



CAPABILITY STATEMENT | Bushfire Planning and Management



### Assessment and Management

The assessment and management of fire fuel loads is a necessity for some bushland areas to reduce the risk of bushfire attack on nearby urban areas and or infrastructure. Integral to fire management is assessing, planning, on-ground management and maintenance; all of which Natural Area are capable of undertaking.

Fire fuel load assessments are carried out using the visual fuel load guides prepared by the Dept. of Fire and Emergency Services. Consideration is also given to fine fuel loads, such as the presence and depth of leaf litter and bark that can assist with fire movement into tree canopies. Field information is mapped and used to prepare a fire fuel load map and provide suggested maintenance options such as the manual removal of leaf litter and fine fuels, trimming and thinning, and advice on hazard reduction burns. Consideration is also given to the ecological functions of bushland and the effects of burning.

### Manual Fire Fuel Load Management

Natural Area can construct firebreaks by removing all the vegetation from a selected area and/or installing formal firebreaks using crushed limestone. The type of firebreak will always be site specific. The other types of fire fuel load management include:

- Brush cutting which is the removal of nearly all above ground biomass to reduce fire fuel loads along site boundaries and buffer zones. Typically, tall grasses are brush cut to prevent ignition of bushland from embers.
- Track pruning which is the removal of overhanging branches and shrubs to maintain clear tracks and reduce the probability of fires 'jumping' across physical divides between bushland pockets. This also ensures safe egress through a bushland in the case of a fire.
- Thinning which is selectively removing branches from the canopy to reduce fuel load. Old and loose branches are generally targeted.

### Bushfire Management Plans and BAL Assessments

Fire is an integral part of natural area processes in Australia; many Australian species do not germinate or set seed without fire to act as a trigger. However, natural areas within Perth are often surrounded by urban landscapes and fire can pose a risk to property and lives. Natural Area provides a range of services relating to fire planning and management. Natural Area employs a Level 2 Bushfire Planning and Design (BPAD) Accredited Practitioner, who can undertake bushfire hazard assessments, bushfire attack level (BAL) assessments and prepare bushfire management plans for proposed subdivisions.

The preparation of a BAL assessment report will include:

- Site assessments to classify the vegetation present, topography, distance and slope of the land between vegetated areas and proposed buildings.
- Determining the BAL according to vegetation type, slope and distance from proposed buildings.
- Indicating appropriate construction requirements according to assigned BAL's as provided in AS 3959 – 2009.
- Preparing a BAL-Assessment report, and if required, a BAL-assessment certificate.

The preparation of a bushfire management plan involves assessing the fire risk posed by vegetation in proximity to proposed or current developments and assigning appropriate BAL rating that influences building construction standards that will assist with reducing the risk to an acceptable level. Typical activities involved with preparing a bushfire management plan include:

- Those required for a BAL assessment.
- Assessing subdivision design against performance criteria and acceptable solutions.
- Liaising with various stakeholders, including local government fire control officers.

