bushfire attack.

BAL ratings include:

- **BAL-LOW**

If the BAL assessment indicates that the development is rated BAL-LOW then there are no further bushfire planning or building requirements.

- **BAL-12.5 to BAL-29**

If the rating is between BAL-12.5 and BAL-29 you will need to build your house to the corresponding standard set out in the Building Code of Australia.

- **BAL-40 or BAL-Flame Zone**

If the rating is BAL-40 or BAL-Flame Zone (BAL-FZ) then you will need to lodge a planning application. The development application will need to address the bushfire protection criteria in the *Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas* with the aim of achieving BAL-29 or less for the site. You will then need to build to the corresponding construction standard set out in the Building Code of Australia.

## DO I NEED A BAL ASSESSMENT

You can use the '[What do I need to do](#)' tool to determine if you need a BAL assessment. Alternatively, you can follow these three easy steps to determine if you need to undertake a BAL assessment for planning purposes:

1. check to see if your property is located in a designated bushfire prone area;
2. determine if the lot size is 1,100m<sup>2</sup> or greater; and
3. check to see if your property is located in an area covered by a local planning scheme.

### STEP 1: CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR PROPERTY IS LOCATED IN A DESIGNATED BUSHFIRE PRONE AREA

The bushfire planning reforms only apply to properties in designated bushfire prone areas.

You should check if your property is located within a designated bush fire prone area by finding your property on the *Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas*. If any section of your property is shaded pink on the map then it is designated as being bush fire prone.

If your property has been designated bushfire prone for 4 months or more you may be required to undertake a BAL assessment. You will be able to find the designation date by typing in your address in the *Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas*.

### STEP 2: DETERMINE IF THE LOT SIZE IS 1,100M<sup>2</sup> OR GREATER

The bushfire planning reforms only apply if you are proposing to build a single house or ancillary dwelling on a lot 1,100m<sup>2</sup> or greater. You should check your Certificate of Title to confirm the size of your property.

If your property is in a bushfire prone area and equal to or greater than 1,100m<sup>2</sup>, the requirement to undertake a BAL assessment may apply to you.

However, even if your property is less than 1,100m<sup>2</sup>, you may still need a BAL assessment or have other bushfire building requirements under the Building Code of Australia. You can find further information on building in bushfire prone areas by visiting the Building Commission's website [www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission).

### STEP 3: CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR PROPERTY IS LOCATED IN AN AREA COVERED BY A LOCAL PLANNING SCHEME

The bushfire planning reforms only apply to properties which are covered by a local planning scheme.

## FACTSHEET

Building a house in a remote area

## PLANNING IN BUSHFIRE PRONE AREAS

### BUSHFIRE POLICY FRAMEWORK

You should check with your local government to find out if your property is covered by a local planning scheme.

If your property is in a bushfire prone area, 1,100m<sup>2</sup> or greater, covered by a local planning scheme, the requirement to undertake a BAL assessment may apply to you.

However, even if your property is not covered by a local planning scheme, you may still need a BAL assessment or have other bushfire building requirements under the Building Code of Australia. You can find further information on building in bushfire prone areas by visiting the Building Commission's website [www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission).

### BAL ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

If you are a landowner/proponent, developer or builder proposing a single house or ancillary dwelling on a site 1,100m<sup>2</sup> or greater in a designated bushfire prone area you will need a BAL assessment. If your property is more than 50km from the boundary of a gazetted town site, you may choose to undertake the BAL assessment yourself rather than engage an accredited Level 1 BAL Assessor or Bushfire Planning Practitioner.

If you choose to undertake the BAL assessment yourself you should follow the Simplified Procedure (Method 1) set out in *Australian Standard 3959 Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-Prone Areas* (AS 3959). You can access a copy of AS 3959 through your local government or purchase a copy online.

Your BAL assessment may then be submitted with any development or building permit applications for the proposed building, to fulfil the requirement to undertake a BAL assessment.

However, if the decision-maker and/or registered building surveyor for your proposed building is not satisfied with the accuracy of your BAL assessment, they may require you to engage an accredited Level 1 BAL Assessor or Bushfire Planning Practitioner to undertake your BAL assessment.

If your property is no longer within 100 metres of bushfire prone vegetation you may be able to complete a BAL assessment (basic). Please refer to *Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas fact sheet: BAL assessment (basic)* for further details.

### DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

If your BAL assessment indicates BAL-40 or BAL-FZ, you will require development approval. Your development application should include a copy of your BAL assessment and a statement/report that incorporates the bushfire protection criteria requirements from the *Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas* with the aim of achieving BAL-29 or less for the site. This may be in the form of a Bushfire Management Plan.

You will then need to build to the corresponding construction standard set out in the Building Code of Australia.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

You can find a copy of the Map of gazetted town sites and surrounding 50km boundaries [here](#).

You can find a copy of the BAL assessment (basic) report [here](#).

## FACTSHEET

## FURTHER INFORMATION

You can find further information about when a BAL assessment is required by visiting the Department of Planning's website [www.planning.wa.gov.au/bushfire](http://www.planning.wa.gov.au/bushfire).

You can also find information on building in bushfire prone areas by visiting the Building Commission's website [www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission) or by contacting your local government.

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