

# Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas

## Frequently Asked Questions

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## What are Bush Fire Prone Areas?

Bush Fire Prone Areas (BPAs) are areas that are likely to be subject to bushfire attack. BPAs are designated by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner under section 18P of the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998*. A BPA is identified by the presence of, and proximity to, bush fire prone vegetation (BPV), and includes the BPV and a 100 metre buffer zone immediately surrounding it. The vegetation types considered bush fire prone are those classified in the *Australian Standard 3959:2018 Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas*. Land not identified as bush fire prone may still be subject to bushfire.

More information, including the detail of how BPV is identified, is available in the Mapping Standard for Bush Fire Prone Areas 2023.

## What is the Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas?

The Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas (Map) is an online, interactive tool developed to provide a visual representation of designated BPA across Western Australia (WA). The Map is available from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) website, or you may wish to bookmark the direct URL: <https://maps.slip.wa.gov.au/landgate/bushfireprone>.

Please refer to the [Instructions for Use](#) for how to use the Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas.

## What is the purpose of the Map?

Properties that are in designated BPAs may require additional assessment as part of any planning or building approval process. These requirements ensure developments in BPAs occur with consideration of the potential impact of bushfires.

More information about planning or building approvals in BPA may be found via the links provided under the FAQ: *Where do I get further information about what being in a bush fire prone area means for me?*.

## How often does the Map change?

The Map is generally updated every year to continually improve its accuracy and currency. The first edition of the Map was released in December 2015 and subsequent editions were released annually on 1 June from 2016 to 2019.

As part of the Action Plan for the Bushfire Framework Review there were two additional updates to the Map in 2019. These included the removal of isolated patches of vegetation less than four hectares and managed vegetation within the Perth Central Planning Sub-region.

No review was undertaken in 2020, however an interim review was undertaken in 2021 and gazetted on 11 December 2021. No review was undertaken in 2022 and a review is being undertaken in 2023 for expected gazettal in early 2024.

The frequency of Map updates is currently being reviewed and consideration is being given to updating the Map more frequently.

## **What is the Action Plan for the Bushfire Framework Review?**

This Bushfire Framework Review was initiated in 2019 at the request of the State Government and is a partnership between DFES, the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) and the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS). The aim of the Bushfire Framework Review is to better recognise specific landscapes and bushfire risks across the State, while ensuring bushfire planning and building frameworks remain robust and based on scientific evidence.

The Bushfire Framework Review Working Group is currently implementing its Action Plan for the Bushfire Framework Review 2019. This includes reviewing the Map, State Planning Policy 3.7 Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas and the Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas.

## **What can be expected from the 2023 Review of the Map?**

DFES is currently undertaking a review of the Map. The Review will apply the current mapping standard to the Perth, Peel and Greater Bunbury Region Scheme areas using higher resolution imagery and some ground validation. Changes made to the Perth Central Planning Sub-region from the two updates to the 2019 Map will be retained.

All local governments in WA will be given the opportunity to recommend changes to the Map that pertain the patches of vegetation greater than one hectare in area. The focus on significant changes (greater than one hectare only) will ensure the smooth roll out of the updated mapping methodology and minimise disruption.

The Review introduces a new concept of Area 1 and Area 2 to the Map. Area 1 comprises suburbs where the intensity of development and non-contiguous nature of vegetation reduces the risk of landscape scale bush fire. Area 2 comprises the remainder of the State.

For further information please refer to the Mapping Standards for Bush Fire Prone Areas 2023.

## **What is Area 1 and Area 2 on the Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas?**

The Map now identifies two different designations of BPA. Area 1 comprises suburbs located on the Swan Coastal Plain within the Perth, Peel and Greater Bunbury Region Schemes where urban density, topography and the absence of contiguous vegetation reduces the risk of landscape scale bushfires. Area 2 covers the rest of the State.

All BPA within the respective area will be designated BPA 1 or BPA 2.

## **How were Area 1 locations identified for the Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas?**

Area 1 was identified by applying a combination of quantitative and qualitative criteria via analysis of imagery and cadastral data and on-ground vegetation assessment. The was designed to identify areas with a low likelihood of sustaining a landscape scale bushfire due to the intensity of development and absence of large expanses of contiguous vegetation. Area 1 suburbs have the following characteristics:

- Predominantly established and developed urban areas, including residential, commercial, industrial, community and public purposes.

- Minimal bushfire prone vegetation.
- Vegetation distributed in isolated remnants.
- Extensive road network.
- Not adjoining a suburb with significant areas of bushfire prone vegetation.

Suburbs with the following characteristics are not included in Area 1:

- Large areas of contiguous vegetation.
- Large areas of vegetation in adjacent suburbs.
- Few roads.
- Undeveloped areas with future development potential.

### **Why were suburb boundaries used to identify Area 1 on the Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas?**

Suburbs were found to be an appropriate size for delineating Area 1 as they are small enough to have a relatively consistent risk profile, while providing a well understood and convenient administrative boundary. Local government areas were found to be too large to have a consistent bushfire risk profile, particularly in areas close to the rural-urban interface.

### **Why was Area 1 limited to Perth, Peel and the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme Areas?**

The identification of Area 1 suburbs requires cadastral and vegetation data and remotely sensed imagery that is more available in the most populous areas of the State. DFES is continuing to work on improving data for the remainder of the State, and further regions will be assessed for inclusion in Area 1 in the future.

### **Does the Map show different hazard levels?**

As part of the Bushfire Framework Review 2019, CSIRO was engaged by DFES, DPLH and DMIRS to develop a new methodology for the future mapping of BPAs in Western Australia. The new method aimed to provide a more detailed representation of bushfire hazard levels, to enable a nuanced evidence-based planning policy response. Due to challenges in obtaining complex base data, the highly technical and innovative nature of the project, and successive COVID-19 lockdowns that impacted the CSIRO's workforce capacity, CSIRO discontinued the development of the new methodology. Work progressed by the CSIRO to develop the WA hazard map will inform the Australian Government funded [National Bushfire Intelligence Capability](#) program.

### **How do I know if I am using the latest version of the Map?**

The latest version of the Map is available from [www.dfes.wa.gov.au/bushfireproneareas](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/bushfireproneareas).

**Do you have a colleague that is still accessing a previous edition of the Map through their cache? Remind them to 'refresh' or to access the latest edition using the above link.**

## How was the Map created?

Please refer to the publication Mapping Standard for Bush Fire Prone Areas 2023 for an overview of the methodology used to create the Map.

## The aerial photography for my property looks out of date. Does this mean the Map needs to be updated?

The Map displays aerial photography that is publicly and freely available, drawn from Landgate's public 'Locate' map service. As such, the aerial photography used as a backdrop for the Map varies in its currency and resolution and is not necessarily the most recent or best available.

The aerial photography used as the background on the Map is only intended to assist users of the Map to locate their properties and areas of interest. It is not used by DFES to map BPV or BPA. The BPA are determined using the most recent aerial photography available.

## Why can't I find my new property using the search function on the Map?

There is a time lag between properties being created and the property street address database being updated. If your property is newly created, you may be able to locate the new address using the Proposed Roads search function (refer [Instructions for Use](#)). You could also navigate to the location manually using the pan and zoom functions in the Map interface or search using GPS coordinates. Coordinates can be searched using a latitude, longitude format (for example, -31.976,115.765).

Note there is no space after the comma between the coordinates.

## Interpreting the results of a search – is my property bush fire prone?

Clicking within the yellow boundaries of a property on the Map will bring up a pop-up box informing the user whether the property intersects BPA. The term 'Not Applicable' indicates the lot is not within a BPA. The border of the property will change to a bright blue colour, so it is easy to identify which property the information relates to. For more information on using the Map, please refer to the [Instructions for Use](#).

For green title properties and strata schemes, one property boundary is displayed and the designation outcome (Bush Fire Prone Area or Not Applicable) applies within the property boundary. For survey strata schemes, the Map may display a separate property boundary for common property areas (such as access ways and drive ways). In these circumstances, a BPA designation of the common property would not trigger the bushfire construction requirements for an individual (housing) lot that was returning a 'Not Applicable' outcome.

## What should I do if I think my property is incorrectly identified as being in a bush fire prone area?

If you are concerned that your property has been incorrectly included in the Map, you should contact the planning or building section of your [local government](#). The inclusion or removal of areas of land from the Map depends on a variety of factors that will need to be considered. If your property has been incorrectly identified on the Map, your local government can work with [OBRM](#) to ensure the site is considered in a future review process. In the meantime, to satisfy the current planning and building requirements, a Bushfire Attack Level assessment

(basic) may be used in situations where the vegetation in and around the proposed building site has been cleared in the time since the Map has been released.

Please refer to the [DPLH website](#) for further information on this topic.

### **Why has my property changed in designation status, when it appears that there has been no change to the nearby vegetation?**

The BPA on the Map is reviewed regularly by OBRM in conjunction with local governments. As a result, the location and size of the BPA will often change between releases to reflect the clearing or re-vegetation of areas. These changes can be slight, for example, clearing a road verge may move the edge of a bush fire prone area by a few metres.

However, there may be occasional unintended changes in the designation status of a property between releases due to slight variances in the projection, processing and intersection of the Map datasets over time. This situation is most likely to occur where the edge of the BPA just intersects a property boundary. We appreciate that it may be difficult to tell when this is occurring, and our team is happy to help investigate.

Please contact [OBRM](#) if you think this situation applies to you.

### **Why does my property appear as bush fire prone when it doesn't contain much vegetation?**

A BPA extends 100 metres from the edge of the bush fire prone vegetation so will include non-vegetated areas. Research has shown that most house losses in bushfires occur within 100 metres of vegetation with ember attack being a common cause of house ignition. As such, it is important that construction within 100 metres of BPV considers bushfire risk.

The data underpinning the 2023 version of the Map was finalised in July 2023. As such, some BPA on the Map may no longer be bush fire prone. If you think this is the case for your property, refer to the FAQ above "What should I do if I think my property is incorrectly identified as being in a bush fire prone area?"

### **Is the dataset available to download?**

The dataset for this Draft Map is not publicly available but has been shared with local governments for their use.

The dataset from the last gazetted Map (dated 11 December 2021) is publicly available to download from [data.wa.gov.au](http://data.wa.gov.au) and [Landgate Shared Location Information Platform \(SLIP\)](#) in Shapefile, Web Mapping Service (WMS) and Web Feature Service (WFS) format. Historical BPA datasets are also available to download from these websites. The 2023 revision of the BPA dataset will be made publicly available after it is gazetted.

### **How does 'designated as bush fire prone' affect planning and building?**

Additional planning and building requirements may apply to developments within designated BPA, in accordance with Schedule 2 Part 10A of the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*, State Planning Policy 3.7 Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas, and the Building Code of Australia. Certain exemptions and exclusions may apply. Local governments may also have locally specific planning requirements.

For specific requirements and for more information about how this may apply to you, please refer to the information under *Where do I get further information about what being in a bush fire prone area means for me?*

## **Where do I get further information about what being in a bush fire prone area means for me?**

For specific requirements and for more information:

### **Bushfire Planning Policy Framework**

- Refer to the [Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage website](#), or contact the Bushfire Policy Officer at [bushfire@dplh.wa.gov.au](mailto:bushfire@dplh.wa.gov.au) or (08) 6551 9000.
- Contact the planning section of your local government.

### **Building Regulations and the Application of Building Construction Standards**

- Refer to the [Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety website](#) or contact [BCinfo@dmirs.wa.gov.au](mailto:BCinfo@dmirs.wa.gov.au) or 1300 489 099.
- Contact the building section of your local government.

### **Information about and help using the Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas**

- Refer to the [Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas website](#) or contact [bushfiremap@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:bushfiremap@dfes.wa.gov.au) or (08) 9395 9709.

### **Bushfire Safety Information**

- Refer to [Department of Fire and Emergency Services](#) for bushfire safety information and useful publications or contact DFES on (08) 9395 9300.