



Executive Summary

East Coast Fire Management Area

Fire Protection Plan

This report summarises the findings contained in the Fire Protection Plan for the East Coast Fire Management Area 2017-18.

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 East Coast 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.

East Coast Fire Management Area Background

- The ECFMA is approximately 393,000 ha in size and covers three local government areas (Glamorgan-Spring Bay, Sorell and Tasman).
- Geographically it follows the coastline from the Tasman Peninsular in the South to Bicheno in the North.
- The majority of the population within the East Coast Fire Management Area are predominately located around the south east corner, closest to the outer settlements of Hobart.
- The East Coast Fire Management Area also contains smaller coastal communities spread along the coast line.
- The East Coast is a popular tourist destination which results in a large influx of visitors particularly during the summer months.

Key findings for the East Coast Fire Management Area

- Within the East Coast Fire Management Area approximately 55% of land is private/freehold, 30% is public/crown land 10% is Forestry Tasmania managed land.
- The three major vegetation types within the East Coast Fire Management Area are Dry Eucalypt forest (55%), Agricultural land (22%), and Wet Eucalypt forest (10%)
- In terms of area suitable for fuel reduction burning within the East Coast Fire Management Area, 63% (247,590 ha) of the area has been categorised as treatable while 36% (141,480 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 East Coast Fire Management Area

- The majority of the East Coast Fire Management Area can experience periods of prolonged dryness, often with fire season beginning in October and continuing into April. The exception to this is the Tasman Peninsular and isolated patches of wetter forest types in higher rainfall areas that experience a shorter fire season.
- The majority (65%) of the East Coast Fire Management Area has been untouched by fire since records began. 29% of the East Coast Fire Management Area is noted as having been subject to fire at least once. Approximately 6% of the East Coast Fire Management Area has been subject to more than 2 fires at the same location.
- Within the East Coast Fire Management Area the main causes of fire are; undetermined (17%), recreation (17%) followed by Arson (16%) and escapes from planned burns (15%).

Bushfire risk analysis for the East Coast Fire Management Area

Computer modelling was used to conduct an initial broad scale assessment across the East Coast 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 Tasmania 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 East Coast Fire Management Area under current fuel loads are located; north west of Bicheno, around Coles Bay, Orford/Triabunna and scattered areas on the Tasman Peninsular

High risk ignition point locations

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

- North west of Bicheno
- Areas in the vicinity of Little Swanport
- North west of Triabunna and Orford
- North of Buckland
- In the vicinity of Orielson
- On the Tasman Peninsular around Nubeena and Port Arthur

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 East Coast 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:

- Coles Bay
- Buckland
- Orford/Shelly Beach
- Bicheno
- Eaglehawk Neck/Doo Town
- Port Arthur
- Nubeena
- Dolphin Sands
- Taranna
- Dunalley

Areas of strategic importance within the East Coast Fire Management Area

In addition to the above communities, areas of potential strategic importance for bushfire risk mitigation within the East Coast 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 East Coast Fire Management Area:

- Eastern Tiers west of Swansea
- Forested areas around Orford and Triabunna, particularly to the north west of these communities
- Forested areas in the vicinity of Nugent/Orielton/Forcett
- Areas located within the Tasman and Forestier Peninsulas

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 East Coast Fire Management Area are shown in Map 1 - Areas identified in the East Coast Fire Protection Plan for mitigation activities.

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

