



POLICY 1/2017

Fire Access & Fire Trails

1 Policy Cancellation

The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy 2/2007 – Policy on Fire Trails is hereby cancelled and is replaced with this policy.

The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee adopted this policy at meeting 81 on 3 August 2017 by Decision No. 81.10. Annexure A: Model Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan was adopted at meeting 83 by Decision No. 83.11.

2 Rationale

The *Rural Fires Act 1997* charges the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) with responsibility for ensuring a coordinated response to fires for the protection of land, life, property and the environment, consistent with the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD).

Section 52 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* requires the preparation of a draft fire access and fire trails plan by a Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC). This policy describes the legislative and policy framework and outlines the guiding documents used for preparing these plans. This will ensure an adequate access network for fire fighting vehicles is in place to assist in protecting the community and its assets.

3 The role of the BFCC and the NSW RFS Commissioner

On 1 July 2017 the *Rural Fires Act 1997* was amended to include additional requirements for the provision of Fire Trails. These changes gave the NSW RFS Commissioner additional powers in regards to the certification, management and maintenance of Fire Trails.

The BFCC maintains its role to direct the BFMCs to undertake the collaborative approach in identifying Fire Trails and preparing a Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan for submission to the BFCC.

In accordance with Section 59A(3), prior to the submission of the Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan submission to the BFCC for approval, The NSW RFS Commissioner may direct a BFMC to amend a draft Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan. The NSW RFS Commissioner is also responsible for approval of the Treatment Register associated with the identified designated fire trails.

4 Links to the Operations Coordination Plan and the Bush Fire Risk Management Plan

The Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan should be developed having regard for any potential linkages to the Operations Coordination Plan and the Bush Fire Risk Management Plan where applicable. If discrepancies between plans occur during the implementation of an approved Fire Access & Fire Trail Plan, the Fire Access & Fire Trail Plan will prevail over the commitments in the other plans.

5 Historical Fire Trails

It is important to recognise the effort of BFMCs in identifying Fire Trails in their area prior to the legislative changes and implementation of this policy which amends BFCC Policy 2/2007. This historical information may assist in informing a new approach to designate Fire Trails throughout the landscape.

6 Dispute Resolution

There may be occasions when developing a Fire Access & Fire Trail Plan where consensus is not achieved easily by the committee. In these instances, BFMCs should refer to *BFCC Policy 1/2000 Dispute Avoidance – Dispute Resolution*.

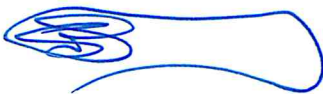
7 Procedure

1. Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan to satisfy Section 52 of the Rural Fires Act 1997 must be prepared by the BFMC in accordance with the following documents:

- > Fire Trail Standards
- > Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan Instructions

These documents are prepared by the NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner.

2. A schedule has been developed for the BFMCs to prepare their Draft Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan to ensure the three-year implementation timeframe as required by Section 52(4) of the *Rural Fires Act* is achieved.
3. A Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan shall be prepared for each BFMC area by their committee in the structure provided in Annexure A.
4. The Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan will be referred to the NSW RFS Commissioner for review and recommendation before being referred to the BFCC for approval.
5. A Fire Access and Fire Trail Treatment Register will be prepared and submitted to the BFCC for context, and submitted to the NSW RFS Commissioner for approval and certification.
6. Once a fire trail has been certified by the NSW RFS Commissioner, it will be added to the Fire Trail Register and displayed on the NSW RFS website.
7. BFMCs are required to report on the implementation of their Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan to the BFCC prior to 31 August each year.



Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM

Chair 5-4-18

Annexures:

- A. Model Fire Access & Fire Trail Plan