

# FIRE PREVENTION GUIDE

## Winter and Spring Maintenance

### Annual Fire Prevention Inspections

Each year as a part of our requirements under the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*, we conduct fire prevention inspections across Wellington Shire. These inspections identify properties that require landowners to carry out certain hazard works to reduce the threat of fire and risk to life or property.

During our annual inspections, we focus on reducing fuel loads across the landscape to minimise the threat of ignition and spread of bushfires. A simple way of achieving this on a large scale is through the enforcement of grass slashing and mowing across private landholdings. In some cases, more substantial work is required.

We expect that most residents will mow or slash their properties when the grass is 20-30% cured - when the last of spring growth has occurred. Our first inspections occur when grass is between 30-50% cured - when the grass is starting to dry out enough to have potential to ignite and carry fire, and suppression difficulty is low. Our second inspections occur when grass is 50-70% cured - when grass is dry enough to ignite and carry fire and suppression difficulty is moderate to high.

### What is winter and spring maintenance?

Although the majority of fire prevention works involve grass slashing and mowing, some landowners will need to remove more substantial undergrowth on their properties to separate ground fuels from the tree canopy and nearby dwellings.

Winter and spring maintenance is fire prevention work that can be conducted well before the fire season because it does not rely on spring growth or curing. This work may involve slashing undergrowth and weeds, removing fallen timber, rubbish piles and tree branches, as well as pruning tree branches back from dwelling and fences.

### Why does Council promote winter and spring maintenance?

Winter and spring maintenance may be more time-consuming, expensive, or difficult to complete than grass slashing. If you complete this work over winter and spring it spreads out the workload. If you are engaging a contractor to help complete the work, they'll be more readily available. Clearing the undergrowth will also make your future fire season grass slashing much easier.

### How do I find a contractor?

Several private local contractors offer fire season property maintenance services. Check local business directories, speak to a neighbour or contact your local garden supplies centre. For landowners who do not live locally, we recommend asking your contractor to take before and after photos to ensure that work is completed to your satisfaction.

### What can I do with my green waste?

You have several options for the disposal of green waste which may include mulching and composting, permitted burning or transport to a nearby waste facility. If you engage a contractor, they will likely dispose

of the vegetation as a part of their service. Please note that the fine for dumping green waste is \$322.00. Contact Council on 1300 366 244 to report someone illegally dumping green waste.

## No Fee green waste weekend

We hold an annual No Fee Green Waste Disposal weekend on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday before the Melbourne Cup. You can dispose of green waste between 9am and 5pm at our Kilmany, Maffra, Rosedale, Loch Sport, Seaspray, Heyfield, Stratford, and Yarram waste facilities.

At other times, green waste can be disposed of at these facilities for a small fee. See the 'Waste Facilities' page on our website for more details.

## Removing native vegetation and trees

A planning permit is generally required to remove native vegetation. In some circumstances you may be able to remove native vegetation without a permit for bushfire protection under the 10/30 and 10/50 rules. Check if these rules apply to where you live by contacting our Environmental Planner on 1300 366 244.

## Burning Off

Outside of the Fire Danger Period you may be able to burn the vegetation you have cleared on your property. If you live in a rural living zone or farm zone, you do not require a permit to burn on your property but should notify your local CFA and you must comply with the Standing Requirements for Every Burn.

If you live in any other zone, including residential zones, you will need to apply for a permit and you must demonstrate that there is no alternative to burning. Visit our ['Fire'](#) webpage for more information on burning off, including the Standing Requirements for Every Burn.

## What happens if I don't clean up my property?

Maintaining your property in winter and spring is not compulsory however you are expected to have your property prepared well in advance of the fire season. Your property will be inspected during our annual fire inspections in November and if it is deemed a fire risk, you will be served a Fire Prevention Notice (in accordance with *Section 41 of the CFA Act 1958*) directing you to:

- Carry out fire prevention works to remove any fire risks as specified, and
- Maintain your property for the duration of the declared Fire Danger Period.

If you do not follow the directions of the Fire Prevention Notice, we will issue you a Fire Infringement Notice (penalty of \$1,612). We can also arrange for the hazard reduction works specified in the notice to be completed by our authorised contractors at your cost, plus an administration fee.

## Where do I find more information?

- Visit Council's 'Fire' webpage [www.wellington.vic.gov.au/fire](http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/fire)
- Contact the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer on 1300 366 244 for specific advice
- Visit the CFA's 'Prepare your Property' webpage [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/how-to-prepare-your-property](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/how-to-prepare-your-property)

### Sale Service Centre

18 Desailly Street (PO Box 506), Sale Victoria 3850  
Telephone 1300 366 244

### Yarram Service Centre

156 Grant Street, Yarram Victoria 3971  
Telephone 03 5182 5100

### Contact Us Online

Web [www.wellington.vic.gov.au](http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au)  
Email [enquiries@wellington.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@wellington.vic.gov.au)

