

BUSH FIRE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CODE - SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

FIRE AND WEED MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

July 2021

1. Introduction

The Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code (Code) provides for a 'one-stop shop' streamlined environmental assessment process for mechanical and burning methods for undertaking bush fire hazard reduction work. Issuing authorities and certifying authorities can use this Code to determine Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificates (Certificates) that authorise the carrying out of the identified bush fire hazard reduction works in accordance with section 100C of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*.

The Code identifies potential issues of environmental concern. Works which may impact on these environmental concerns are required to be carried out in accordance with the provided conditions. The Code also identifies those circumstances for which a Certificate may not be issued based on the potential environmental impact. In these cases, a more comprehensive assessment of the potential impact is required under the relevant environmental legislation.

The Code and related documents can be located at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

This document has been prepared by the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) in conjunction with the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

This document is for the use of issuing and certifying authorities (those public authorities specified in the Code and the *Rural Fires Act 1997*) when assessing the conditions required for a bush fire hazard reduction certificate. This document has been developed to support the Code. As such, a level of understanding of the Code will assist in comprehending this document.

2. Rationale for these Guidelines

These guidelines focus on weeds that pose a bush fire risk. The purpose is to ensure that appropriate measures are undertaken when using fire to manage the bush fire risk posed by weeds. Reference to specific weed species will be incorporated as and when guidance can be provided. Weed species will be added to this guideline on the advice of the DPI.

It is important that weeds are managed with due consideration of the effects of the control methods. Integrated weed management involves the coordinated use of a variety of control methods to maximise the potential of eradication or weed control. There is recognition that burning can be a useful tool for the eradication or control of some weeds, however burning of weeds for example, at the wrong time of year could exacerbate the problem. Burning is best used as part of an integrated weed management program.

The best way that a landholder can give effect to an integrated weed management program is to develop a plan of management highlighting the weed control methods and their timing.

3. Application

The purpose of Clause 5.12.2 of the Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code is to ensure that appropriate measures are undertaken when using fire to manage the bush fire risk posed by weeds. Consideration of this clause (and these guidelines) is not required when undertaking a burn in an area where weeds happen to occur, unless the purpose of the burn is to eradicate or control a weed that poses a bush fire risk.



4. Rules for fire intervals for weed management

Clause 5.12.2 of the Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code provides that:

Burning of weeds for bush fire hazard reduction may be undertaken in accordance with these guidelines.

A certificate may be issued if a landowner submits a plan of management outlining how the landowner intends to manage the weed occurrence in accordance with these guidelines. The plan is to include reference to timing and complementary measures such as herbicide use and mechanical works.

If the plan of management meets these guidelines then burning may be undertaken irrespective of any relevant fire interval thresholds (in the Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code Section 5.4) that might otherwise be required for the vegetation class present. These conditions are only afforded for the period of time required to control the weed occurrence as described in the plan of management.

However, these conditions do not provide for burning of:

- vegetation formations and classes identified in Clause 5.1 of the Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code, or
- threatened species unless otherwise in accordance with Clause 5.3 of the Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code.

Note: *If you are seeking to manage weeds on your property which do not pose a bush fire risk, contact your local council or Local Land Services for advice.*

5. Weeds to which these guidelines will apply

These guidelines do not currently provide for any specific weed species.

Weed species will be included here on a case-by-case basis on the advice of the Department of Primary Industries.