

A stylized sun graphic consisting of a large yellow circle with several shorter yellow dashes of varying lengths radiating from its top-left edge, set against an orange background.

EDAP 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference – Parkes 2024

# Bush Fire Planning in the Strategic Space

Presented by Erika Dawson

# Introduction

- NSW Bush Fire Inquiry Recommendations
- Current Requirements





# NSW Bush Fire Inquiry

# NSW Bush Fire Inquiry

- Focussed on 2019-20 bush fire season
- Purpose:
  - to understand what happened during the 2019-20 bush fire season
  - how it was different to seasons that have come before
  - to make recommendations for future improvements to how NSW plans and prepares for, and responds to, bush fires
- Characteristics of the season:
  - Scale unseen previously
  - Fire generated thunderstorms (50% increase)
  - Extreme dryness
  - Weather conditions
  - Prescribed burning had no effect on severity and fire spread
  - Historic techniques for fire fighting we not able to be used.
  - Capacity of response stretched due to scale and remote/rugged terrain



# Land Use Planning Outcomes of the Inquiry

- “Being more strategic in our land use planning to account for bush fire”
- Recommendation 27:  
*“That Government commit to shifting to a strategic approach to planning for bush fire, and develop a new NSW Bush Fire Policy similar to the NSW Flood Prone Land Policy in order to accommodate changing climate conditions and the increasing likelihood of catastrophic bush fire conditions; to build greater resilience into both existing and future communities; and to decrease costs associated with recovery and rebuilding.”*
- DPE & RFS Working Group



# Proposed Changes

- Bush Fire Prone Land Package:
  - draft Bush Fire Policy for Land Use Planning
  - draft Local Planning Direction 4.3, Planning for Bushfire Protection
  - draft bush fire planning system circular.



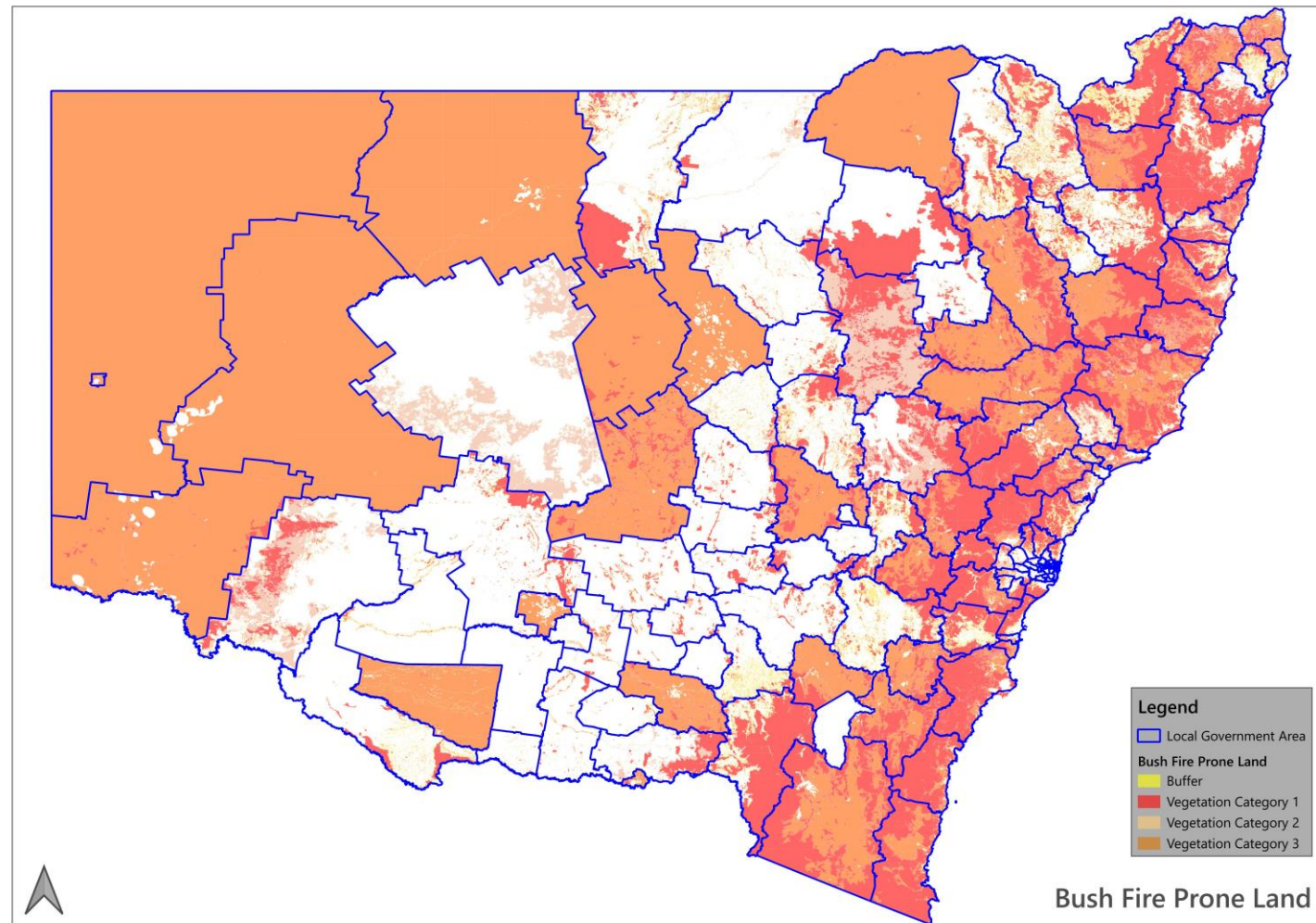
# Current Requirements

# Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping

- Council's responsible for Bush Fire Prone Land (BFPL) Map
- Current guideline for mapping = *Guide for Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping (version 5b) November 2015.*
  - Introduced Category 3, which includes: Grasslands, freshwater wetlands, semi-arid woodlands, alpine complex and arid shrublands
  - Provided a three (3) year transition period to include Category 3 vegetation (i.e. by November 2018)
- Otherwise s.10.3 EP&A Act requires updating of the BFPL Map every five (5) years.



# Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping - 2024



# Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping

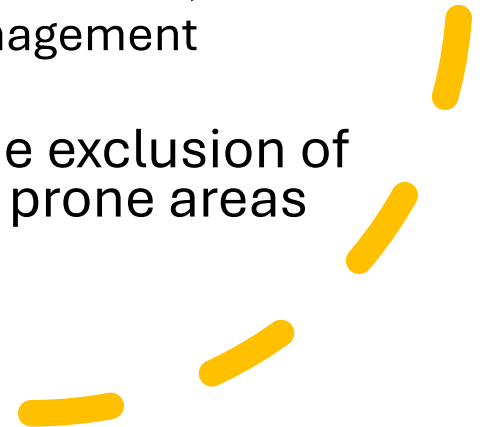
- Observed resistance of Councils to update their mapping
- Consequences of not updating mapping:
  - Not on 10.7 Certificates – potential purchasers not aware of bushfire risk
  - Land being rezoned without considering bushfire risk → developments in the wrong place and not provided with appropriate access.
  - Developments not being designed to reflect the bushfire risk.

# Local Planning Directions

- Direction 4.3 – Planning for Bush Fire Protection
  - Applies to a PP that affects BFPL or is in proximity to BFPL
  - The PP must:
    - Have regard to PBP
    - Avoid placing inappropriate developments in hazardous areas
    - Ensure that hazard reduction is not prohibited in APZs (i.e. biodiversity offsets or in “C” zones).
    - Provide for APZs with perimeter roads at the interface with the vegetation hazard
    - Provide for two-way access roads linking to perimeter roads
    - Ensure adequate water supply for fire fighting purposes
    - Minimise the interface with the vegetation hazard

# Planning for Bush Fire Protection

- Chapter 4 of PBP applies to Strategic Planning
- Overarching requirement:  
*“strategic planning must ensure that future land uses are in appropriate locations to minimise the risk to life and property from bush fire attack. Services and infrastructure that facilitate effective suppression of bush fires also need to be provided for at the earliest stages of planning.”*
- Broad Principles:
  - ensuring land is suitable for development in the context of bush fire risk;
  - ensuring new development on BFPL will comply with PBP;
  - minimising reliance on performance-based solutions;
  - providing adequate infrastructure associated with emergency evacuation and firefighting operations; and
  - facilitating appropriate ongoing land management practices
- Strategic planning should provide for the exclusion of inappropriate development in bush fire prone areas



# Reporting requirements

- Strategic Bush Fire Study required
- Must address the requirements of PBP Table 4.2.1, which includes:
  - Bush fire landscape assessment
  - Land Use Assessment
  - Access & Egress
  - Emergency Services
  - Infrastructure
  - Adjoining Land



# Bush Fire Landscape Assessment

- Considers the likelihood of a bush fire, its potential severity and intensity and the potential impact on life and property in the context of the broader surrounding landscape.
- Assessment Considerations
  - The bush fire hazard in the surrounding area, including: Vegetation, Topography, Weather





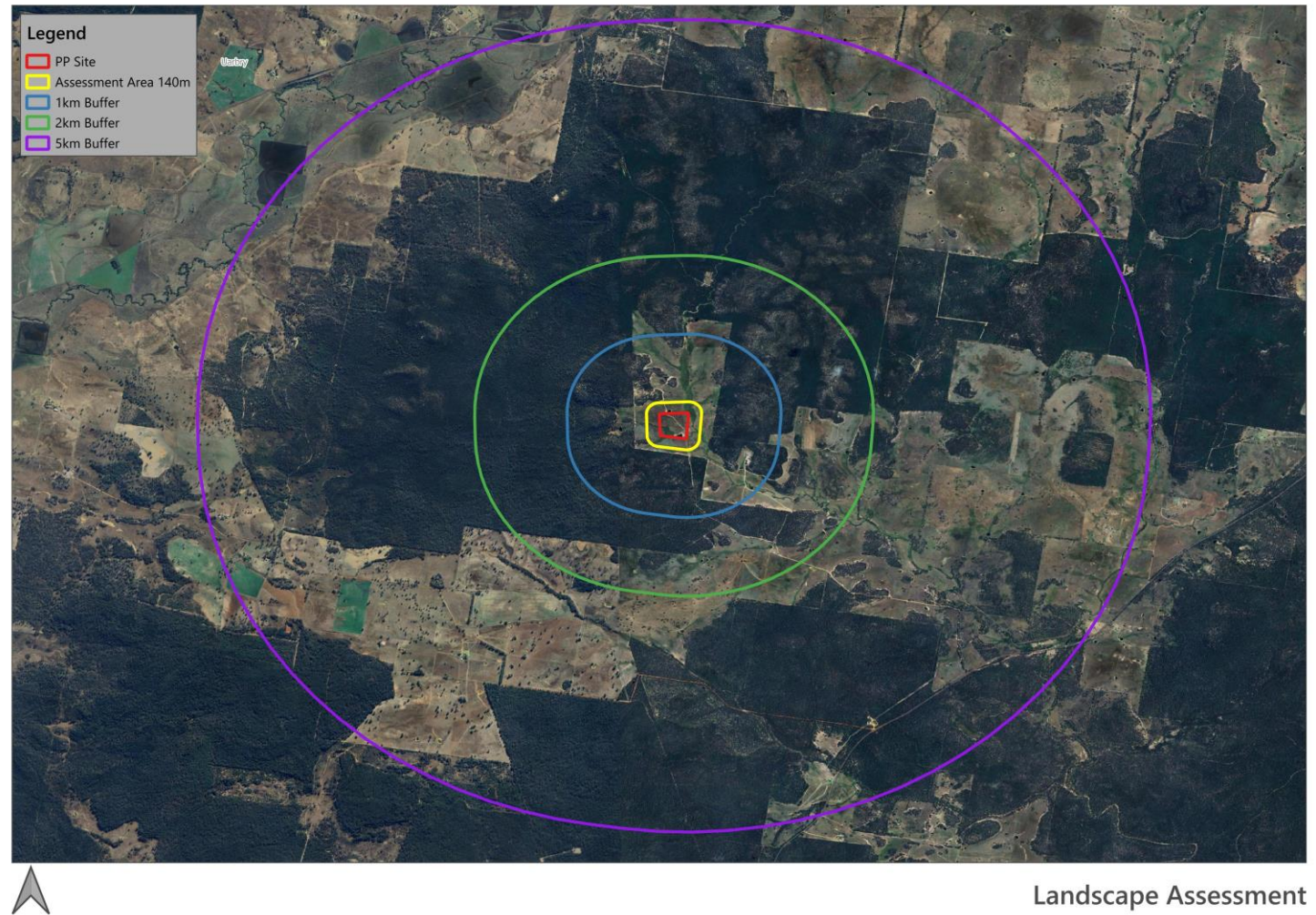
# Bush Fire Landscape Assessment



Assessment Area for Developments



# Bush Fire Landscape Assessment





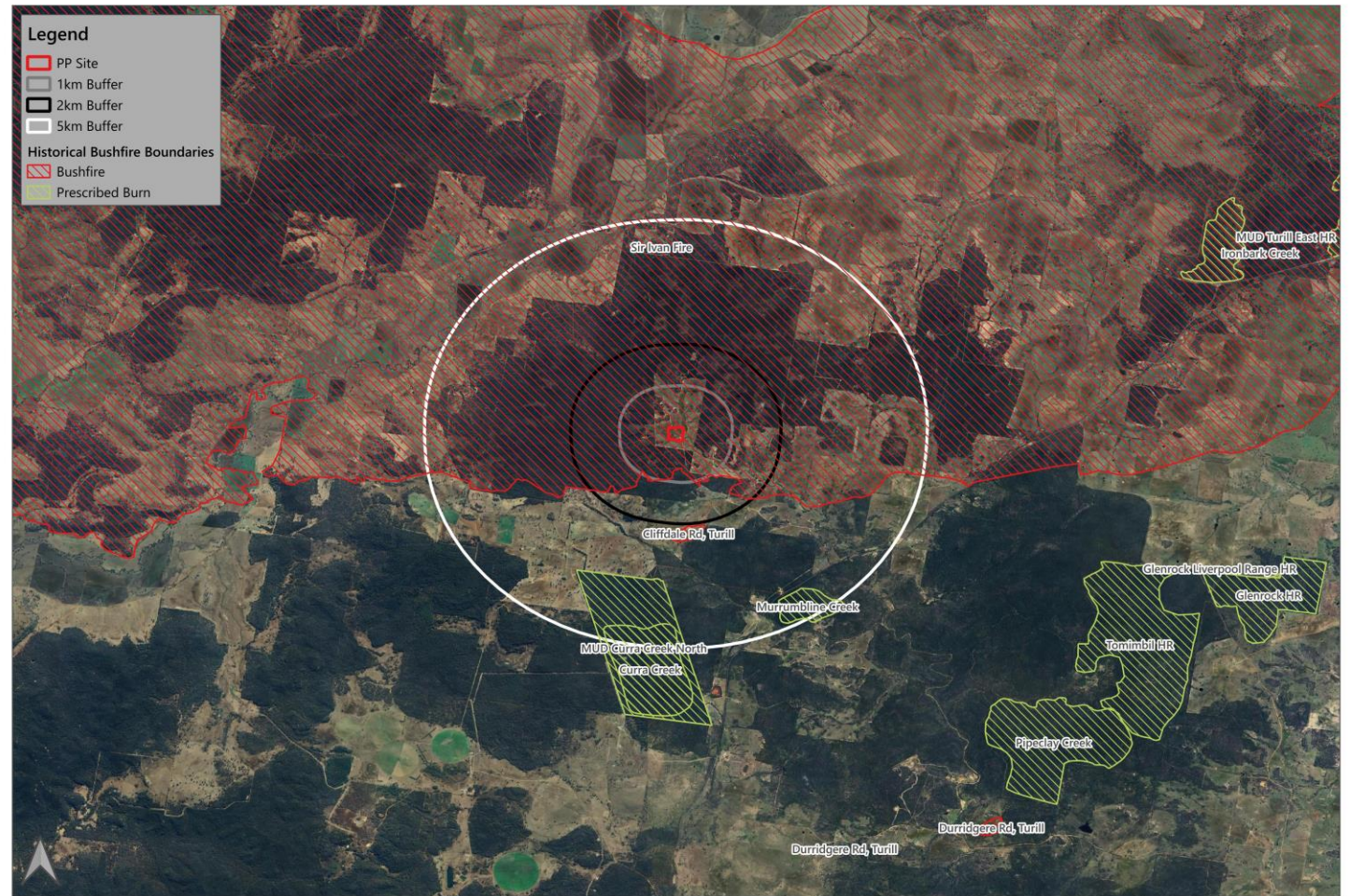
# Topography & Weather



Topography



# Bushfire History



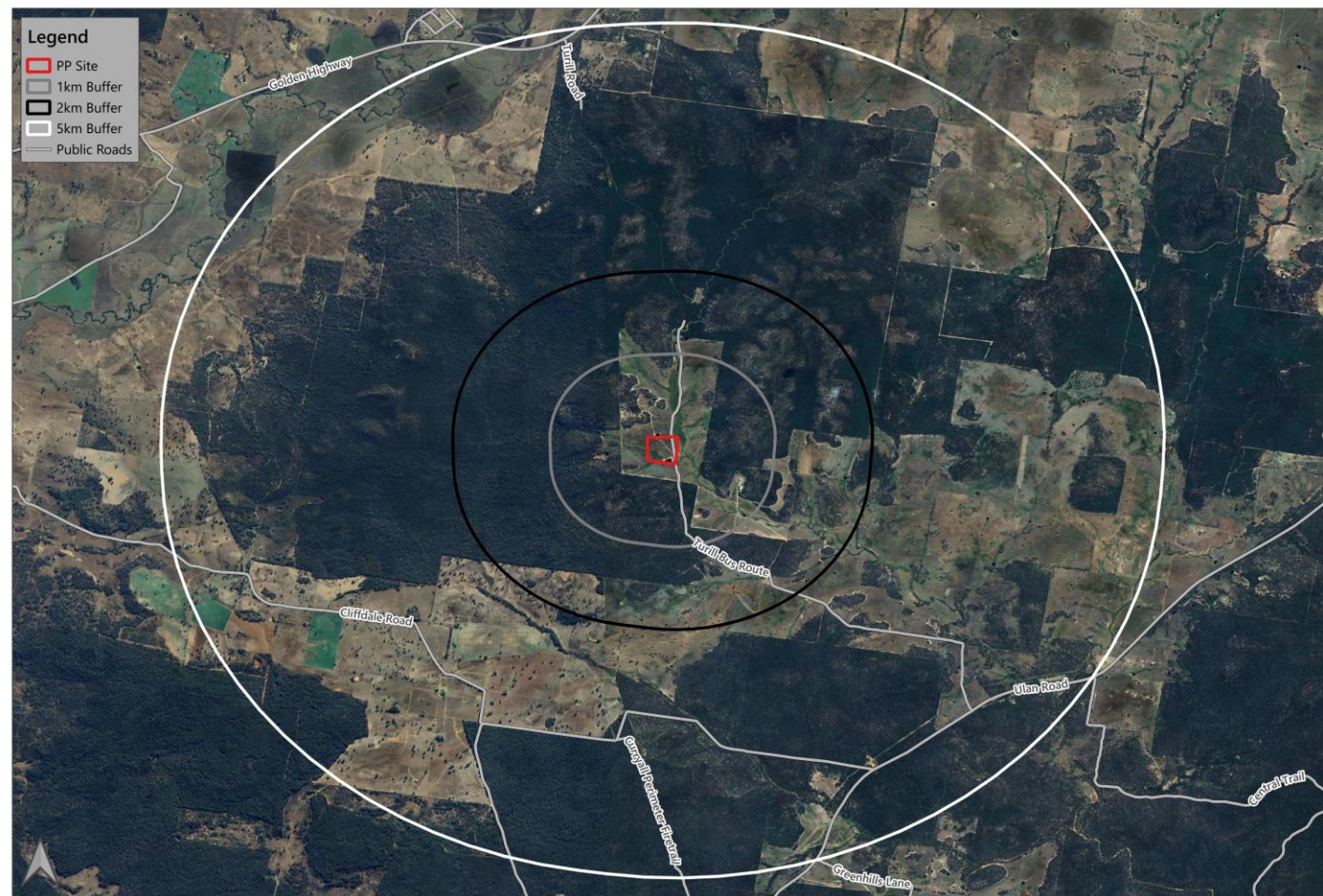
Fire History

# Land Use Assessment

- Identify the most appropriate locations within the masterplan area or site layout for the proposed land uses.
- Assessment Considerations
  - The risk profile of different areas of the development layout based on the above landscape study;
  - The proposed land use zones and permitted uses;
  - The most appropriate siting of different land uses based on risk profiles within the site (i.e. not locating development on ridge tops, SFPP development to be located in lower risk areas of the site); and
  - The impact of the siting of these uses on APZ provision.



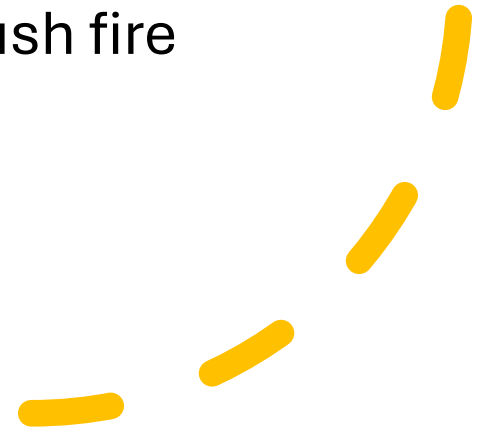
# Access & Egress



Access & Egress

# Emergency Services

- An assessment of the future impact of new development on emergency services.
- Assessment Considerations:
  - Consideration of the increase in demand for emergency services responding to a bush fire emergency including the need for new stations/brigades; and
  - Impact on the ability of emergency services to carry out fire suppression in a bush fire emergency.



# Infrastructure

- An assessment of the issues associated with infrastructure and utilities.
- Assessment considerations:
  - The ability of the reticulated water system to deal with a major bush fire event in terms of pressures, flows, and spacing of hydrants; and
  - Life safety issues associated with fire and proximity to high voltage power lines, natural gas supply lines etc.

# Adjoining Land

- The impact of new development on adjoining landowners and their ability to undertake bush fire management.
- Assessment Considerations:
  - Consideration of the implications of a change in land use on adjoining land including increased pressure on BPMs through the implementation of Bush Fire Management Plans.

# Summary

- Overarching consideration: right developments in the right location
- Look at wider area, not just 140m from the site.
- Watch this space for new strategic requirements





# Thank You & Questions

## **Contact**

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