SERVICE STANDARD 4.1.5 ASSISTANCE FOR INFIRM, DISABLED AND ELDERLY RESIDENTS (AIDER)

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Version Number	v1.0
SOPs	> SOP 4.1.5 - 1 Referrals and Assessing Eligibility
	> SOP 4.1.5 - 2 Property Assessment and Services
	> SOP 4.1.5 - 3 Property Inspection and Completing Works
Owner	Executive Director, Operations
Contact	Director, Operational and Mitigation Services
Approved Date	25 October 2016
Effective Date	25 October 2016
Next Review	25 October 2021
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1 Purpose

- 1.1 This Service Standard outlines the principles of the Assistance for Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents (AIDER) Program. This is a free once only service for infirm, disabled and elderly community members who have limited domestic support available from family, relatives, friends or other services to undertake vegetation and fuel management on their property and are at risk of bush fire.
- 1.2 This Service Standard outlines:
 - a. How eligibility for AIDER services is determined;
 - b. How a property is assessed and what works may be undertaken;
 - c. The process for environmental approvals and vegetation waste management;
 - d. How the AIDER program links to other local programs, plans or initiatives; and
 - e. How client confidentiality is managed.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 For the purposes of this Service Standard the following definitions apply:
 - a. **AIDER:** Assist Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents Program.
 - b. **Bush Fire Prone Land:** an area of land that can support a bush fire or is likely to be subject to bush fire attack, as identified on a bush fire prone land map. Bush fire prone land maps are prepared by local councils and certified by the Commissioner of the NSW RFS.
 - c. **Client:** a resident of New South Wales who meets the eligibility criteria for the AIDER Program.

- d. **Disabled:** a resident who fulfils at least one of the following criteria:
 - i. Receiving the disability support pension;
 - ii. Receiving any Home and Community Care (HaCC) Services for the disabled;
 - iii. Receiving any federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) services for the disabled; or
 - iv. Having a disability as defined in the Disability Inclusion Act 2014.
- e. **Elderly:** a resident who fulfils at least one of the following criteria:
 - i. 65 years or older (50 years or older for an Indigenous person);
 - ii. Receiving an age pension;
 - iii. Receiving a Veterans Affairs pension;
 - iv. Receiving any HaCC services for the aged;
 - v. Receiving any FaHCSIA services for the aged; or
 - vi. In receipt of a NSW Seniors Card.
- f. **Infirm:** a resident who requires ongoing personal care, support and assistance because of their disability, long-term or life-limiting illness, mental illness, dementia or ageing.
- g. **Living Arrangements:** location where AIDER client resides or any other living arrangements which may warrant AIDER services to be provided.
- h. **Secondary Assets:** major buildings (such as farm sheds, hay sheds, machinery sheds) and boundary fences (being a fence erected on the boundary separating land owned by different persons/agencies).
- i. **SMSS:** State Mitigation Support Services.

3 Policy

- 3.1 The primary purpose of the AIDER Program is to improve the level of protection for infirm, elderly or disabled people living in a residence at risk of bush fire.
- 3.2 Improving the level of protection for an AIDER client includes:
 - a. Using NSW RFS planning and preparation tools to identify the level of risk;
 - b. Managing vegetation and fuel hazards on their property as a once only service;
 - c. Advising them of their responsibility to manage vegetation and fuel on their property;
 - d. Recommending ways to maintain their property once AIDER services are complete; and
 - e. Connecting them to local NSW RFS programs, plans or initiatives.
- 3.3 Secondary assets or assets on adjoining properties may be protected by works as a part of the AIDER Program however; this is not the primary purpose.
- 3.4 The AIDER Program is:
 - a. A once only service and not an ongoing maintenance service;
 - b. Limited by available resources, funding and operational needs; and
 - c. Managed by State Mitigation Support Services (SMSS).
- 3.5 If it is determined that a resident who has applied is not eligible for the AIDER Program, this does not imply that there is no bush fire risk. SOP 4.1.5-1 Referrals and Assessing Eligibility outlines the information that residents who have applied but are not eligible for the AIDER Program will receive from the NSW RFS and how they can seek further advice.
- 3.6 Where it is identified that an AIDER client requires assistance under the Smoke Alarm Battery Replacement (SABRE) program, they will be referred to the AIDER Coordinator.

AIDER referrals and eligibility

- 3.7 The AIDER Program is an eligibility program that requires an application to be lodged. It is not an entitlement program.
- 3.8 To be eligible for the AIDER Program, the resident receiving the service must be:
 - a. Living in a residence on bush fire prone land; or living in a residence determined to be exposed to a significant bush fire threat; **and**
 - b. Responsible for vegetation and fuel management on their property. (The NSW RFS may require evidence of this responsibility).
- 3.9 In addition to the criteria in clause 3.8, the resident receiving the service must also be:
 - a. Infirm: or
 - b. Disabled; or
 - c. Elderly; or
 - d. People who are receiving community assistance and services for ageing and/or disability.
- 3.10 If the living arrangements of an AIDER client changes, eligibility for additional services will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Manager, State Mitigation Support Services.
- 3.11 The management of referrals, applications and the process for determining eligibility for the AIDER Program are outlined in SOP 4.1.5 1 AIDER Referrals and Assessing Eligibility.

Property assessment and services

- 3.12 The process of property assessment and the types of services covered by the Program are outlined in SOP 4.1.5 2 Property Assessment and Services.
- 3.13 Assessment of bush fire risk and required works as part of the AIDER Program will be undertaken by an SMSS Works Assessment Officer (WAO) or authorised SMSS Officer. This process is outlined in SOP 4.1.5 3 Property Assessment and Completing Works.
- 3.14 Assessment of bush fire risk is undertaken using the Bush Fire Hazard Complaints and Notice Guidelines.
- 3.15 Any damage to property that may occur as a result of works undertaken by SMSS will be repaired by the NSW RFS. Repair works will be managed by SMSS.

Environmental approvals and vegetation waste management

- 3.16 The NSW RFS will determine what environmental approvals are required.
- 3.17 Environmental approvals will be undertaken by the local NSW RFS District Office or SMSS where required.
- 3.18 All mechanical hazard reduction shall be conducted in accordance with the Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code for New South Wales 4.2 Standards to Prevent Soil Erosion and Instability unless otherwise specified in an environmental approval.
- 3.19 Vegetation waste management will be undertaken in compliance with the relevant environmental legislation and regulations, by one or more of the following methods:
 - a. Removal from site;
 - b. Burn on site in accordance with the NSW RFS Standards for Pile Burning if unable to remove waste from site;
 - c. Re-use vegetation on site where it is appropriate and does not pose a bush fire risk.
- 3.20 Vegetation waste management is the responsibility of SMSS.

AIDER and other local programs, plans or initiatives

- 3.21 Works and services that are completed as part of the AIDER Program are required to be recorded for reporting purposes. Recording and reporting of completed works is the responsibility of SMSS.
- 3.22 SMSS will provide details of completed AIDER works to the local NSW RFS District Office.
- 3.23 Following the completion of AIDER works, it is the responsibility of the local NSW RFS District Office to connect an AIDER client with any brigade, district or other local initiatives that may assist with improving their level of protection from bush fire.

Client confidentiality and consent

- 3.24 The personal information of AIDER clients will be managed in accordance with Service Standard 1.1.14 Personal Information and Privacy, the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*, and the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002*.
- 3.25 Eligible clients are notified in writing by the NSW RFS that consent will be required for SMSS crews to enter their property to undertake an inspection of potential bush fire hazards. This is outlined in SOP 4.1.5 -1 AIDER Referrals and Assessing Eligibility.
- 3.26 At the time of inspection, the SMSS Works Assessment Officer (WAO) or authorised SMSS Officer will make arrangements with the AIDER client as to what work is required to be undertaken. The AIDER client is required to provide consent for works to take place under the AIDER Program prior to work being undertaken. Consent for vegetation and fuel management works to be undertaken is sought through the AIDER Owner's or Occupier's Consent Form (Attachment 2).
- 3.27 Photographs of a property that requires work through the AIDER Program are required for planning purposes and are taken at the time of inspection. No identifiable feature (e.g. name of property or street number) is to be visible in any photograph. Photographs are also taken after completion of work. These photographs are used for work purposes only and cannot be used for any other purpose. Consent for photographs to be taken is included in the AIDER Owner's or Occupier's Consent Form.
- 3.28 Photographs of an AIDER client and/or their property can only be used for promotional purposes if specific consent has been given under the NSW RFS Photograph Release Consent, and will remain valid for three years. The consent must be completed and signed by the client.

Gifts and benefits

- 3.29 If while conducting AIDER work a NSW RFS member is offered a gift or benefit, they must comply with policy P1.1.4 Gifts and Benefits, which outlines how offers of gifts or benefits from AIDER clientele must be managed.
- 3.30 P1.1.4 Gifts and Benefits apply to all employees, including both ongoing and temporary SMSS employees.

Conflicts of interest

- 3.31 Policy P1.1.3 Conflicts of Interest outlines the principles and procedures relating to NSW RFS staff members in the identification, declaration and management of potential, perceived or actual conflicts of interest.
- 3.32 Policy P1.1.3 Conflicts of Interest applies to all employees, including both ongoing and temporary SMSS employees.
- 3.33 Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics provides further details on ethical conduct of NSW RFS members.

4 Related documents

- Disability Inclusion Act 2014
- Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002
- > Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998
- Rural Fires Act 1997
- Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code for New South Wales

- > Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics
- > Service Standard 1.1.14 Personal Information and Privacy
- > Policy P1.1.3 Conflicts of Interest
- > Policy P1.1.4 Gifts and Benefits
- > Policy P6.1.3 Environmental Assessment for Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Works
- > Policy P6.1.4 Bush Fire Hazard Complaints and Notices
- > Bush Fire Hazard Complaints and Notice Guidelines
- > NSW RFS Standards for Pile Burning
- > NSW RFS Standards for Asset Protection Zones

5 Amendments

AMENDMENT DATE	VERSION NO	DESCRIPTION
25 October 2016	1.0	Initial release

SOP 4.1.5 - 1

Referrals and Assessing Eligibility

1 Purpose

- 1.1. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the process for generating AIDER requests, managing referrals and the process for assessing eligibility for the Program.
- 1.2. Generating requests, managing referrals and assessing eligibility for the AIDER Program is the responsibility of the NSW RFS AIDER Program Coordinator.

2 Procedures

- 2.1. Resident applies for the AIDER Program through the NSW RFS website, by phoning (02) 8741 4955 or emailing aider@rfs.nsw.gov.au
- 2.2. Dual residences such as holiday homes are eligible for the AIDER Program if the resident is the primary occupant of that house and both the house and primary occupant meet the eligibility criteria outlined in clauses 3.8 and 3.9 of the Policy.
- 2.3. A resident who has had works undertaken as part of the AIDER Program at their primary residence or dual residence previously is ineligible for further works under the AIDER Program.
- 2.4. If the living arrangements of an AIDER client have changed, eligibility for additional services will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Manager, SMSS.
- 2.5. Eligible clients will receive a letter from the AIDER Program Coordinator within 21 days of receipt of the application confirming receipt of their request for assistance under the AIDER Program. At this time they also receive the following information:
 - a. How the inspection process is undertaken;
 - b. That consent is required for SMSS crews to undertake an inspection of their property;
 - c. A reminder that AIDER is a once only free service;
 - d. A description of work which may be undertaken; and
 - e. Notification of intent to forward their contact details to the local NSW RFS District Office.
- 2.6. Non-eligible residents receive a letter from the AIDER Program Coordinator within 21 days confirming receipt of their request and advising that they are not eligible for the AIDER Program. At this time they also receive:
 - a. Information regarding the reason they are not eligible:
 - b. NSW RFS Fact Sheets on bush fires, grass fires, home fire safety and Prepare Act Survive;
 - c. Contact details for Home and Community Care (HACC);
 - d. Contact details for NSW Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC);
 - e. Contact details for Senior Services Guide; and
 - f. Community Services Directory for disabled and/or elderly residents within that Local Government Area.

3 Related forms

None

SOP 4.1.5 - 2

Property Assessment and Services

1 Purpose

1.1. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the process of property assessment and the types of services covered by the AIDER Program.

2 Procedures

- 2.1. To mitigate the bush fire risk, the following works may be undertaken:
 - a. Establishing an Asset Protection Zone (APZ);
 - b. Under scrubbing;
 - c. Thinning vegetation;
 - d. Trimming branches;
 - e. Removing leaf and tree debris;
 - f. Slashing or mowing long grass;
 - g. Tree removal; and
 - h. Clearing gutters.
- 2.2. Where works have been undertaken (as listed in clause 2.1 above) the following will be provided:
 - a. Assistance with the use of planning and preparation tools to understand their level of risk including; Bush Fire Survival Plan; Bush Fire Household Assessment Tool and Bush Fire Safety Fact Sheets;
 - b. A report for the client (Attachment 1) outlining:
 - i. Works undertaken by the NSW RFS;
 - ii. Recommended ways to maintain their property once AIDER services are complete;
 - iii. Their responsibility to manage vegetation and fuel on their property; and
 - iv. Contact details for the local NSW RFS District Office;
 - c. A report to the local NSW RFS District Office outlining the works undertaken.
- 2.3. The following works will **not** be undertaken:
 - a. Stump removal;
 - b. Junk and rubbish removal;
 - c. Weeding or garden maintenance;
 - d. Removal of waste material other than that from AIDER works;
 - e. Fire trail maintenance:
 - f. Building repairs or site preparation works;
 - g. Work on vacant land;
 - h. Hazard reduction work on adjoining land;
 - i. Any works that are considered unreasonable or unsafe.
- 2.4. SMSS will notify the local NSW RFS District Office of AIDER works that are to be undertaken in the area. Where AIDER works are identified as being in a Fire District, the NSW RFS District Office will advise Fire and Rescue NSW through existing local arrangements.

- 2.5. During the process of assessing and undertaking AIDER services, hazards may be identified on adjoining land. Any identified hazards will be referred to the local NSW RFS District Office for appropriate action.
- 2.6. During the process of assessing and undertaking AIDER services, other dangers or vulnerabilities may be identified. These will be reported to the relevant SMSS Supervisor for appropriate action.

3 Related forms

None

SOP - 4.1.5 - 3

Property Inspection and Completing Works

1 Purpose

- 1.1. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the process of conducting a property inspection to assess vegetation and fuel management work required as part of the AIDER Program, and the process for completing works.
- 1.2. Conducting a property inspection and completing works as part of the AIDER Program is the responsibility of a State Mitigation Support Services (SMSS) Works Assessment Officer (WAO) or authorised SMSS Officer.

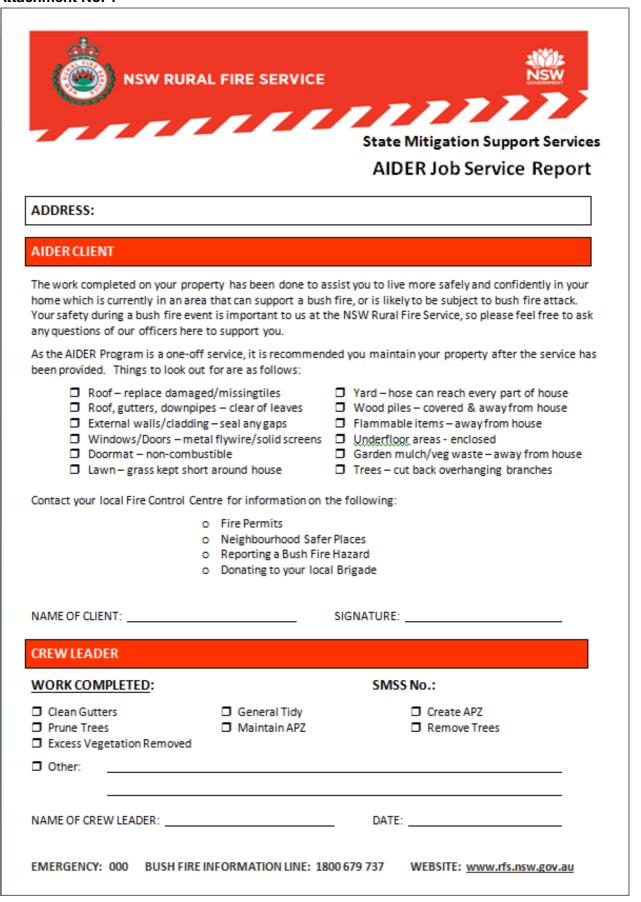
2 Procedures

- 2.1. The AIDER Program Coordinator will provide the relevant SMSS Supervisor with the following information in order for an inspection to be undertaken:
 - a. Name, phone number, eligibility category and address of client;
 - b. Name, phone number and agency of referring officer (if any);
 - c. Details of previous AIDER contact (if any);
 - d. NSW RFS District and Local Government Area; and
 - e. Wildfire history of the area.
- 2.2. SMSS WAO or authorised SMSS Officer contacts the AIDER client to schedule an inspection of the property.
- 2.3. An inspection of the property is undertaken by SMSS within 28 days of receipt of the request for assistance under the AIDER Program. If this is not possible, the AIDER client must be contacted within the same 28 day period and alternative mutual arrangements made to inspect the property as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 2.4. SMSS WAO or authorised SMSS Officer obtains written consent from the AIDER client to undertake a property inspection (Attachment 2 or 3).
- 2.5. Property inspection is undertaken and AIDER Tasking Form is completed for work to be scheduled. The SMSS WAO or authorised SMSS Officer assists the AIDER client with the use of planning and preparation tools to understand their level of risk including; a Bush Fire Survival Plan; Bush Fire Household Assessment Tool and Bush Fire Safety Fact Sheets.
- 2.6. AIDER works are scheduled by SMSS as soon as practical after the property inspection and the AIDER client notified of the scheduled start and completion date of the works.
- 2.7. Any changes to the scheduled works date will be communicated to the AIDER client as soon as possible.
- 2.8. Prior to commencing the AIDER works, the SMSS Crew Leader confirms with the AIDER client that the proposed work is in accordance with the client's wishes and a site risk assessment is undertaken with the crew.
- 2.9. Following completion of the AIDER works, the SMSS Crew Leader provides the AIDER client with a report (Attachment 1) outlining:
 - a. Works undertaken by the NSW RFS;
 - b. Recommended ways to maintain their property once AIDER services are complete;
 - c. Their responsibility to manage vegetation and fuel on their property; and
 - d. Contact details for the local NSW RFS District Office or NSW Fire and Rescue Station;
- 2.10. All inspection and completion details are recorded by the SMSS WAO or authorised SMSS Officer within five working days of the end of the calendar month in which the work is carried out.

- 2.11. The AIDER Program Coordinator provides the NSW RFS District Office with a report outlining the works undertaken and contact details for the AIDER client so that they can be connected to any NSW RFS brigade, district or other local initiatives that may assist with improving their level of protection from bush fire.
- 2.12. The AIDER Program Coordinator enters the AIDER works into the approved corporate register currently Bushfire Risk Information Management System (BRIMS).

3 Related forms

- AIDER Job Service Report
- Owners Consent Form
- Occupiers Consent Form
- Site Risk Assessment Form



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Attachment No. 3

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Issued by: Melissa Heffernan Issued on: 01/05/2013		Health ar	nd Safety			Page 1 of 4	
Next Review: 01/05/2014							





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Are SDS available?	1 1
WORKING AT HEIGHTS – HAZARD	Critical High Medium Low
IDENTIFICATION	Cridical High Medium Low
Can the work be completed from a	
ladder?	
Is the roof kit required and has it	Name of competent person
been checked prior to use?	
ELECTRICITY – HAZARD IDENTIFICATION	Critical High Medium Low
All electrical equipment has been	
tagged, tested and in date?	
Are there electrical hazards on site?	List
	Control Measures
OTHER – HAZARD IDENTIFICATION	Controls
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