1 Purpose

1.1 Part 3A of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* (the Act) provides for such functions as the designation, inspection, removal of designation, and signposting of Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSPs).

1.2 This service standard outlines the NSW Rural Fire Service’s (NSW RFS) process and procedures for the identification, designation and administration of NSPs to ensure consistency with the Act.

2 Definitions

2.1 For the purposes of this service standard, the following definition applies:

a. **Neighbourhood Safer Place**: in NSW, an NSP is a formally identified place of last resort for people to access in a bushfire emergency. It can be either a building or an open space that has been designated as an NSP by the Commissioner of the NSW RFS.

3 Policy

3.1 The *Rural Fires Act 1997* provides that the NSW RFS is the responsible agency for the NSP program in NSW.

3.2 The NSW RFS Commissioner or delegate is solely responsible for designating a place as a NSP, and removing the designation of a place as a NSP.

3.3 The NSW RFS will inspect potential NSPs in line with the Neighbourhood Safer Places: Places of Last Resort Guidelines prior to designation.
3.4 The NSW RFS has established partnerships with key stakeholders for the identification and management of NSPs. Partners include local government, land holders and Bush Fire Management Committees.

3.5 The NSW RFS will engage with stakeholders where required over the lifespan of each NSP. Stakeholders may include Local Emergency Management Committees, local Councils, Bush Fire Coordinating Committee, Bush Fire Management Committees and Community Groups. Engagement is to occur as early as possible.

3.6 The *Rural Fires Act 1997* requires the NSW RFS to:
   a. conduct annual inspections of each NSP and adjacent land;
   b. maintain a register of all current NSP locations on the NSW RFS website; and
   c. install signage at NSW sites.

3.7 The NSW Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy 2/2012 specifies that NSPs are to be considered as part of a Bush Fire Risk Management Plan once the NSP is designated by the NSW RFS Commissioner.

3.8 Bush Fire Management Committees are to be formally notified of NSPs that have been designated by the NSW RFS Commissioner for inclusion in their Bush Fire Risk Management Plans in line with the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy.

## 4 Related Documents

- *Rural Fires Act 1997*
- *Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy 1/2008*
- *Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy 2/2012*
- *Neighbourhood Safer Places: Places of Last Resort Guidelines*
- *Neighbourhood Safer Places Register*

## 5 Amendments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMENDMENT DATE</th>
<th>VERSION NO</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 July 2012</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Initial release</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 30 July 2018   | 2.0        | Repeals and remakes SS 4.1.4 v1.0
                        Comprehensive review
                        Addition of five new SOPs, removal of previous SOPs 4.1.4-2 Emergency Procedures Building and 4.1.4-3 Emergency Procedures Open Space, and rearrangement of SOPs |
SOP 4.1.4-1
ESTABLISHING THE NEED FOR A NSP

1 Purpose

1.1 This Standard Operating Procedure provides an identification process for communities that would benefit from the designation of Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSPs) in their area.

2 Procedures

3 Related forms

- None
SOP 4.1.4-2
ASSESSMENT OF A POTENTIAL OR EXISTING NSP

1 Purpose

1.1 The intention of this SOP is to provide the procedure for the inspection of a place for the NSP Program.

2 Procedures

3 Related forms

› NSW Site Assessment Form
› NSP Inspection Form
**SOP 4.1.4-3**

**APPROVAL OF A PLACE AS A NSP**

1 **Purpose**

1.1 This SOP provides the procedure for the approval or rejection of a site as a NSP.

2 **Procedures**

3 **Related forms**

   › None
SOP 4.1.4-4
REMVAL OF A DESIGNATION OF A NSP

1 Purpose
1.1 This SOP provides the procedure for the inspection of a place for the NSP Program.
1.2 NSPs may form part of individual Bush Fire Survival Plans, and are a life safety option for the community.
1.3 The NSW RFS considers the removal of a place as a NSP should only be exercised where it is legally required or the place cannot be reasonably sustained as a NSP.

2 Procedures

NSW RFS District Office → BFMC shall be consulted regarding site being removed from the NSP register
→ Site shall be inspected in accordance with SOP 4.1.4-2

Planning and Environmental Services → Completed assessment form and all accompanying information shall be forwarded to Team Leader, Community Protection Planning for collation and administration.

Team Leader, Community Protection Planning → Required information received shall be forwarded to Director Planning and Environment Services

Director Planning and Environment Services → Director Planning and Environment Services shall provide required information to NSW RFS Commissioner or delegate

Was application for removal approved by NSW RFS Commissioner or delegate?

Yes
→ Director Planning and Environment Services shall return application to Team Leader, Community Protection Planning with outcomes from Commissioner or delegate

No
→ Director Planning and Environment Services shall return application to Team Leader, Community Protection Planning with outcomes from Commissioner or delegate

Team Leader, Community Protection Planning → Team Leader, Community Protection Planning removes site from NSP Register

Planning and Environmental Services → Relevant BFMC is to be notified of outcomes from Commissioner or delegate

Planning and Environmental Services → Assessment form and all accompanying information shall be stored on relevant NSP File.

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE – SERVICE STANDARD 4.1.4 NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES V2.0
30 JULY 2018 6 of 9
SOP 4.1.4-5
FUNDING FOR ENHANCEMENTS TO THE NSP PROGRAM

1 Purpose

1.1 The intention of this SOP is to provide the procedure for the allocation of funds for works under the NSP Works program.

1.2 The terms of this SOP are reliant on the NSW RFS having funds available for expenditure for NSPs.

2 Procedures

NSW RFS and local stakeholders shall work together to identify works that can be undertaken to enhance the NSP program in their area. This should include:

- The full extent of the works to be undertaken
- Who will be undertaking the works
- What method of payment will be used
- Are the works feasible in the provided time period

Proposed work shall be forwarded to the relevant Planning and Environment Service Centre.

If supported, a formal Works Approval Form shall be created and approved by the relevant NSW RFS Planning and Environment Service Centre Manager or delegate.

All approved works are to be completed in accordance with Works Approval Form and relevant procurement/reimbursement procedure.

Works to be inspected by NSW RFS member on completion to ensure they are satisfactory.

Are works completed satisfactorily?

Yes

Take steps to rectify incompleted works

No

Proceed with payment in line with relevant procurement/reimbursement process.

Works Approval Form and relevant documentation to be completed and submitted to relevant Planning and Environment Service Centre.

If supported, a formal Works Approval Form shall be approved and finalised by the relevant NSW RFS Planning and Environment Service Centre Manager or delegate.

All forms and all accompanying information to be stored on relevant NSP File.
3 Related forms

› NSP Works Program
› NSP Works Approval Form
SOP 4.1.4-6
ANNUAL INSPECTION OF NSPs

1 Purpose

1.1 Section 62D of the Act requires that the NSW RFS undertake an inspection of every NSP each calendar year.

1.2 The purpose of this SOP is to set out the requirements for the undertaking of these inspections.

2 Procedures

Each site on the NSP Register shall be inspected at least once each calendar year

Site shall be inspected in accordance with SOP 4.1.4-2

Results of inspection shall be recorded in the Annual Inspections Database

A summary of results shall be formally provided to the relevant BFMC

Assessment forms, summaries and all accompanying information shall be stored on relevant NSP File

Full results of the annual inspection will be made available to the BFMC on request

3 Related forms

› None