



## *Executive Summary*

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

---

**This report summarises the findings contained in the Fire Protection Plan for Tasmania's North East 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 Plan is to effectively manage bushfire related risk within the North East 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.

## **North East Fire Management Area Background**

- The North East Fire Management Area is approximately 681,193 ha in size and encompasses two local government areas (Dorset and Break O'Day). The Fire Management Area covers an area bounded by the coast to the north and extending in south easterly direction from the mouth of the Pipers Brook to just below the mouth of the Douglas River on the east coast of Tasmania.
- The permanent population of the North East Fire Management Area is estimated to be around 13,500 though this number increases markedly during the summer period though influx of tourists and absentee landowners.

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

- Within the North East Fire Management Area approximately 65% of land is public land and 35% is private/freehold land. A significant proportion (25%) is Forestry Tasmania managed land.
- The majority (90%) of the broad vegetation group types occurring in the Fire Management Area have a flammability rating of moderate to high.
- In terms of fuel reduction burning, 46% (313,420 ha) of the North East Fire Management Area has been categorised as treatable. 53% (360,190 ha) of the Fire Management Area has been classified as untreatable in terms of conducting fuel reduction burning however field inspections will be required to properly determine whether areas are suitable for fuel reduction burning.

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

- The bush fire season for the Fire Management Area is typically from November through to March though fires can and do occur outside this peak season. It has also been identified that in approximately one season in every two, there is an increased fire danger period during spring on the East coast including the coastal north east.
- The North East has a long history of bush fires and whilst bush fires occur across the whole region, there is a distinct spatial clustering of fires within Fire Management Area. The first cluster being the East coast, the second is the area associated with Mt Cameron, Banca Road and Old Port Road and the third being Scottsdale and surrounds.
- 15% of the Fire Management Area is noted as having been subject to fire at least once. Less than 1% of the fire management area has been subject to more than 2 or 3 fires at the same location.
- The cause of the majority of fires in the Fire Management Area is largely undetermined (39%). Escapes from planned burns have been identified as a significant source of ignitions (37%), followed closely by arson (24%).

## **Bushfire risk analysis for the North East Fire Management Area**

Computer based fire behaviour tools were used to conduct a broad scale bushfire risk assessment across the North East 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 and advice obtained 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, incidents and historical records

## **High risk areas for bushfire**

Computer modelling results indicate that the areas of highest risk within the North East Fire Management Area under current fuel loads are scattered throughout the Fire Management Area with noticeable concentrations in the north western, central and southern part of the Fire Management Area.

Areas of extreme risk in the north western part of the Fire Management Area are concentrated in the area around the communities of Derby, Scottsdale and South Springfield.

In the southern part of the Fire Management Area areas of extreme risk are concentrated to the south west of Douglas Aspley National Park. In the eastern part of the Fire Management Area areas of extreme risk are concentrated around the Beaumaris, St Helens and Binalong Bay area.

## **High risk ignition point locations**

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

- West of Gladstone
- West and north west of Bridport (on the north coast)
- North and north west of Scottsdale
- Around Legerwood
- North of Branxholm and Derby
- North west of Ansons Bay
- At Binalong Bay
- North of St Helens
- Northwest of St Marys

## **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 North East 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 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.

## **Community Risk Assessment results**

The following communities were identified as having priority for bushfire risk mitigation activities:

- Scamander – Beaumaris
- St Marys- Cornwall
- Ansons Bay
- Derby

- Pioneer
- Gladstone
- Weldborough
- Scottsdale
- Musselroe Bay

### **Areas of strategic importance within the North East Fire Management Area**

Reducing fuel loads in strategic locations has the potential to modify fire behaviour and reduce impacts from bushfires. The following areas were identified as having potential strategic importance for the North East Fire Management Area:

- Golconda
- Banca
- Mt Cameron
- Mt William
- The Gardens
- Scamander
- Fingal Valley
- Douglas

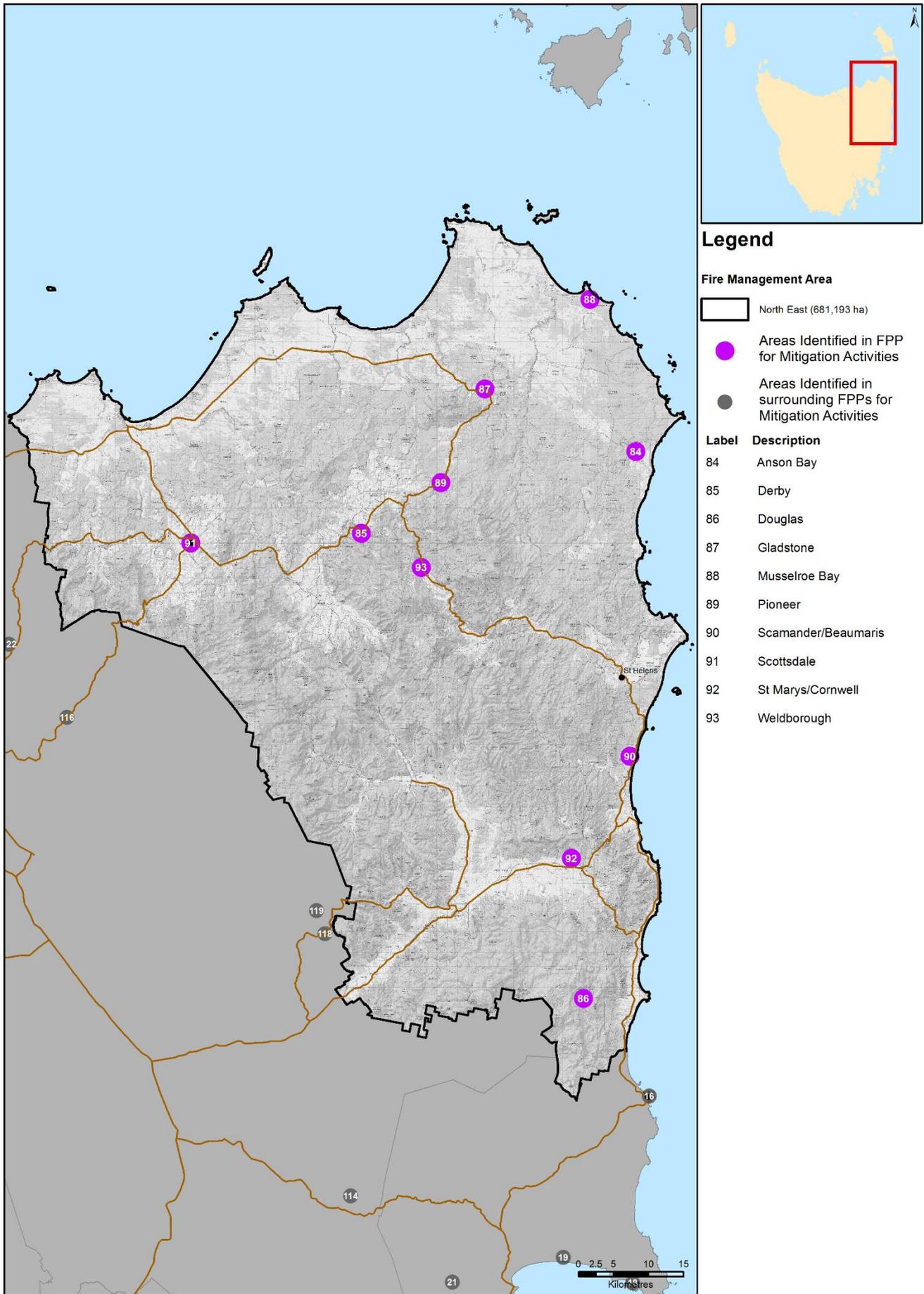
These potential strategic areas will require further detailed investigation in the field to more accurately determine their potential for use as treatment areas with strategic value.

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

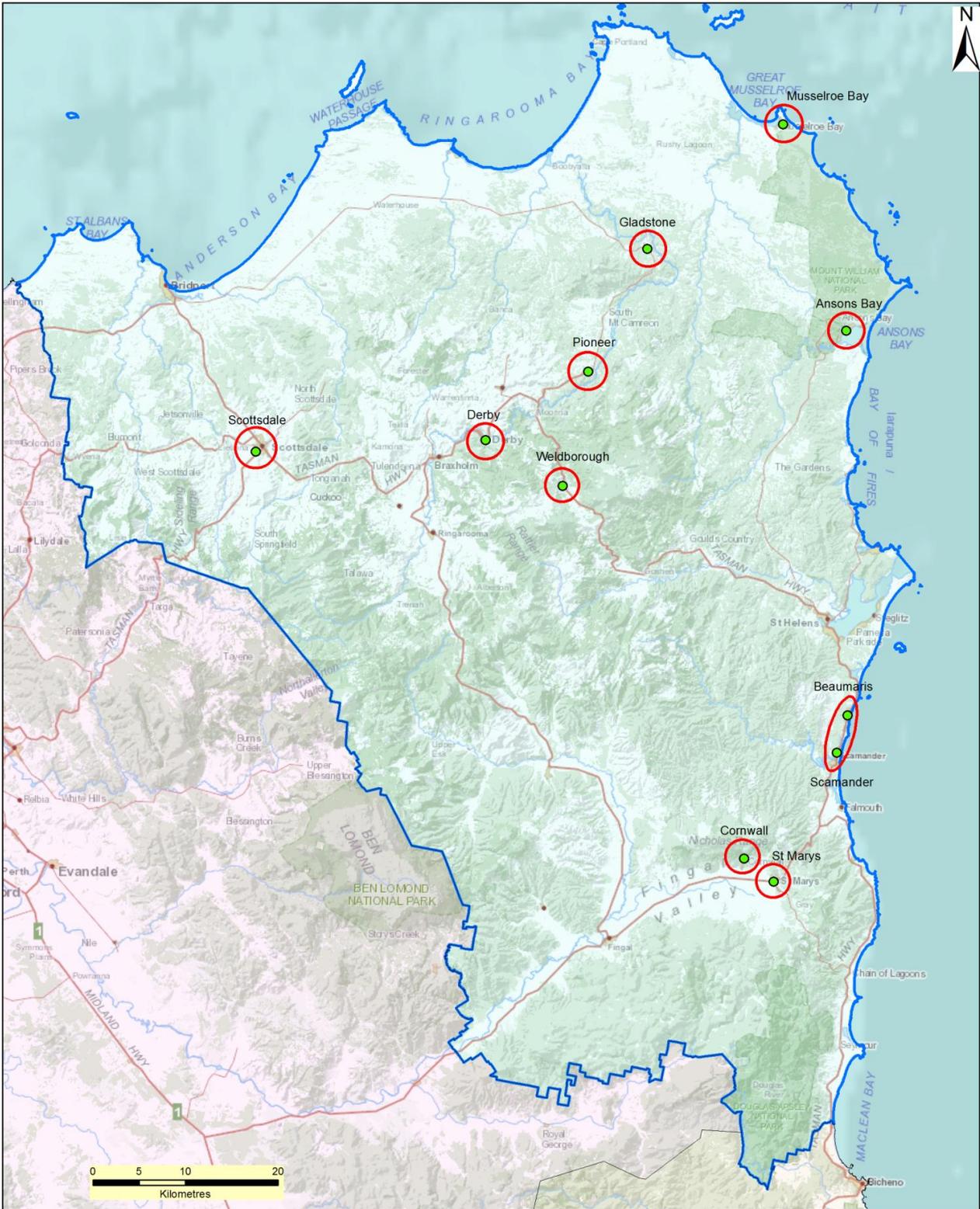
- Map 1 - Areas identified in the North East Fire Protection Plan for mitigation activities
- Map 2 - Community Risk Assessment results

For further information please contact  
State Fire Management Council on (03) 6230 8681,  
email: [SFMC@fire.tas.gov.au](mailto:SFMC@fire.tas.gov.au),  
or post: GPO Box 1526, Hobart 7001. [www.sfmc.tas.gov.au](http://www.sfmc.tas.gov.au)

**Map 1 - Areas identified in the North East Fire Protection Plan for mitigation activities**



Map 2 - Community Risk Assessment results



'At Risk' Communities identified in strategic assessment process  
North East FMA

State Fire Management Council	
Map Title: TEMPLATE	Date: GDA 1984
Author: megl	Projection: Transverse Mercator
Print Date: 24/10/2014	Coordinate System: GDA 1984 MGA Zone 55
Print Time: 10:35:30	
Scale: 1:381,456	1 centimetre = 3,815 metres (A3)
Base data from the <b>LIST</b> (State of Tasmania)	Base image by <b>TASMAP</b> (State of Tasmania)
<small>Map may include data provided by Government departments and other bodies. The State Fire Management Council is not responsible for the accuracy of the data provided. Users of the product are advised to independently verify data for accuracy and completeness before use.</small>	