



## *Executive Summary*

### **Midlands Fire Management Area**

### **Fire Protection Plan**

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#### **This report summarises the findings contained in the Fire Protection Plan for the Midlands Fire Management Area 2019.**

The purpose of Fire Protection Plans is to identify and prioritise bushfire risks in the landscape and strategically identify work that can be done to mitigate that risk.

Fire Protection Plans have been prepared for each of the ten fire management areas in Tasmania in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Service Act 1979. These plans were developed for the first time in 2014 in a collaborative effort by members of Fire Management Area Committees made up of local stakeholders.

The objective of the Fire Protection Plan is to effectively manage bushfire related risk within the Midlands Fire Management Area in order to protect people, assets and other things valuable to the community.

In preparing the Fire Protection Plan, a tenure blind approach to strategic fuel management was taken. The identification of areas and communities at risk from bushfire together with the identification of areas of potential strategic value for undertaking risk mitigation activities was undertaken by Fire Management Area Committee members without regard to land tenure/ownership.

In taking this approach, Fire Management Area Committees have recognised that strategic fuel management needs to occur across public and private property boundaries in order to be effective.

The management of bushfire related risk is not the sole responsibility of any one land manager or agency. It is a shared responsibility of the whole community.

The tenure blind approach to bushfire risk mitigation planning as undertaken by Fire Management Area Committees creates opportunities for collaboration between public and private land managers and owners and promotes the development of a centrally coordinated bushfire risk mitigation program.

### *Midlands Fire Management Area Background*

- The Midlands Fire Management Area is approximately 1,059,000 ha in size and covers two local government areas (Central Highlands and Southern Midlands).
- Approximately 8,000 people live within the Midlands Fire Management Area, predominately around the South East corner, closest to the outer settlements of Hobart.
- The Midlands Fire Management Area also contains smaller isolated communities located in the Upper Derwent Valley and Central Highlands.
- Shack communities are present around a number of Highland lakes, with the population in these communities being seasonally variable.

### *Key findings for the Midlands Fire Management Area*

- Within the Midlands Fire Management Area approximately 52% of land is private/freehold, 26% is public/crown land 12% is Sustainable Timber Tasmania managed land.
- The three major vegetation types within the Midlands Fire Management Area are; Dry Eucalypt forest (37%), Agricultural land (25%), and Wet Eucalypt forest (12%)
- In terms of area suitable for fuel reduction burning within the Midlands Fire Management Area, 41% (434,190 ha) of the area has been categorised as treatable while 58% (614,220 ha) of the area has been classified as untreatable. These are very broad figures and are based on TasVeg mapping and flammability attributes. Actual areas suitable for fuel reduction burning will need to be determined by field inspection.

### *Bushfire threat in the Midlands Fire Management Area*

- The average rainfall varies considerably across the Midlands Fire Management Area. Due to this the length of the fire season can range from October through to April in areas of lower rainfall and from December to March in areas of higher rainfall and wetter vegetation types.
- The vast majority (86%) of the Midlands Fire Management Area has been untouched by fire since records started being kept. 12% of the Fire Management Area is noted as having been subject to fire at least once. Less than 2% of the fire management area has been subject to more than 2 or 3 fires at the same location.
- In relation to fire cause in the Midlands Fire Management Area the majority of fires are undetermined (37%), followed by Arson (33%) and escapes from planned burns (13%).

### *Bushfire risk analysis for the Midlands Fire Management Area*

Computer modelling was used to conduct an initial broad scale assessment across the Midlands Fire Management Area to identify communities vulnerable to bushfire. A more detailed assessment using more locally specific processes was then conducted by members of the Fire Management Area Committee.

Tools that were used by the Fire Management Area Committee to identify communities vulnerable to bushfire include:

- Consultation of Local Government and Emergency Services risk registers
- Local knowledge from Tas Fire Service District Officers and Brigades
- Consultation with Tasmania Fire Service Community Protection Planners and Community Development Officers
- Expert opinion of fire practitioners
- Identification and consideration of existing and past fire management actions, plans and incidents

### *High risk areas for bushfire*

Computer modelling results indicate that areas of highest bushfire risk identified for the Midlands Fire Management Area are located in the southern parts near the outer settlements of Hobart, communities in the Derwent River Valley, and around settlements near the Great Lake.

### *High risk ignition point locations*

Computer modelling indicates that within the Midlands Fire Management Area bushfire ignition points of potential concern under current fuel loads are located:

- In the vicinity of Campania and Tea Tree
- North west of Bagdad around Huntingdon Tier and Harry Walker Tier
- A strip along the Derwent River from Westerway to Wayatinah
- The general area around the Dee lagoon and Bradys Lake
- In the vicinity of Arthurs Lake and the western side of the Great Lake
- Derwent Bridge

### *Community Risk Assessment*

Following group analysis and discussion of the preliminary risk assessment results (detailed above), together with input gathered from local knowledge, 'at risk' communities were then prioritised by members of the Midlands Fire Management Committee in terms of requiring mitigation actions.

Mitigation activities may include:

- Fuel reduction burning
- Fire trail and fire break construction/maintenance
- Mechanical fuel reduction through slashing, trittering and mulching
- Community education
- Other prescribed activities specific to community needs

Some of these activities can be implemented in a relatively short time frame whilst others will need careful planning and consultation with the relevant stakeholders which will need to be done over a longer time frame.

### *Community Risk Assessment results*

The following communities were identified during the strategic assessment process as being at high risk and as having priority for mitigation actions:

- Campania
- Ellendale
- Westerway
- Derwent Bridge
- Wayatinah
- Brandum Bay/Breona

### *Areas of strategic importance within the Midlands Fire Management Area*

In addition to the above communities, areas of potential strategic importance for bushfire risk mitigation within the Midlands Fire Management Area were identified through a process that utilised and combined local knowledge with computer modelling. Fire Management Area Committee members with specific fire expertise and knowledge across the area contributed to the identification of both the communities at risk and the broader strategic areas for potential mitigation actions.

The following areas were identified during a desktop exercise as having potential strategic importance for bushfire risk mitigation treatment within the Midlands Fire Management Area:

- Huntingdon Tier and Harry Walker Tier
- East Bagdad including Quoin Mt and Native Corners
- Gravely Ridge and Brown Mt
- Mt Dromedary and surrounding areas
- Western Tiers/MT Field Alpine areas

These potential strategic areas will require further detailed investigation and ground truthing in the field to more accurately determine their potential for use as treatment areas with strategic value.

Maps showing the location of communities at high risk from bushfires, together with a map showing areas of potential strategic importance within the Midlands Fire Management Area are identified in the Midlands Fire Protection Plan for mitigation activities

For further information please contact  
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**Map 1 - Areas identified in the Midlands Fire Protection Plan for mitigation activities**



