

## **Central North Fire Management Area Fire Protection Plan**

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**This report summarises the findings contained in the Fire Protection Plan for Tasmania's Central North Fire Management Area 2016 review.**

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 is to effectively manage bushfire related risk within the Central North 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 members of the Fire Management Area Committee 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.

### **Central North Fire Management Area Background**

- The Central North Fire Management Area is located in central northern Tasmania and covers an area of 550,464 ha. The Fire Management Area extends westwards along the north coast from Badger Head to Heybridge. The southern part of the Fire Management Area extends westward from Golden Valley to the middle of Walls of Jerusalem National Park.

- The Central North Fire Planning Area has an estimated residential population of 82,000 people.
- The fire management area contains a mix of fertile agricultural land, wineries, dispersed rural communities and large areas of national park (including Mole Creek Karst caves and The Walls of Jerusalem National Park which is part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area).
- 40% of Tasmania's vegetable crop is produced in the Mersey/Forth valley area in the central northern part of the Fire Management Area.
- Significant built infrastructure assets in the region include Origin Energy's LPG Operation at Devonport and the Alinta natural gas pipeline offtake at Westbury.
- Critical infrastructure within the Central North Fire Management Area includes radio communications towers at Kelcey Tier, Mt Claude and Dazzler Range and the Orica storage facilities at Heybridge and Dulverton.

### **Key findings for the Central North Fire Management Area**

- Approximately 58% of land is public land and 42% is private/freehold land. The management of fire risk on private land presents a considerable challenge for the Central North Fire Management Area.
- A total of 15.2% of the fire management area was identified as being at extreme risk from fire under current fuel loads.
- The vegetation within a large portion of the Central North Fire Management Area has been highly modified for agriculture resulting in the dominant vegetation type consisting of non-native agricultural, urban and exotic vegetation. The second most common vegetation type within the Fire Management Area consists of highly flammable dry eucalypt forest and woodland.
- The majority (54%) of the broad vegetation group types found in the Fire Management Area have a medium flammability rating.
- Within the Central North Fire Planning Area a total of 121,005 ha (or 22% of the total area) has been categorised as treatable (using fuel reduction burning). The remaining 76% of the fire planning area (417,928 ha) has been classified as untreatable (through the use of fuel reduction burning) However field inspections will be required to properly determine whether areas are suitable for fuel reduction.
- Bushfire risk mitigation activities in the Central North Fire Management Area will largely require the use of techniques other than fuel reduction burning.
- Records that are available indicate that the vast majority (98%) of the fire management area has been untouched by fire in recent years.
- Arson appears to be a significant issue for the Central North Fire Management Area.

## **Bushfire threat in the Central North Fire Management Area**

- The fire season in the northern region of Tasmania extends from August to April. The fire season of the Central North Fire Management Area is generally considered to be from September to March.
- The bushfire threat for the Central North Fire Management Area increases in late December with December/January generally being the driest and hottest months when bushfires are more difficult to control.
- Of the 126 fires where ignition sources were recorded within the fire management area, the majority of fires (35.9%) were started by arson, 10.6% were caused by escaped planned burns, 3.5% were accidental, 1.8% were caused by lightning and in 14.8% of cases a cause was undetermined.

## **Bushfire risk analysis results for the Central North Fire Management Area**

Computer based fire behaviour modelling tools were used to conduct an initial broad scale assessment across the Central North Fire Management Area to identify communities vulnerable to bushfire. A more detailed assessment 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 Tasmania Fire Service District Officers and brigades
- Consultation with Tasmania Fire Service Community Protection Planners and Community Development Officers
- The 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 identified as being at highest risk of bushfire in the Central North Fire Management Area are located in the central and southern part of the Fire Management Area as well as at scattered locations throughout the Fire Management Area including in the vicinity of:

- Jackeys Marsh
- South of Lorinna
- Eriba
- Penguin
- Deloraine
- Mersey Lea and Kimberley

## **High risk ignition point locations**

Computer based fire behaviour modelling indicates that within the Central North Fire Management Area bushfire ignition points of potential concern under current fuel loads are located:

- South of Forth
- West of Spreyton
- South of Meander
- South west and north west of Deloraine
- North East of West Pine
- East and south of Devonport

## **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 Central North Fire Management Committee in terms of requiring mitigation activities.

Mitigation activities to reduce the risk of fire for these communities may include:

- Fuel Reduction burning
- Fire trail and fire break construction/maintenance
- Mechanical fuel reduction through slashing, trittering or 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.

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

- Don Reserve (west of Devonport)
- Cradle Valley (including Pencil Pine)
- Rubicon (Bakers Beach area)
- Heybridge
- Lorinna (Sth of Mt Roland)
- Squeaking Point
- Dooleys Hill (Latrobe)
- Acacia Hills
- Penguin

## Areas of strategic importance within the Central North Fire Management Area

Reducing fuel loads in strategic locations has the potential to modify fire behaviour and reduce impacts from bushfires. Broad areas of potential strategic importance for bushfire risk mitigation within the Fire Management Area were also identified as part of a desktop exercise. These areas 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 as having potential strategic importance for bushfire risk mitigation treatment within the Central North Fire Management Area:

| Potential treatment area                   | May provide protection for                           |
|--|--|
| Clayton Valley/Stubbs Road (Turners Beach) | Turners Beach residents                              |
| Reedy Marsh area                           | Westbury (to the east in Tamar Fire Management Area) |
| Pitcairn Street Reserve (Latrobe Council)  | Residents surrounding the reserve at Port Sorrell    |
| Kelcey Tier (Devonport Area)               | Leary Rd residents (Stony Rise) and Wrenswood Drive  |
| Cradle Valley                              | Cradle Mountain Village                              |
| Jackeys Marsh                              | Jackeys Marsh community                              |

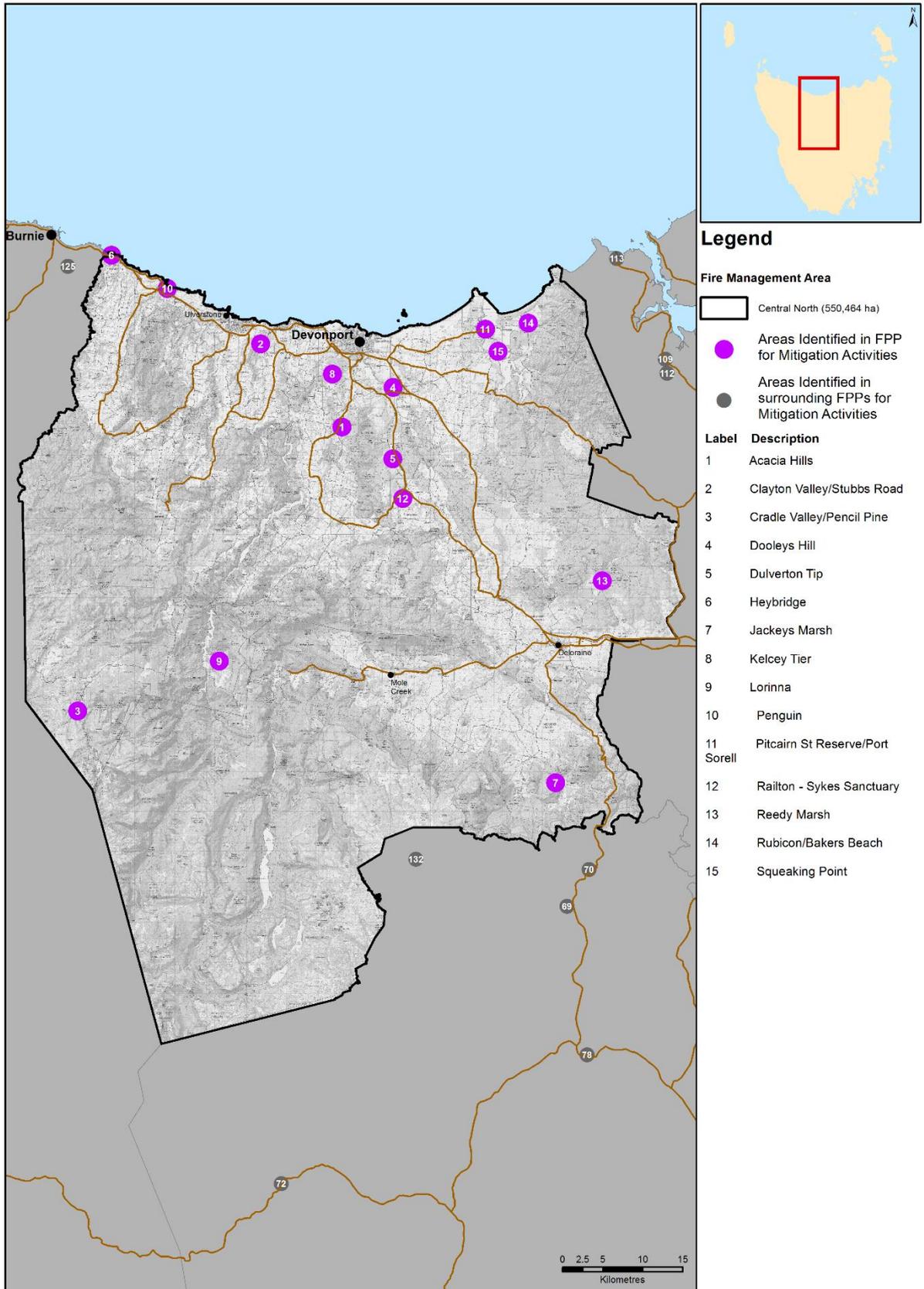
These potential strategic areas will require further detailed investigation in the field to more accurately determine their potential for use as treatment areas with strategic value.

Maps showing the location of communities at high risk from bushfires, together with a map showing areas of potential strategic importance within the Central North Fire Management Area are shown below.

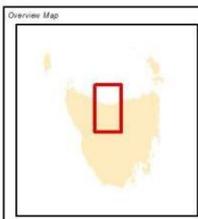
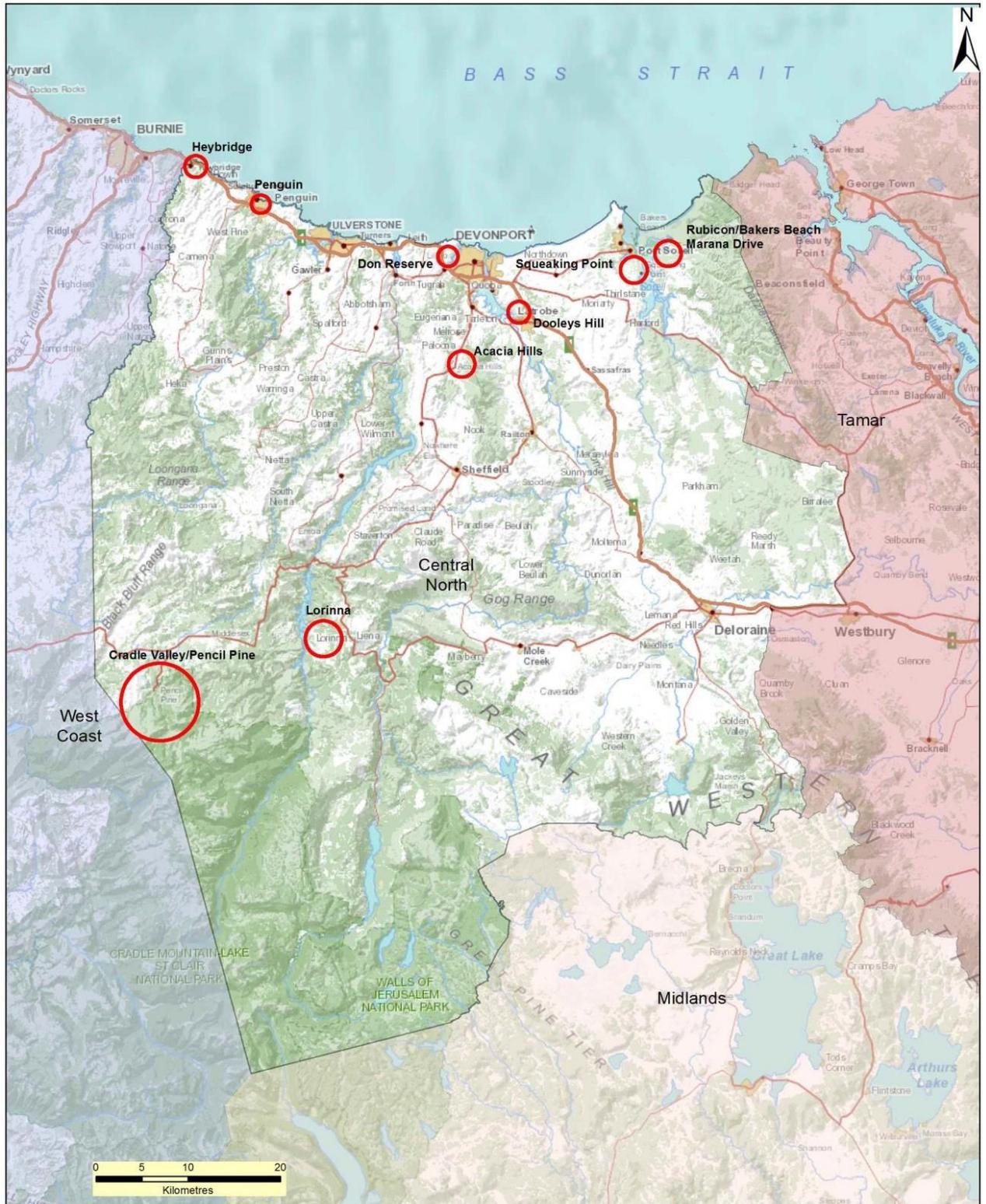
- Map 1 - Areas identified in the Central North Fire Protection Plan for mitigation activities
- Map 2 - Community Risk Assessment results
- Map 3 - Areas of potential strategic value for bushfire risk reduction

For further information please contact  
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# Map 1 - Areas identified in the Central North Fire Protection Plan for mitigation activities



## Map 2 - Community Risk Assessment results



### Communities identified in strategic assessment process Central North FMAC

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>State Fire Management Council</b>    |                                  |
| Map Title: TEMPLATE                     | Date: 26/09/2014                 |
| Author: megl                            | Print Date: 19/10/20             |
| Datum: GDA 1994                         | Scale: 1:381,456                 |
| Projection: Transverse Mercator         | 1 centimetre = 3.815 metres (A3) |
| Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55 |                                  |

