RFS

4.1.4A Neighbourhood Safer Places Management Handbook

NSW GOVERNMENT

Document control

Release history

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1.0	2017	Development Planning and Policy	Initial release
2.0	2 December 2025	Planning and Environment Services	Comprehensive review to reflect current practice and implementation of the Guardian system. Relocation of SOPs from Service Standard to Handbook.

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Name	Title	Date
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Related documents

Document name
Rural Fires Act 1997
Service Standard 4.1.4 Neighbourhood Safer Places
OneRFS NSP staff community page
Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy 1/2023 Bush Fire Risk Management
Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy 2/2012 Notified Step for the Protection of Neighbourhood Safer Places

Document name
Neighbourhood Safer Places Designation Register
NSP Designation Register Instruction Manual
National Construction Codes
NSP / CPP Record Management Guide
Planning for Bush Fire Protection
Policy P5.16 Record Management
Service Standard 1.3.1 Operational Delegations and Authorisations

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1

Introduction and general information

1.0 Purpose

This handbook forms part of and should be read in conjunction with Service Standard 4.1.4 Neighbourhood Safer Places. It provides information on the services provided by the RFS in relation to the Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP) program.

It sets out the required steps in the designation and assessment of NSPs and details compliance steps, works funding arrangements, and record management for NSPs within NSW.

1.1 About this document.

This Handbook provides guidance for Community Protection Plan and Neighbourhood Safer Place Coordinators to assist them in carrying out their roles.

A range of resources is available on the OneRFS NSP private community page that must be utilised to ensure consistency of designation, assessment and compliance of NSPs.

1.2 What is a NSP?

A NSP is a building or an open space that may provide for improved protection of human life during the onset and passage of a bush fire. They are locations where people facing an immediate threat to their personal safety can gather and seek shelter from the impact of a bush fire, as a place of last resort.

In NSW, a NSP is a formally designated place of last resort for people to access in a bush fire emergency. A NSP may be either a building or an open space.

A NSP may provide a safer location than being:

- In a house that is not prepared to the highest level, designed, constructed or modified to withstand bush fires and the occupant is not well prepared to actively defend it
- In the open either in or out of a vehicle directly in the path of an oncoming bush fire event, or
- Travelling through an area where there is an active bushfire event occurring.

A NSP can form part of a person's bushfire survival plan / backup plan, to be utilised where their intended actions in the face of a bush fire are unable to be implemented or have failed.

NSPs are not recovery centres, assembly areas, evacuation centres or informal places of shelter.

Additionally, it is to be noted that each community faces different risks and has its own local needs. The intended occupation time of a NSP is from a couple of minutes to a couple of hours as the fire front passes. Once safe to exit, it is intended that occupants return to their homes or move on to the official centres mentioned above.

1.3 Why do we have NSPs?

The NSP program was implemented in NSW by the RFS as a result of recommendations made by the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission which included NSPs and Other Safer Locations or Bush Fire Safer Precincts.

By identifying these options, the Royal Commission noted that safer places *'may increase a person's chance of survival, but still entail some risk, both in moving to them during a fire and while sheltering in them. They cannot be considered, nor should they be described as, 'safe'.'* (p.209)

1.4 Organisational context

Management and policy development of the NSP program sits within the Planning and Environment Services unit of the Built and Natural Environment directorate. The program is overseen by the Deputy Commissioner Field Operations and the Director Built and Natural Environment.

The state-level statutory Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) provides governance for the program through the local Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC). All NSPs within a BFMC's area are listed in the relevant Bush Fire Risk Management Plan and associated Fuel Management Register and the NSP Register. The NSP Register is published to the RFS website.

The RFS has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the NSW Police Force. Operational decisions to activate a NSP during a bush fire event rest with the local Incident Controller in conjunction with local emergency management groups.

1.5 Conduct and ethics

RFS members delivering the NSP program are required to comply with:

- Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Service Standard 1.1.35 Conflicts of Interest
- Service Standard 1.1.36 Gifts and Benefits
- All other policies and service standards.

Action may be taken for breaches of service standards, policies and conduct in accordance with SS 1.1.34 Workplace Complaints Resolution.

1.6 Legislative framework

NSPs in NSW are legislated by the *Rural Fires Act 1997* (the Act). The Act identifies the Commissioner of the RFS as responsible for the program in NSW. This responsibility has been delegated to the Deputy Commissioner Field Operations and is implemented by the Director Built and Natural Environment through the Planning and Environment Services (PES) teams.

Part 3A of the Act identifies the legislative framework for:

- Designation of a NSP
- Inspection of a NSP (and land adjoining a NSP) and actions following annual inspections
- Removal of the designation of a NSP
- The Register of NSPs
- Signposting of NSPs
- Protection from personal liability for owners of a NSP.

Section 100C of the Act identifies environmental approval options for carrying out bush fire hazard reduction work on a NSP or land adjacent to a NSP.

Section 54(3) of the Act outlines the requirement for a BFMC to consider the number and location of NSPs when preparing its draft Bush Fire Risk Management Plan. The legislative requirement under the Act is reflected in the *Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy 1/2023 Bush Fire Risk Management*. This policy establishes that all NSPs in a BFMC area require ongoing treatment by the applicable landowner to ensure that the asset remains viable as a place of last resort for people during a bushfire. Therefore, all NSPs within the BFMC area are required to be treated and must be included in the Fuel Management Register.

Additionally, *BFCC Policy 2/2012 Notified Step for the Protection of Neighbourhood Safer Places* identifies that maintenance (in accordance with this document) of an NSP that has been designated but not yet included in the BFRMP is a notified step for the purposes of section 63(4) of the Act.

1.7 Funding of NSP program works

Works may be required to support the establishment, maintenance and enhancements that provide additional safety of NSP sites. There are multiple funding sources available to enable works such as hazard reduction and infrastructure improvements. These funding sources and the activities that may be undertaken are detailed in the NSP Works Funding Handbook.

Funding of works to NSPs will be assessed on their individual merit against the NSP essential criteria identified in this guideline. All funding applications must clearly demonstrate how the proposed works will allow the NSP to meet the essential criteria or enhance the NSP to provide an additional level of safety during a bushfire event.

Further information on the funding of NSP works is available from the PES teams.

1.8 Roles and responsibilities

Service Standard 1.3.1 Operational Delegations and Authorisations delegates the NSP program to the Deputy Commissioner Field Operations. The Director Built and Natural Environment, through the Planning and Environment teams, performs the functions to meet these responsibilities.

There are various roles and responsibilities in delivering the NSP program. The Act defines the statutory requirements of the NSP program as:

- Designation of NSPs (section 62C)
- Commissioner to inspect NSPs (s62D)
- Removal of designation as NSP (s62E)
- Register of NSPs (s62F)
- NSPs may be signposted (s62G)
- Protection from personal liability for owners of NSPs (s62H)

Table 1 below identifies the roles primarily responsible for undertaking the tasks associated with the statutory requirements. At times, other roles may assist in completing the tasks.

Statutory Requirement	Perform	Endorse	Approve
62C - Designation of NSP	CPP and NSP Coordinator in accordance with this guideline	PES Manager Director BNE	DCFO
62D – Inspection of NSP	CPP and NSP Coordinator in accordance with this guideline		PES Manager
62E – Removal of Designation of NSP	CPP and NSP Coordinator in accordance with this guideline	PES Manager Director BNE	DCFO

Statutory Requirement	Perform	Endorse	Approve
62F – Register of NSP	CPP and NSP Coordinator in accordance with this guideline		
62G – NSP maybe Signposted	CPP and NSP Coordinator in accordance with this guideline		PES Manager
62H – Protection from liability for owners of NSP	CPP and NSP Coordinator in accordance with this guideline and Private Landowners agreement.	PES Manager Director BNE	DCFO

Table 1 Roles and responsibilities to fulfill statutory requirements for NSPs

1.9 Audit program

The NSP program is subject to periodic audit via inclusion on the RFS Internal Audit Program. This audit is performed by an external auditing body engaged by the RFS, and all findings and recommendations are reported to the Commissioner and the Audit and Risk Committee.

2

NSP assessment

2.0 When is a NSP needed?

When looking at the establishment of a new site there are a number of broad considerations to be taken into account including:

- What level of bush fire risk does the Bushfire Risk Management Plan identify for the community?
- Is the community within an identified Bushfire Risk Management Plan focus area?
- Has the community requested a NSP (e.g. CPP or community meeting)?
- Is the community isolated from an established larger urbanised area?
- Are there access issues that would impede the community's ability to relocate. For example, does the community have to travel through bushfire hazardous vegetation to relocate to an urban area?
- Has the District or BFMC identified a bushfire hazard to the community, or other issues that would support the need for an NSP?

The above considerations must be undertaken in conjunction with District and BFMC stakeholders to investigate the area for a potential NSP site utilising the site selection hierarchy shown at clause 2.2 below

When assessing potential new sites, the surrounding land must also be assessed to ensure land management practices will support the ongoing compliance of the site.

2.1 Site selection hierarchy

When selecting a new NSP site it is recommended that the following hierarchy be followed:

- Sites where users will be moving away from a bush fire hazard and not towards a hazard (e.g. site in the middle of a built-up area in preference to a site on the edge of a built-up area.
- Building sites in preference to open space
- Public sites in preference to private sites
- Larger sites in preference to smaller sites
- Buildings constructed to a site-specific National Construction Code to standard in preference to those constructed before *Planning for Bushfire Protection (2001)* came into effect.
- Closer to the population rather than further away
- Further away from other identified hazards, e.g. flammable liquid or dangerous chemical storage.

2.2 The NSP assessment process

The assessment of NSPs is an established process that is repeatable and provides consistency across all areas of the RFS that conduct NSP assessments.

Site assessments are based on vegetation classification types identified in *Ocean Shores to Desert Dunes: The Native Vegetation of New South Wales and the ACT* (Keith, D, 2004).

Where a NSP does not meet the setback requirements of 139m (building) and 310m (open space), the vegetation and fire design characteristics to be applied using the Bush Fire Attack Assessor are detailed in Appendix D of this document.

The steps within the NSP assessment process must be undertaken at some point in the process to ensure consistency for every assessment undertaken.

The assessment of NSPs is based on specific criteria aimed at the protection of life during a catastrophic bushfire event. The assessment process is detailed in this handbook to ensure consistency between assessments and assessing officers, whist demonstrating the sites merit to the delegated officer.

The assessment process consists of two parts:

1. New site assessment

   Section 2.3 details the new site assessment process. The premise of this assessment is to ensure the site meets the required criteria, is suitable for the community, and has all the required permissions and approvals.

2. Annual inspection

   Section 2.4 details the annual inspection process. The premise of this inspection is to ensure that the site remains compliant with the required criteria, whilst also checking that any changes in the site are still within the scope of the site's designation.

This assessment process may identify low threat vegetation areas that can be identified on the assessment sheets as a reduced threat or not threat to the NSP site,

These sites include modified landscapes, coastal wetlands, riparian areas and include:

- Single areas of vegetation less than 1 hectare in area and greater than 100 metres separation from other areas of Category 1 or 2 vegetation bushfire prone land.
- Multiple areas of vegetation less than 0.25 hectares in area and not within 20m of the site, or each other or of other areas of vegetation being bushfire prone lands classified vegetation.
- Strips of vegetation less than 20 metres in width (measured perpendicular to the elevation exposed to the strip of vegetation) regardless of length and not within 20m of the site or to each other, or other areas of vegetation being Category 1, 2 or 3 vegetation.
- Vegetation regarded as low threat due to factors such as flammability, moisture content or fuel load, including grassland managed in a minimal fuel condition, mangroves and other saline wetlands, maintained lawns, golf courses such as playing areas and fairways, maintained public reserves and parklands, sporting fields, vineyards, orchards, banana plantations, market gardens and other non-curing crops, cultivated gardens, arboretums, commercial nurseries, nature strips and windbreaks.
- Existing areas of managed gardens and lawns within curtilage of buildings. Non-vegetated areas, including waterways, roads, footpaths, buildings and rocky outcrops. These conditions for low threat vegetation are taken from Planning for Bushfire Protection (2019) p88.

Where a site assessment reveals a building's exterior to be sufficiently compromised that it is no longer fit for purpose as a NSP, the site should not be designated.

In the case of a designated site, the site may be deemed as non-compliant until repairs are undertaken.

All assessment documentation such as assessment forms, maps, calculator outputs and correspondence must be filed in the RFS record management system (currently CM). No access controls are to be applied to CM records to ensure they remain available to all PES staff. As standard

practice, the assessment documentation is included in CM with the designation request as supporting documents. See section 3.5 for further information on recordkeeping.

The assessment process is managed through various systems such as CM and MS Access database. Where the systems pre-populate data into assessment forms or documents, the assessing officer must validate each entry to ensure that the pre-populated data is current and reflects onsite recordings at the time of inspection.

2.3 Desktop assessment

A desktop assessment of all new NSP sites is necessary to establish the site in a landscape context, providing the assessing officer with a spatial overview of the site and surrounding features. A desktop assessment is an efficient method of providing evidence of the site's ability to meet the assessment criteria, and informs the assessing officer of potential hazards that require confirmation during a physical site inspection.

A desktop assessment prior to conducting the annual inspection may serve to refresh the knowledge of a site before an onsite inspection takes place.

A desktop assessment can form part of a due diligence check of the potential site. This includes consideration of:

- Community need, (isolation, access etc)
- Site identification
- Land tenure and consent for use of the site
- Extent of possible works and consideration of the pre-designation process
- Confirmation of the geospatial coordinates of the site and its extent
- Use of correct assessment documentation and data collection.

See Appendix C for Desktop Assessment process flow 2.3.

2.4 Assessment for an existing NSP (annual inspection)

The annual inspection is to ensure that the NSP is compliant with the essential criteria and will likely remain compliant throughout the Bush Fire Danger Period. The annual inspection must include an onsite inspection to determine if there are any bush fire hazards present or other issues that compromise the designation of the NSP.

Sites may be inspected more than once in a 12 month period, for example a follow-up inspection on a non-compliant NSP to ensure works have been completed.

See appendix C 2.4 for Assessment for an existing NSP (Annual Inspection) process flow.

2.5 Onsite assessment of a NSP

All NSPs are to be physically inspected to confirm and assess the on-ground site characteristics against the essential criteria.

See appendix C process flow 2.5 for Assessment for an existing NSP (Annual Inspection) process flow.

2.6 After site inspection of a NSP

As identified in section 2.2 it is important to remember that each assessment must demonstrate to the assessing officer that the site is compliant, and how it complies. Alternatively, if the site does not comply, what actions are available to return the site to compliance. If the site is not able to comply, then the site should be removed and ideally an alternative site found. This should be demonstrated

within the documentation through the addition of evidence to support the compliance or non-compliance. The evidence includes site maps detailing setback requirements, supporting calculator outputs, site photos, photos of any adjoining land, hazard/s and a photograph of the site signage.

See Appendix C process flow 2.6 NSP After site inspection process flow.

2.7 Assessment criteria for compliance

A NSP site is compliant when it has a clearance of 139m (building) and 310m (open space) from surrounding vegetation to an identified site. When this is not present a radiant heat level of <2kW/m2 and <10kW/m2 for an Open Space and Building respectively may be considered, based on the fire design table shown at table 2 below.

Where the building vulnerability from radiant heat becomes unacceptable the building may be considered non-compliant.

A building NSP must provide protection to occupants. Maintenance that may compromise the protection of occupants may result in the removal of NSP designation or access to enhancement works funding.

Where these criteria cannot be met see section 2.9 below.

A threshold of ≤2kW/m^2 for an Open Space NSP has been adopted by the Victorian (CFS), Queensland (QFES) and NSW (RFS) neighbourhood safer place programs. This level has been identified as the pain threshold where unprotected skin will undergo a partial thickness (2nd degree) burn in about 40 seconds (@ 1.74kW/m^2) (Sullivan AL 2015).

A 10kW/m^2 radiant heat threshold for buildings is used as it is in line with a low bush fire attack construction level, where there are no specific built requirements for building elements in line with AS 3959:2018. At this level it is assessed that there is insufficient risk to warrant specific construction requirements

Where the distances of 139 and 310m are not achievable or constrained by the physical characteristics of the site, then the measurement of the radiant heat levels can be calculated by the following means (identified in Appendix D) to achieve compliance:

- RFS Bush Fire Attack Assessor (BFAA) calculator v4 *
- Performance Assessment.

* It must be noted and confirmed by the user before using the BFAA to assess the radiant heat value of a site that the settings are changed to reflect the methodology developed in *Douglas and Tan (2005) Integrating Site Assessment and Performance Planning Outcomes for Bushfire Prone* Areas, available from the RFS Library. When calculating the radiant heat levels to be experienced on or at a NSP, the standard design fire and weather conditions shown at Table 2 below are to be used in conjunction with site specific characteristics:

Fire Characteristic	Level
Fire Danger Index	120 (Catastrophic)
Flame width	100m
Flames Temperature	1200K
Radiation Attenuation through Atmosphere	No
Flame Emissivity	100% (1)

Table 2 Fire design table

2.8 Performance assessment of a NSP site

When assessing NSPs, the aim is for sites to meet the designation criteria of 139m separation or <2kW/m^2 and 310m separation or <10kW/m^2. However, there may be circumstances where a potential site does not strictly meet the radiant heat or distances specified for designation, or there is a lack of an ideal site for a high-risk community.

A Performance Assessment is a demonstration of how the NSP site performs to meet the intent of the radiant heat requirement. That is, a clear measure of how individual characteristics create an environment that provides protection to human life under the applicable radiant heat requirement. Accordingly, a site assessment may be conducted by factoring in other considerations to determine whether the site still meets the level of safety intended by the NSP Program.

A performance assessment must be carried out ***in addition*** to the Site Assessment and evidence of conclusions attached to the New Site Assessment form.

The designation criteria may not consider all site characteristics or features. Factors outside of designation criteria include:

- Application of modelling, and
- Shielding.

Any proposal to apply radiant heat shielding from another structure must be accompanied by a detailed performance-based solution addressing siting, view factor exposure and consideration of the potential fire spread from adjoining structures.

Vegetation or building enhancement works required by a Performance Assessment must be undertaken for the NSP to be compliant. All such works must be in line with the NSP Works and Funding Handbook.

If a NSP cannot meet the requirement of the performance assessment , then the site must be removed from designation.

2.9 Site approval

All requests for NSPs must be endorsed by the relevant BFMC prior to submission to the RFS. A copy of the minutes of the BFMC meeting at which the need/want for a NSP was addressed is to be attached to the performance assessment.

The performance assessment is carried out by a CPP/NSP Coordinator and the relevant Manager Planning and Environment Services must endorse the performance assessment as correct.

The performance assessment must be referenced in and attached to the New Site Assessment Form which is then submitted to the Commissioner's delegate for approval.

2.10 Annual inspection

The conditions of the performance assessment become part of the annual inspection. The inspecting officer will confirm these factors are still consistent with the performance assessment each time the site is formally inspected.

3

Designation, maintenance, and non-compliance

3.1 Designation of a NSP

All NSPs must go through a designation and approval process before they are identified as an approved NSP site.

Where a proposed site meets the assessment criteria for a NSP the Request Designation process must be undertaken before the site can be designated as a NSP.

See Request Designation of NSP appendix C process flow 3.1 for details.

Where a proposed site does not meet the assessment criteria for a NSP site and it is intended to undertake works in order to meet the designation requirements, the Request Pre-Designation process must be undertaken to allowing the works to be undertaken on a site prior to designation.

See Request pre-designation of NSP appendix C process flow 3.1a for details.

Assessing officers must ensure that they are using the current approved documents when requesting designation and pre-designation of a site as outlined in the NSP / CPP Record Management Guide.

3.2 Landowner consultation and consent

Site consultation and consent

NSPs may be designated on both public and private land. Approval for use of a public site should be obtained through a motion at a meeting of the relevant BFMC and minutes of the meeting attached to the New Site Assessment or Request for Pre-Designation form (see appendix C process flow 3.1. or 3.1.1). Approval from the BFMC may be obtained out of session if necessary.

On private land or where land is managed by a community trust, written consent for the site to be used as a NSP must be obtained from the responsible site owner/manager using the Landholder Consent documentation.

Similarly, when a site owner/manager wishes to withdraw consent, this should be obtained in writing or by using the withdrawal of consent documentation.

Where a community hall or similar facility is proposed as the NSP, consultation must occur with all relevant stakeholders such as the local council or the site Trust. This is to ensure that the grounds will be maintained, access to the site is provided when required, and issues that may compromise the site as an NSP are reported to the RFS.

It should be noted that the Landholder Consent form is the method for collecting consent and contact details for the site to ensure that they remain open and accessible. This is particularly pertinent to NSPs that are a building.

Adjacent landowner consultation and consent

When assessing new sites, the surrounding land must also be assessed to ensure land management practices will support the ongoing compliance of the site. The setback area of a NSP may extend past the lot on which the designated site sits, and in some circumstances, across multiple lots of varying tenure.

Written consent from adjoining landowners/managers in such circumstances is not required. Where there is land within the setback area that has the potential to fall out of compliance, consultation with landowners/managers should occur prior to designation. Consultation should include the level of maintenance required and the ability of the RFS to enforce maintenance requirements. Issues arising, such as objections to the site designation should be documented by the assessing officer and included in the site records and CM file for consideration for the site assessment. This consultation will ensure

that adjoining landowners/managers are aware of the need for the land to be maintained to ensure the ongoing availability of the NSP.

Cooperation with the adjoining land manager should be taken into account before submitting a new site for approval.

Where vegetation works are required on adjoining land to enable compliance with NSP essential criteria, the standard hazard reduction process applies. The Guardian reference number should be recorded in the NSP Designation Register to demonstrate consultation with and consent of the relevant landowner/manager.

Maintenance of NSP and works funding

All NSPs in a BFMC area require ongoing treatment by the applicable landowner to ensure that the asset remains viable as a place of last resort for people during a bush fire. Therefore, all NSPs within a BFMC area are required to be treated and are included in the BFMC Fuel Management Register.

NSPs may require physical works to achieve compliance with this document, such as creation or expansion of Asset Protection Zones. Physical works can be carried out on Building NSPs to provide additional protection measures to the building and occupants. These works may form a part of a requirement from a NSP Performance Assessment or could be carried out as general enhancement works.

All works funding must be undertaken following the NSP Works and Funding Handbook. The PES teams can be contacted for further information on funding of NSP works.

3.3 Non-compliant sites

A NSP site is considered non-compliant under the following circumstances:

1. Consent for its use as a NSP has been withdrawn

   NSP private consent is not title bound therefore, if there is a change of ownership then the existing consent ceases to be valid. Private consent with the new owner/manager will need to be sought. If the new owner/manager does not provide consent then the site must be removed from designation, ***or***

2. A site fails to meet the compliance requirements established in section 2.3 for either land adjoining, or within the NSP site.

If a site becomes non-compliant for the above reasons, this must be communicated to the BFMC, District and landowner/manager, as they have responsibilities in returning the site to compliance.

3.4 Removal from designation

A NSP may need to be removed from designation for several reasons, including:

- Revocation of consent by the owner / land manager
- The physical nature of the site or the site use may change making it unsuitable for use as a NSP
- NSP works required to return the site to compliance are prohibited from being carried out
- It is impractical to remediate the site due to its recurring non-compliance with the criteria, compromising the sites ability to remain compliant throughout the Bush Fire Danger Period.

Where a site is to be removed and a community's need for a NSP remains, efforts must be made to locate and designate an alternative.

Were a site is proposed for removal from designation as a NSP, the steps identified in the Removal of Site from Designation (Memo) must be adhered to.

3.5 Document management and record keeping

All documents associated with the development and ongoing processes of the NSP program are to be stored in the RFS record keeping system (currently Content Manager/CM) in accordance with policy *P5.1.6 Record Management*. These are official RFS records and are subject to audit.

Documents referenced in this handbook are stored on CM and a summary of all documents appears in the NSP / CPP document Register. This section is also supplemented by a NSP / CPP Record Management Guide.

All documents are to be stored in CM in the individual LGA Folio references established in CM, with broader scale documents in the General folio.

The NSP Designation Register is the source of information relating to all NSPs. All NSP Inspections, associated outcomes and designation approvals are recorded in the NSP Designation Register. This is to be undertaken in accordance with the NSP Designation Register Instruction Manual.

Where vegetation works are undertaken for a NSP, these works shall be recorded in the RFS Guardian system under the activity management process.

It is essential that the NSP Designation Register is updated when information changes or when annual inspections and works are undertaken, so as to ensure the information supplied to ICT for updating of corporate systems and the public website is accurate and timely.

3.6 Further information

Your closest Planning and Environment Services (PES) offices can be contacted for further information regarding any aspect of the NSP program on 1300 679 737 or nsp@rfs.nsw.gov.au

PES East
121 – 131 Oratava Avenue
West Pennant Hills NSW 2125
8867 3400

PES North
51 Moonee Street
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450
6691 0400

PES South
Unit 2 63 Cranbrook Road
Batemans Bay NSW 2536
4472 0600

4

Appendices

Appendix A: Definitions and abbreviations

Annual inspection	The process undertaken each year to ensure a NSP continues to comply with designation criteria. Annual inspection may also identify the need for remedial works to maintain compliance. All NSPs must undergo an annual inspection.
Assembly area	A designated location used for the assembly of emergency- affected persons before they move to temporary accommodation or a nominated evacuation centre
Bush Fire Attack Modelling	Computer simulations and mathematical models to predict how bushfires will spread, impact structures, and affect communities.
Bush Fire Attack Assessor	The RFS assessment tool that applies the modelling identified above using site specific features.
CM	Content Manager. The authorised RFS recordkeeping system
CPP and NSP Coordinator	An appropriately qualified member of the Planning and Environment Services (PES) team. PES teams sit within the Built and Natural Environment group, in the Field Operations directorate.
Desktop assessment	Is an examination of the geospatial features of a proposed NSP site
Evacuation centre	A designated location approved by the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) that is part of the local Emergency Management Plan. It provides affected individuals with basic needs such as accommodation, food, water, and in some cases, initial healthcare.
Assessment criteria	The minimum requirements for a site to be designated as a NSP.
NSP	A Bush Fire Place of Last Resort, Neighbourhood Safer Place is a building or an open space that may provide for improved protection of human life during the onset and passage of a bush fire. They are locations where people facing an immediate threat to their personal safety can gather and seek shelter from the impact of a bush fire, as a place of last resort, when all other options in a Bush Fire Survival Plan cannot be put into action safely.
NSP assessment	See annual inspection
NSP Designation Register	The register of designated NSPs maintained by the RFS and published to the RFS website at https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/neighbourhood-safer-places
NSP inspection	An inspection of the NSP to ensure it meets the Assessment Criteria.
OneRFS	The online platform for RFS volunteer and staff members

Pre-assessment process	The process undertaken in preparation for the initial assessment of a new NSP site.
Performance assessment	A demonstration of how the NSP site performs to meet the intent of the radiant heat requirement.
Recovery Centre	A location established by the NSW Government after a disaster, such as a bush fire, to provide support to individuals and communities impacted by the event. These centres offer a range of services, including information, financial assistance, and mental health support.

Appendix B: Bibliography and references

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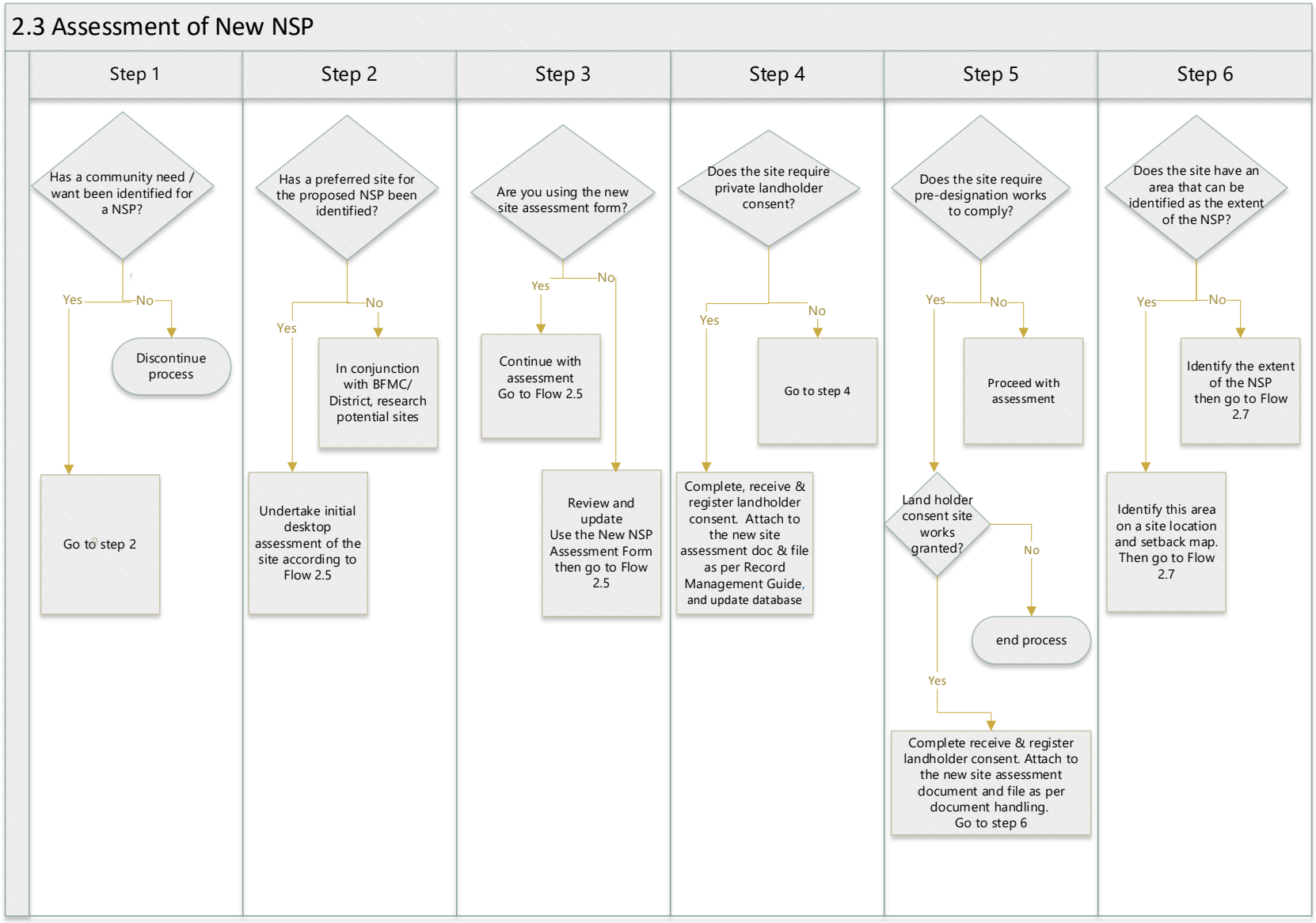
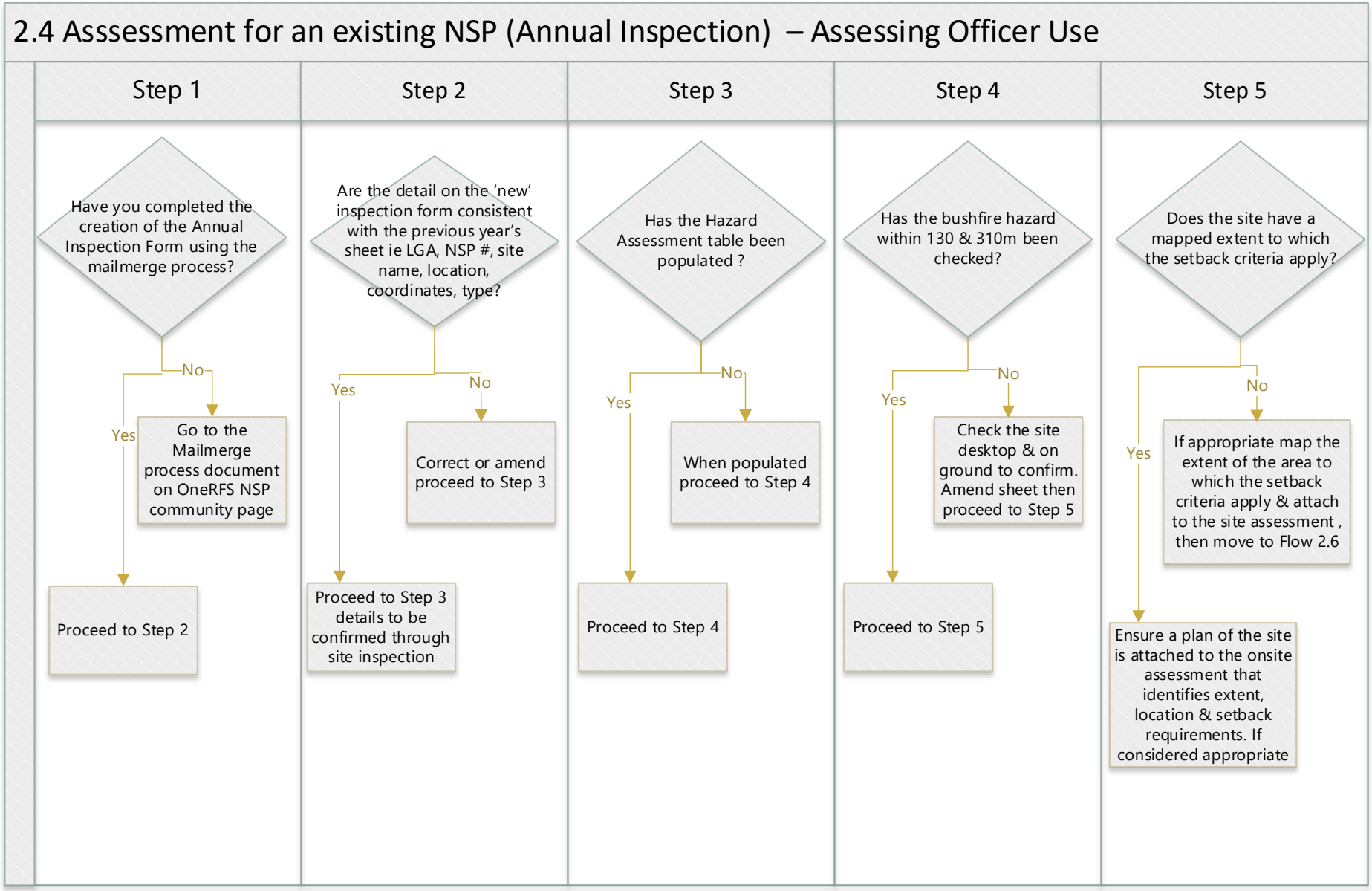
Bushfire Attack Assessor calculator

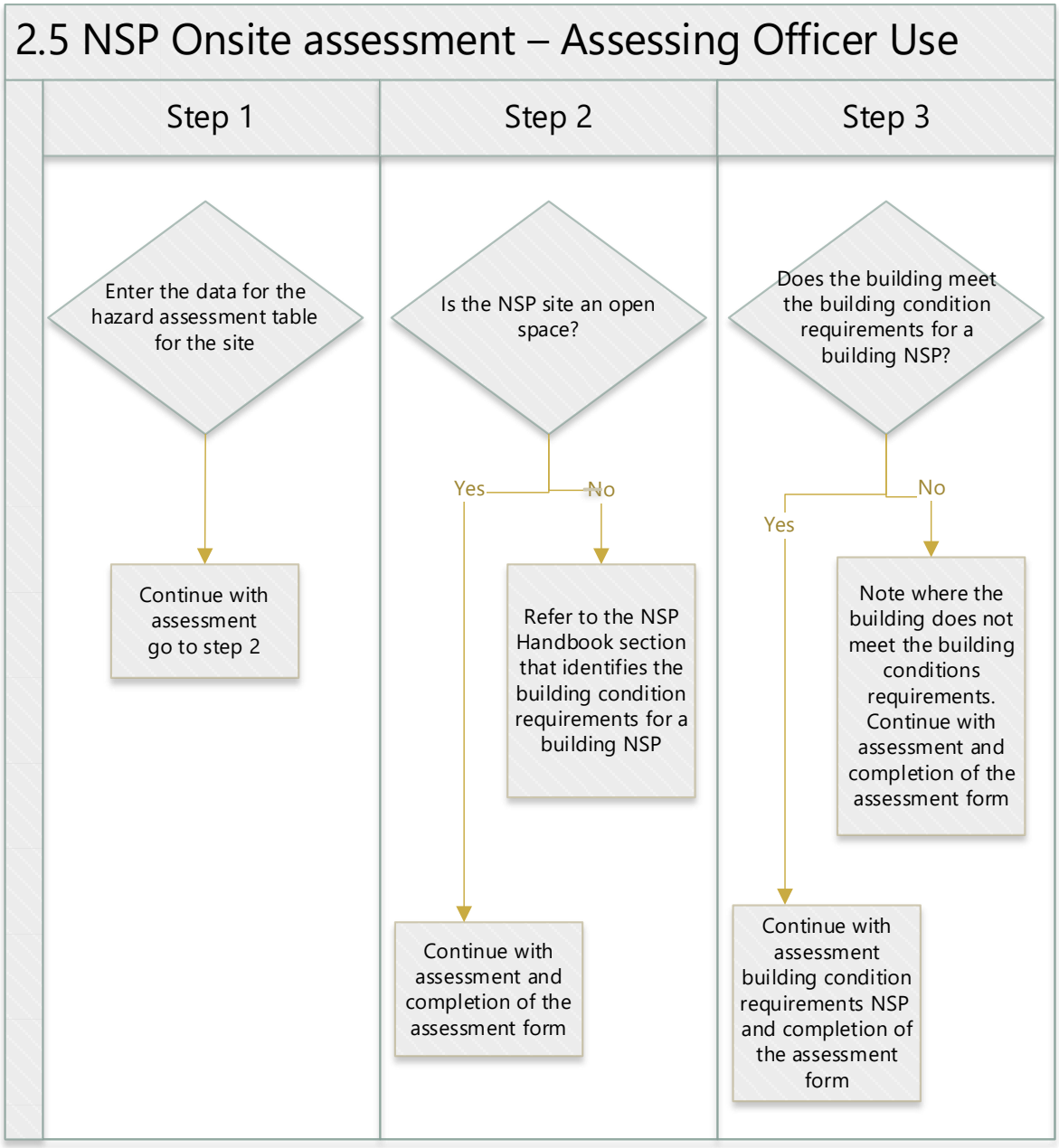
NSP Database

Short Fire Run Calculator

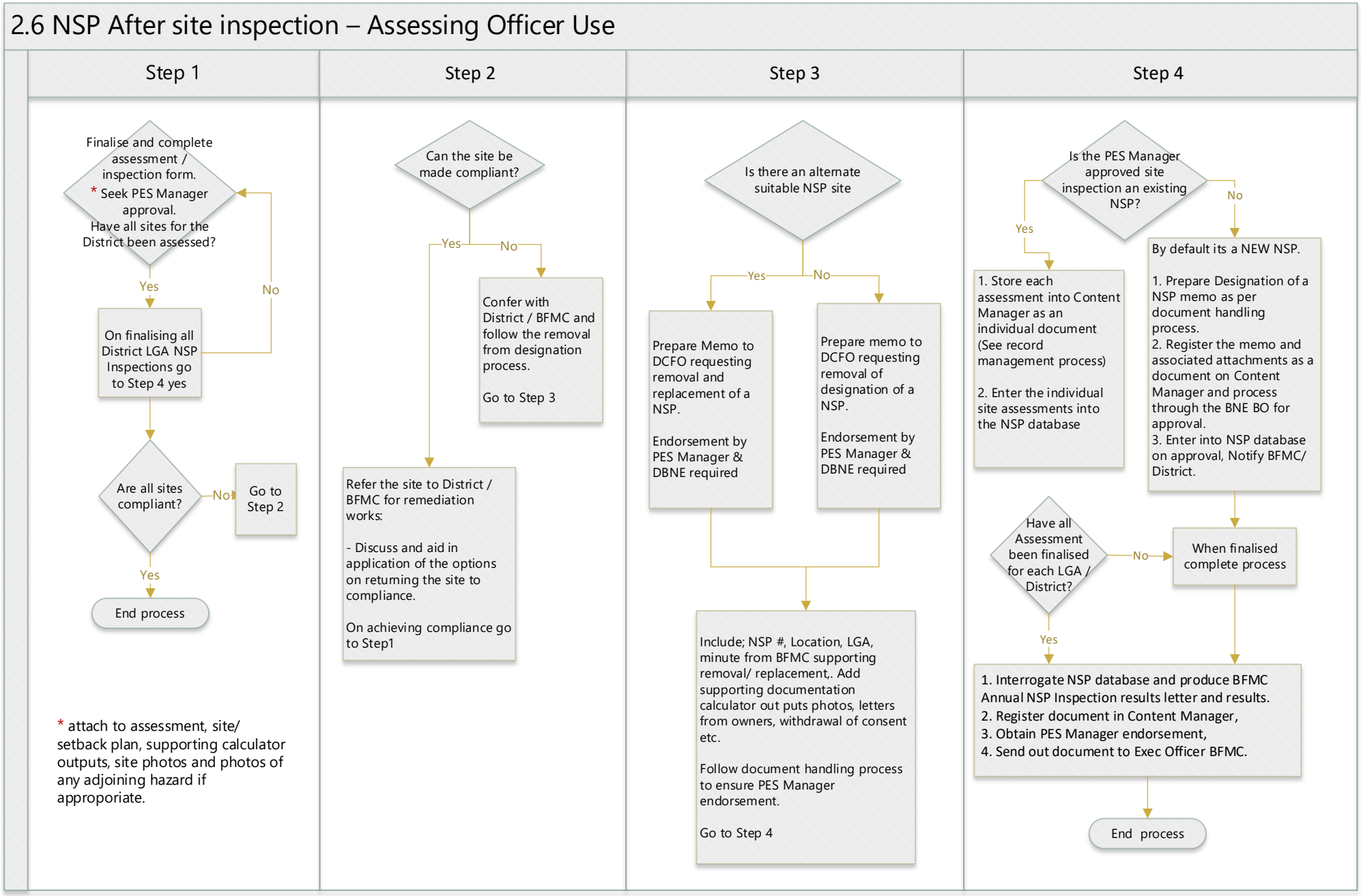
Appendix C: NSP assessment process flowcharts



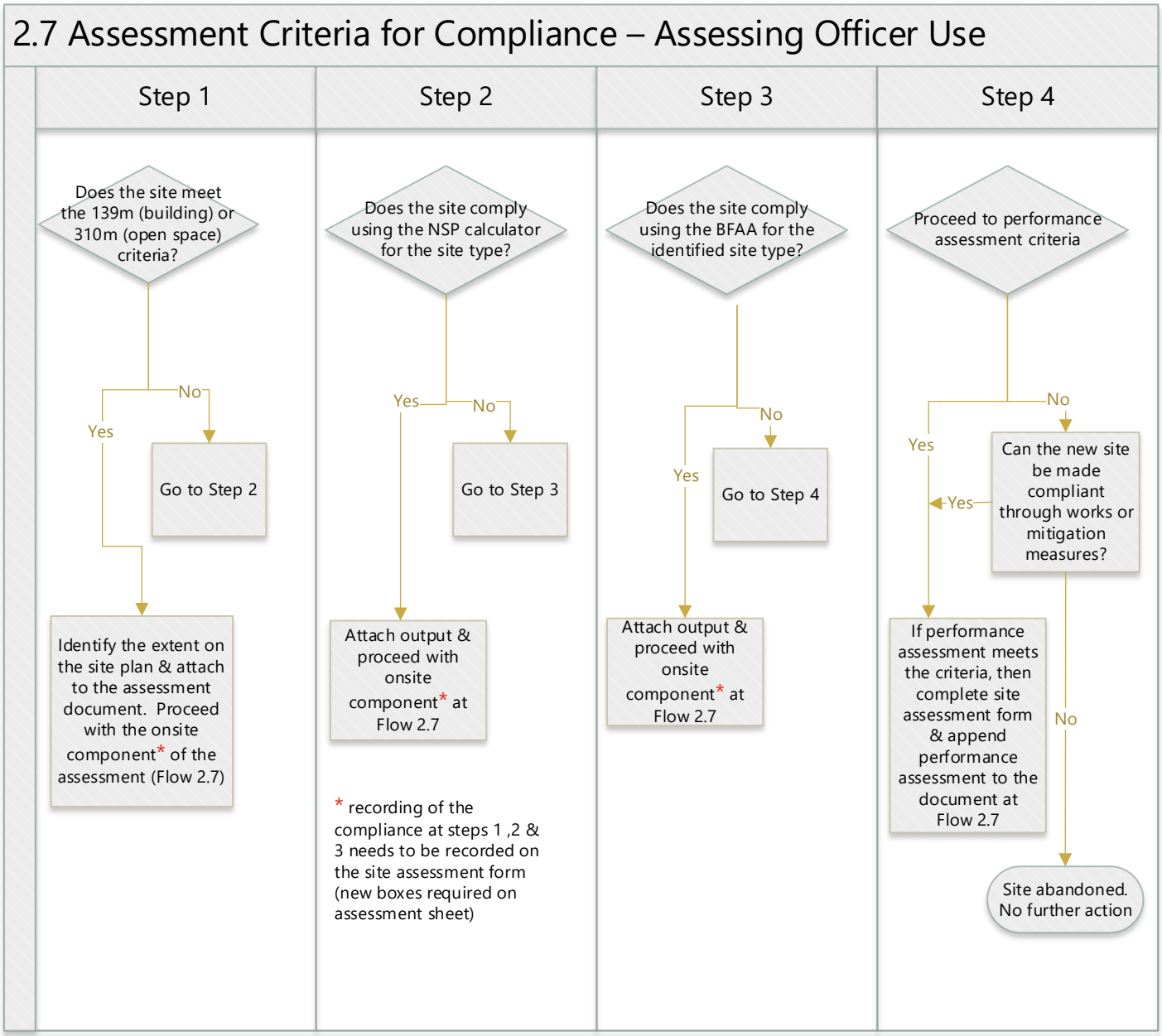

2.4 Asssessment for an existing NSP (Annual Inspection) – Assessing Officer Use
Step 1
Step 2
Step 3
Step 4
Step 5
Have you completed the creation of the Annual Inspection Form using the mailmerge process?
No
Yes
Go to the Mailmerge process document on OneRFS NSP community page
Proceed to Step 2
Are the detail on the 'new' inspection form consistent with the previous year's sheet ie LGA, NSP #, site name, location, coordinates, type?
Yes
No
Correct or amend proceed to Step 3
Proceed to Step 3 details to be confirmed through site inspection
Has the Hazard Assessment table been populated ?
No
Yes
When populated proceed to Step 4
Proceed to Step 4
Has the bushfire hazard within 130 & 310m been checked?
No
Yes
Check the site desktop & on ground to confirm. Amend sheet then proceed to Step 5
Proceed to Step 5
Does the site have a mapped extent to which the setback criteria apply?
No
Yes
If appropriate map the extent of the area to which the setback criteria apply & attach to the site assessment , then move to Flow 2.6
Ensure a plan of the site is attached to the onsite assessment that identifies extent, location & setback requirements. If considered appropriate


2.5 NSP Onsite assessment – Assessing Officer Use
Step 1
Step 2
Step 3
Enter the data for the hazard assessment table for the site
Continue with assessment go to step 2
Is the NSP site an open space?
Yes
No
Refer to the NSP Handbook section that identifies the building condition requirements for a building NSP
Continue with assessment and completion of the assessment form
Does the building meet the building condition requirements for a building NSP?
No
Yes
Note where the building does not meet the building conditions requirements. Continue with assessment and completion of the assessment form
Continue with assessment building condition requirements NSP and completion of the assessment form

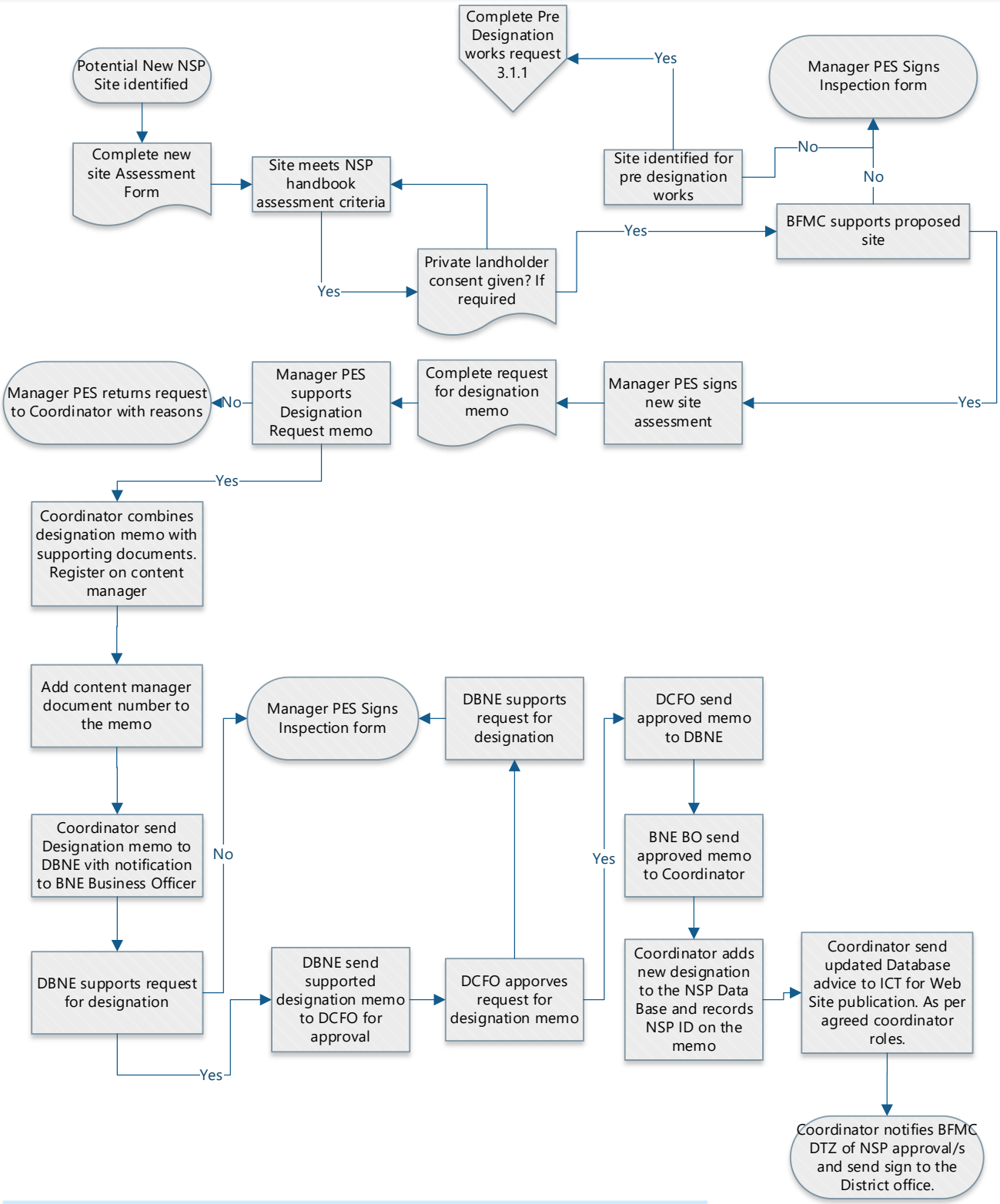
2.6 NSP After site inspection – Assessing Officer Use



2.7 Assessment Criteria for Compliance – Assessing Officer Use



3.1 Request Designation of a NSP



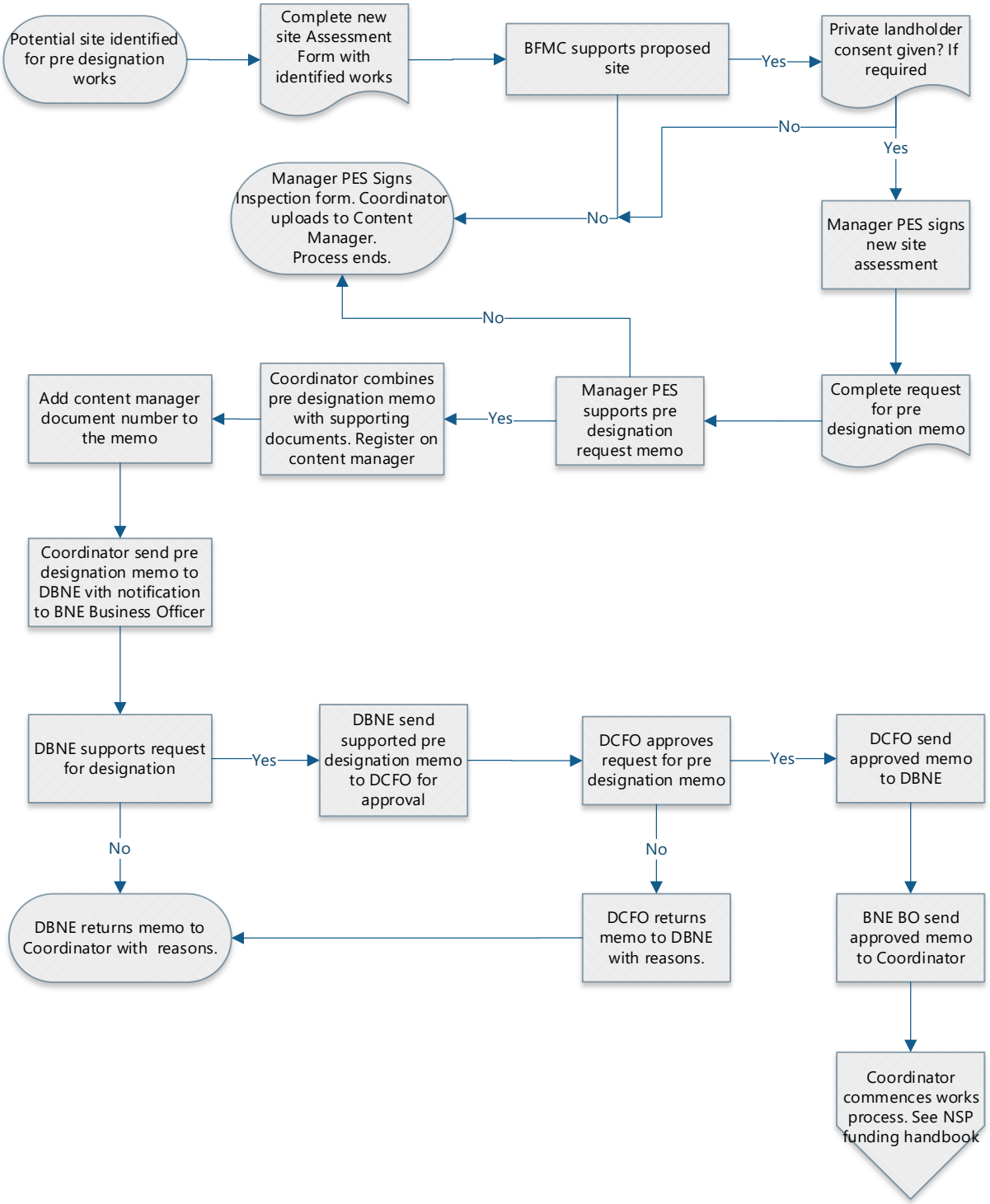
Notes

1. Supporting documents include New Site Assessment form, Photos, copy of BFMC Minute supporting the site, email from BFMC supporting the site, land owners consent, calculators attached to the New Site Assessment.

2. See content manager user guide (Doc18/118433) for sending documents electronically.

3. DCFO = Deputy Commissioner Field Operations, DBNE = Director Built & Natural Environment, Coordinator = CPP & NSP Coordinator

3.1a Request Pre-designation Works for a Proposed NSP



Notes

1. Supporting documents include New Site Assessment form, Photos, copy of BFMC Minute supporting the site, email from BFMC supporting the site, land owners consent, calculators attached to the New Site Assessment.

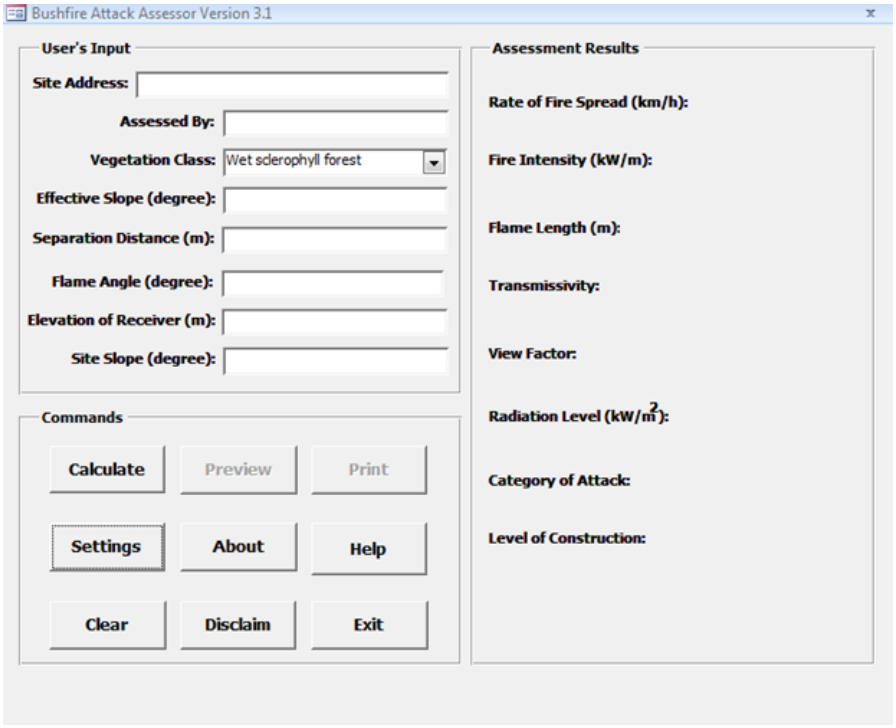
2. See content manager user guide (Doc18/118433) for sending documents electronically.

3 DCFO = Deputy Commissioner Field Operations, DBNE = Director Built & Natural Environment, Coordinator = CPP & NSP Coordinator

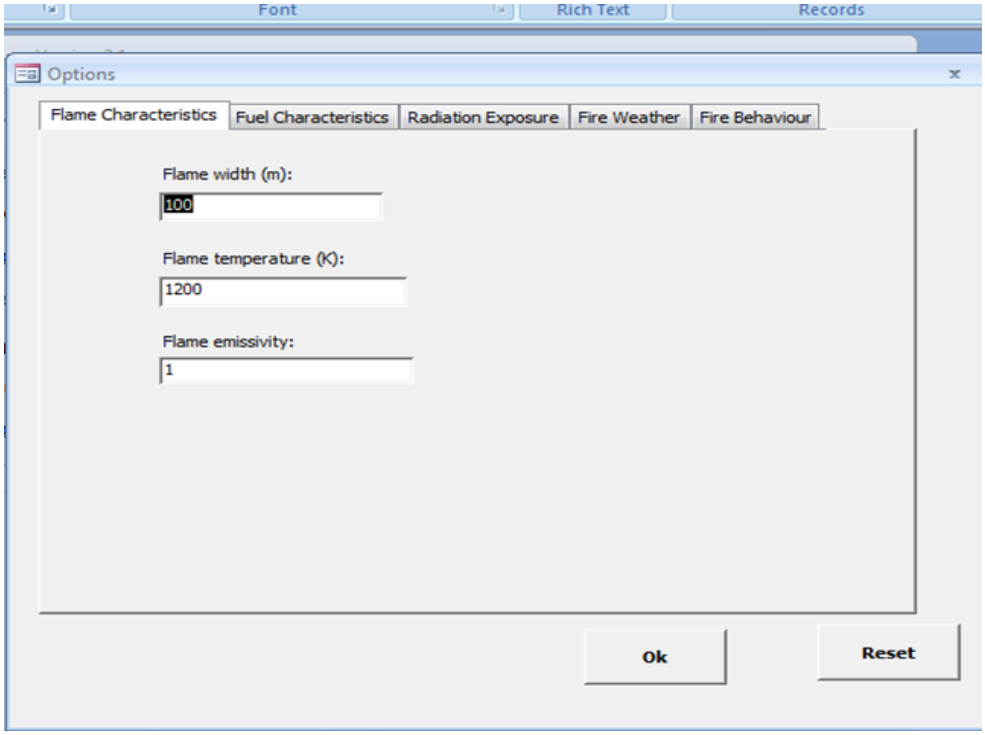
Appendix D: Bush fire attack assessor- Setting for NSP Inspections

The bush fire attack assessor (v4.0) is a calculator produced by the RFS that allows for site specific analysis of a proposal in regard to bush fire radiant heat. This calculator has been set up for use by Development Assessment and Planning (DAP) personnel as they are the primary user. As the protocols around NSPs differ from those of DAP, the following amendments to the settings are required to enable an accurate NSP assessment.

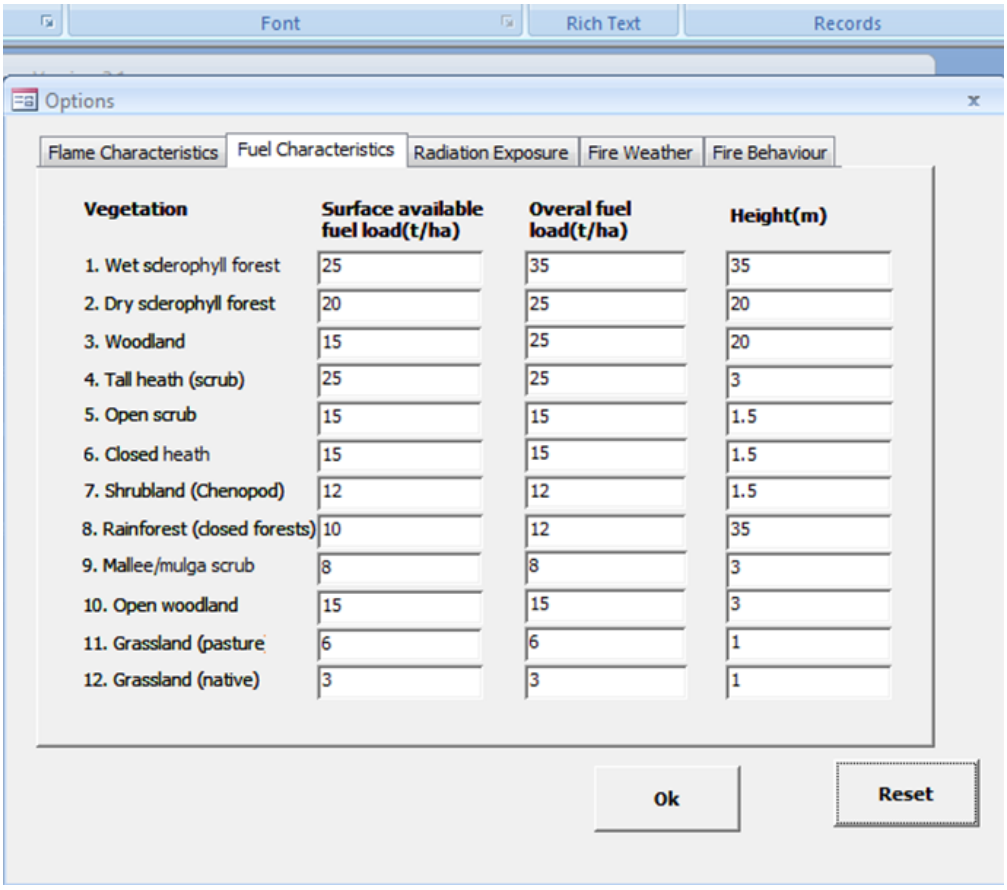
1. Select Settings



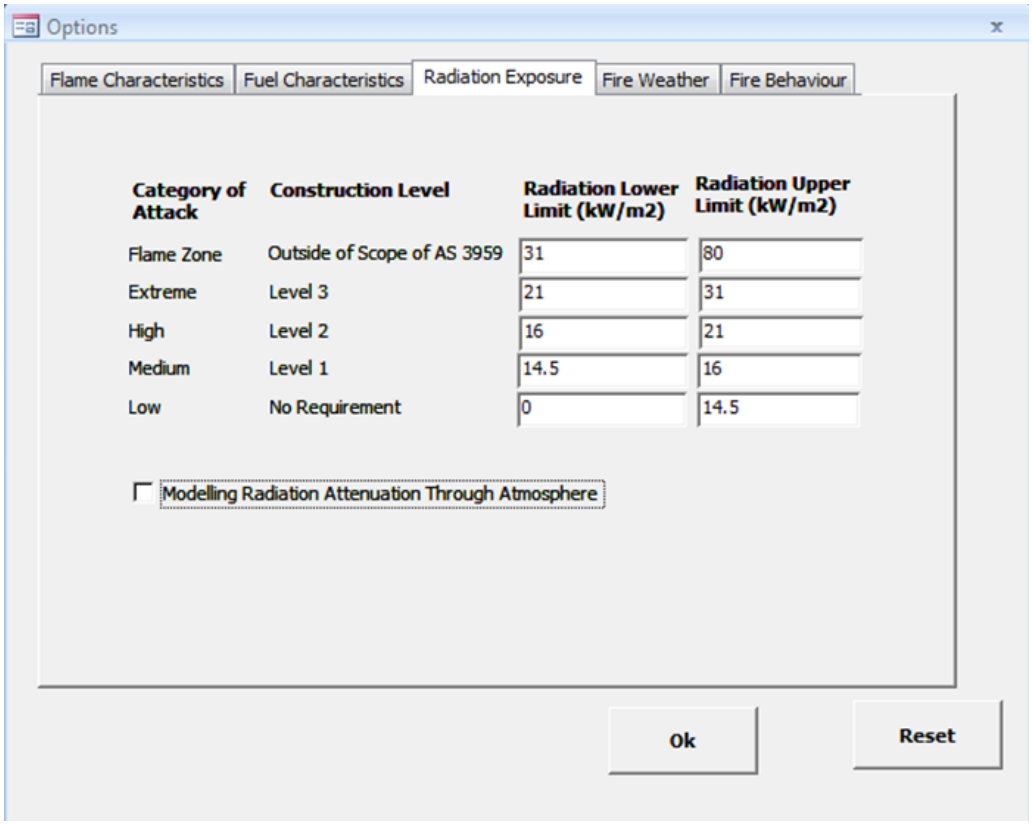
2. Flame Characteristics for NSPs are based on protecting humans in a bush fire event



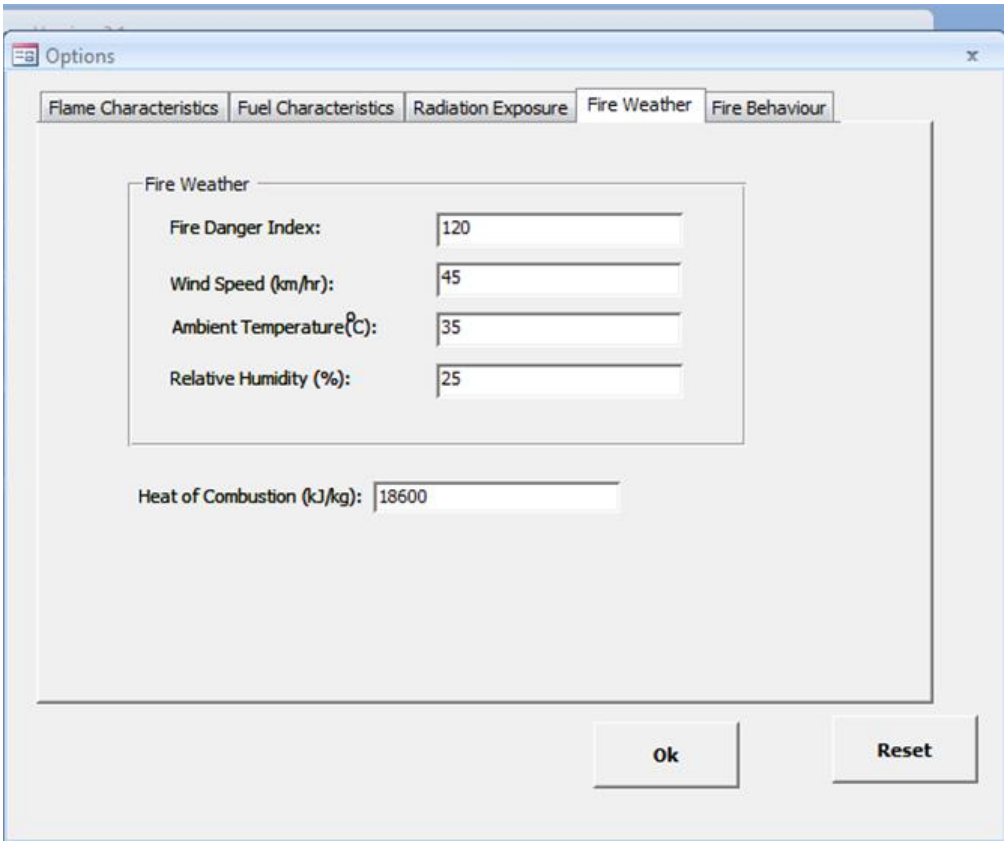
3. Fuel Characteristics – Until further notice, these remain unchanged



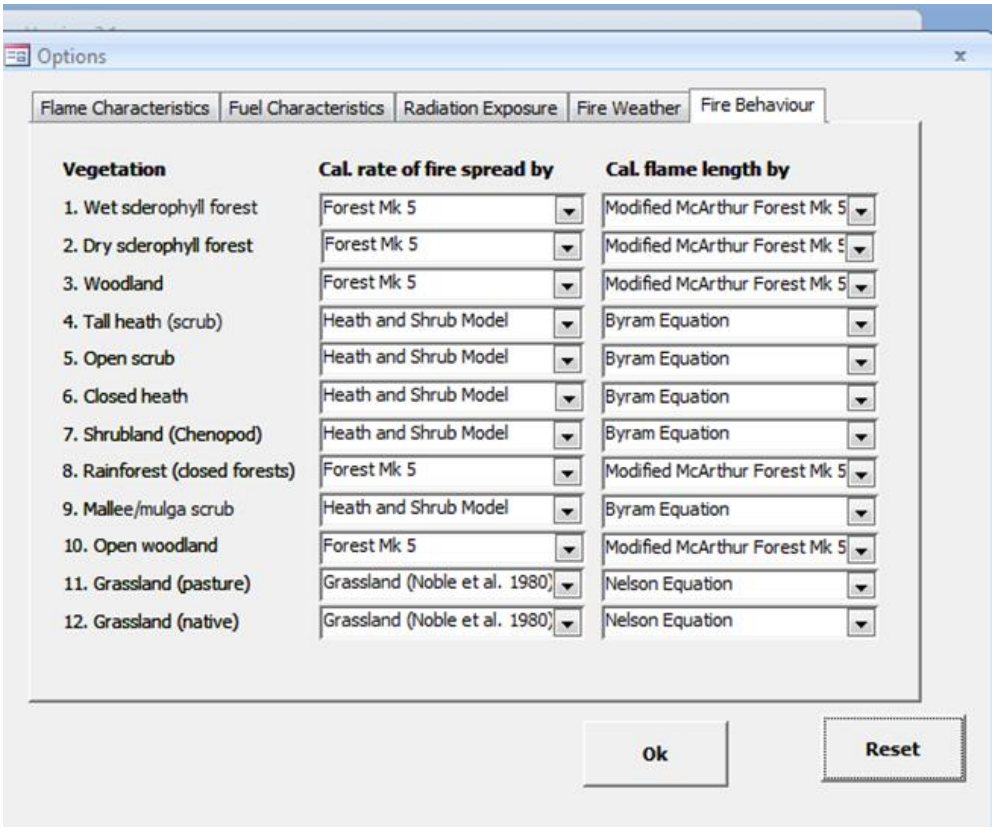
4. Radiation Exposure – Construction levels don't really apply to NSPs due to the set radiation thresholds. The only variance is Modelling Radiation Attenuation through Atmosphere.



5. Fire Weather – The NSP program recognises an FDI of 120 for assessment based on a catastrophic bush fire day.



6. Fire Behaviour – No Change



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