**Why are there bushfire controls in planning schemes?**

Bushfire controls in planning schemes across Victoria form part of the land use planning response to strengthen community resilience to bushfire.

Areas of bushfire hazard are identified so that the location, design and construction of development, as well as bushfire protection measures, can be put in place to reduce the risk to life and property.

**Why has the mapping for the Bushfire Management Overlay been updated?**

The Bushfire Management Overlay and former Wildfire Management Overlay have been developed over time and have been based on an evolving methodology.

The current update makes sure a formal set of criteria is applied across the State. This will ensure consistency in mapping and planning outcomes.

As part of the Victorian Government’s commitment this update implements recommendations of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

**Who has prepared the updated mapping?**

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning worked with local councils and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to review and update the Bushfire Management Overlay maps.

**Will there be future updates to the mapping?**

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning has a process to review the mapping on a regular basis. Changes in bushfire hazard, for example, the removal of a plantation and conversion to pasture may result in the removal of the overlay.

**What mapping criteria has been used?**

Criteria for the updated mapping was developed by the CFA and CSIRO based on the best available science and the experience from previous bushfires.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA 1</th>
<th>Vegetation type and size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forest, woodland, scrub, scrubland, mallee and rainforest vegetation that is 4 ha or more in size</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>CRITERIA 2</th>
<th>Ember buffer</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A 150m buffer is applied from the edge of vegetation identified in Criteria 1</td>
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<tr>
<th>CRITERIA 3</th>
<th>Extreme risk inclusions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area that fire authorities have advised may be subject to extreme landscape fire behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What does it mean if land is included in the Bushfire Management Overlay?**

For existing development there are no changes and no action is required. The new mapping controls are not retrospective.

For most new development the Bushfire Management Overlay will require a planning permit. In East Gippsland, for most settlements, a schedule to the Bushfire Management Overlay will streamline the permit application assessment provided that the conditions set out in the schedule are met.

**Can I remove vegetation without a permit?**

For buildings built or approved before 10 September 2009 the ‘10/50’ vegetation clearance rule can be used. This means landowners can clear vegetation – excluding trees – within 50m of an existing dwelling, and trees within 10m without needing a planning permit.

For new buildings, clearing for bushfire protection will be evaluated as part of the planning permit process.
Are there any exemptions from the need to obtain a planning permit?
For an existing dwelling extension, if the extension is less than 50% of the existing building, a planning permit is not required under the Bushfire Management Overlay.

A planning permit is not required to build an outbuilding, such as a shed or garage, if the combined size of all outbuildings is less than 150m².

What will the new requirements be?
New development needs to demonstrate that bushfire safety has been considered and that the protection of future occupants has been given the highest priority. This is done in the planning permit application by considering the bushfire hazard in the area and on the site, (for example, vegetation type, slope, site access for emergency vehicles and evacuation routes) and the response to the identified risk for the bushfire safety. The response may include the provision of a water supply for firefighting, all weather access driveways and provisions of defendable space around the building.

What is required with an application?
The range of bushfire safety measures include:
- build to current bushfire construction standards
- site the building away from the bushfire hazard
- manage vegetation and fuel loads
- install water tank and provide fire tanker access
- referral to the CFA for independent expert advice

What if I already have a planning permit or building permit for a new house?
If your existing permit expires, or your planning or building permit is not yet approved, you may need to apply for a new planning permit and consider the Bushfire Management Overlay provisions. You should contact Council for advice.

What if you think my land does not meet the criteria for the updated mapping?
If you think your land does not meet the criteria for being included in the updated mapping the first step is to consult with your local council. If it is considered that your land does not meet the mapping criteria, the Council will request the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to undertake a review.

What if only part of my land is included in the updated mapping?
The updated mapping is based on the bushfire hazard, not property boundaries. Therefore, it is common that some properties are partially covered by the Bushfire Management Overlay. The bushfire controls only apply if the new development is proposed on that part of the land included the Overlay.

Will these new provisions increase development costs?
Bushfire construction standards and costs already apply through the building regulation system (that is, when you obtain the building permit). The bushfire safety measures required under the planning system are unlikely to introduce substantial costs.

NOTE: there may be costs associated with bushfire risk assessments and the preparation of site plans required for the planning permit application. Planning permit application fees will also apply.

Other planning scheme requirements
If you are planning to subdivide or build on your land you need to check with your local council if there are other planning requirements. The permit requirements triggered by the new Bushfire Management Overlay will be in addition to the requirements under other planning controls that may already apply.

Where can I find out more?
You can check if your land is in the Bushfire Management Overlay by using the BMO tool using the State government’s Planning Maps Online tool.