

## Standards for Building Protection Zones for buildings and critical infrastructure in Bushfire Prone areas;

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Every building and asset of critical infrastructure is to be surrounded by a Building Protection Zone (BPZ) that meets the following requirements:

- The minimum width of the BPZ is to be 20 metres measured from any external wall of the building or asset.
- The location of the BPZ is to be within the boundaries of the lot on which the building or asset is situated.
- Loose flammable material within the BPZ should be removed to reduce the fuel load to less than 2 tonnes per hectare and this is to be maintained to this level.
- All grasses within the BPZ are to be maintained to a height of a maximum 50mm.
- The crowns of trees within the BPZ should be separated where practical such that there is a clear separation distance between adjoining tree crowns.
- Prune lower branches of trees within the BPZ (up to 2 metres off the ground) to stop a surface fire spreading to the canopy of the trees.
- There are to be no tree crowns or branches overhanging the building or asset and a minimum horizontal clearance of 2 metres is required between tree branches and buildings or assets.
- Do not clump shrubs close to building. Ensure that there is a gap of at least 3 times the height (at maturity) of the shrub away from the building.
- Trees or shrubs in the BPZ are to be cleared of any dead material.
- Fences, sheds and structures within the BPZ should be constructed of non-flammable material and be clear of trees and shrubs as per building requirements.
- Gas Cylinders should be isolated from the Flame Zone and should be stored in an area that is clear of all flammable material. Gas vent valves should face away from the building and anything flammable. Gas cylinders should be securely tethered with non-flammable fastenings to prevent toppling over.
- Fire wood storage should be at least 20 metres from the building unless contained in sealed nonflammable container.
- Driveways and access ways must allow for the safe passage of a fire appliance<sup>1</sup> to all buildings and assets on the land.
- Roof gutters should be free of leaves and other combustible material.
- Roof mounted evaporative air coolers should be fitted with ember proof screens to the filter media to reduce the possibility of bushfire embers igniting the air cooler.

It is further recommended that property owners, where possible and practical, further extend the width of the defendable space around assets by reducing fuel loads and fire hazards.

### NOTE:

- The purpose of the BPZ is to reduce flammable fuel in the immediate vicinity of structures and other assets to reduce the bushfire attack level in accord with Australian Standard AS3959 section 2.
- The requirements for BPZ within Western Australia for new buildings are specified in *“Planning for Bushfire Protection guidelines edition 2” Element 4.*
- Maintained gardens are not classed as flammable for the defendable space.
- Areas such as pathways, drives, lawn, vegetable gardens, pools etc all serve to reduce fire intensity and will form an integral part of any BPZ. The effectiveness of these in

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<sup>1</sup> Standards for such access are defined in Planning for Bushfire Protection guidelines edition 2.

reducing the risk of fire damage to a building is enhanced if these areas are close to the building.

**The following photograph illustrates one example of an effective BPZ<sup>2</sup>:**



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<sup>2</sup> Photograph sourced from FESA Publication 'What is a building protection zone?'