

Bushfire Place of Last Resort Plan

Version: 3.3

Date updated: April 2017

Responsible Department: Connected Communities

Document Control

Council policy documents change from time to time and it is recommended that you consult the electronic reference copy at www.casey.vic.gov.au/policiesstrategies to ensure that you have the current version. Alternatively you may contact Customer Service on 9705 5200.

Responsible Department – Community Safety

This version includes all updates and administrative changes as at 02/05//2017.

Electronic reference library version – 3.3

Preamble

In accordance with a resolution of Council on 21 June 2005 to include definitions of Council, Councillors and Council officers in all Council policy documents, the following definitions are provided:

Council – means Casey City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 1989

Councillors – means the individuals holding the office of a member of Casey City Council

Council officers – means the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.

Council policy documents change from time to time and it is recommended that you consult the electronic reference copy at www.casey.vic.gov.au/policiesstrategies to ensure that you have the current version. Alternatively you may contact Customer Service on 9705 5200.

Purpose

In its Interim Report, the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recommended that Neighbourhood Safer Places ('NSP'), be identified and established to provide persons in bushfire affected areas with a place of last resort during a bushfire.

In response to this recommendation, the Victorian Government introduced the Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Act 2009 (Vic) ('ESLA Act') which amends the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 (Vic) ('CFA Act') and the Emergency Management Act 1986 (Vic) ('EM Act'). The effect of these amendments were to require the Country Fire Authority ('CFA') to certify NSPs against the CFA's Fire Rating Criteria, and Victorian Councils to identify, designate, establish and maintain suitable places as NSPs in their municipal districts.

In October 2015, Emergency Management Victoria, under the direction of the Commissioner Emergency Management developed the Neighbourhood Safer Places – Bushfire Place of Last Resort Signage Manual. In this manual, the term 'Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort' has been changed and is now referred to as a 'Bushfire Place of Last Resort' (BPLR).

BPLRs are not community fire refuges or emergency relief centres. BPLRs are places of last resort during the passage of a bushfire, and are intended to be used by persons whose primary bushfire plans have failed. BPLRs are places of relative safety only. They do not guarantee the survival of those who assemble there. Furthermore, there may be serious risks to safety encountered in travelling, and seeking access, to BPLRs during bushfire events. Depending on the direction of a particular fire, it may not be a safer place to assemble than other places within the municipal district.

BPLRs will be assessed by the CFA as providing some protection from immediate risk of direct fire attack, but not necessarily from other risks, such as flying embers. Where a potential BPLR, which is used for an operational purpose at many times, meets the CFA's criteria, then the CFA considers that those operational activities will be able to continue (to the extent practicable in the circumstances) while the place is being used as a BPLR.

1. Definitions

BPLR	Bushfire Place of Last Resort
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFA	Country Fire Authority
CFA Act	<i>Country Fire Authority Act 1958 (VIC)</i>
CFMPC	Casey Fire Management Planning Committee
CMFMP	Casey Municipal Fire Management Plan
DEWLP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
EM Act	<i>Emergency Management Act 1986 (Vic)</i>
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
ELSA Act	<i>Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Act 2009 (Vic).</i>
FDP	Fire Danger Period
FFG Act	<i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic).</i>
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MERO	Municipal Emergency Resource Officer
MFPO	Municipal Fire Prevention Officer
MNSPP	Municipal Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan
NSP	Neighbourhood Safer Place
OESC	Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner
PE Act	<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Act)</i>

2. Scope

This Plan contains a step-by-step methodology for the Council to follow in identifying, designating, establishing, maintaining and decommissioning BPLRs. The Council must consider each of the factors set out in this Plan. It should also consider other factors which are specific to the Council's circumstances, including the resources available to the Council.

Once this Plan has been adopted, Council must make it, and any documents incorporated into it, available at the Council's municipal offices for public inspection during normal office hours free of charge under section 50F(4)(b) of the CFA Act. It must also be published on Council's website under section 50F(4)(a) of the CFA Act.

This Plan also identifies other matters that should be taken into account in identifying, designating, establishing, maintaining and decommissioning BPLRs within the municipality.

3. Context

This Plan is a Bushfire Place of Last Report Plan for the purposes of the legislation, and contains guidelines which have been developed by the Municipal Association of Victoria ('MAV') to assist the Council in:

- Identifying;
- Designating;
- Establishing;
- Maintaining; and
- Decommissioning places as BPLRs within its municipal district.

4. Strategy/Policy/Procedure

This Plan has been divided into six distinct sections.

Section 1 contains a flow chart which summarises the process for Councils to adopt in identifying, designating, establishing and maintaining BPLRs within their municipal district.

Section 2 contains a more detailed summary of the steps outlined in the flow chart found in Section 1.

Section 3 contains a summary of the factors for Council to consider in assessing potential BPLR locations, prior to designation.

Section 4 contains details of content of signage that Council is required to erect at designated BPLR locations.

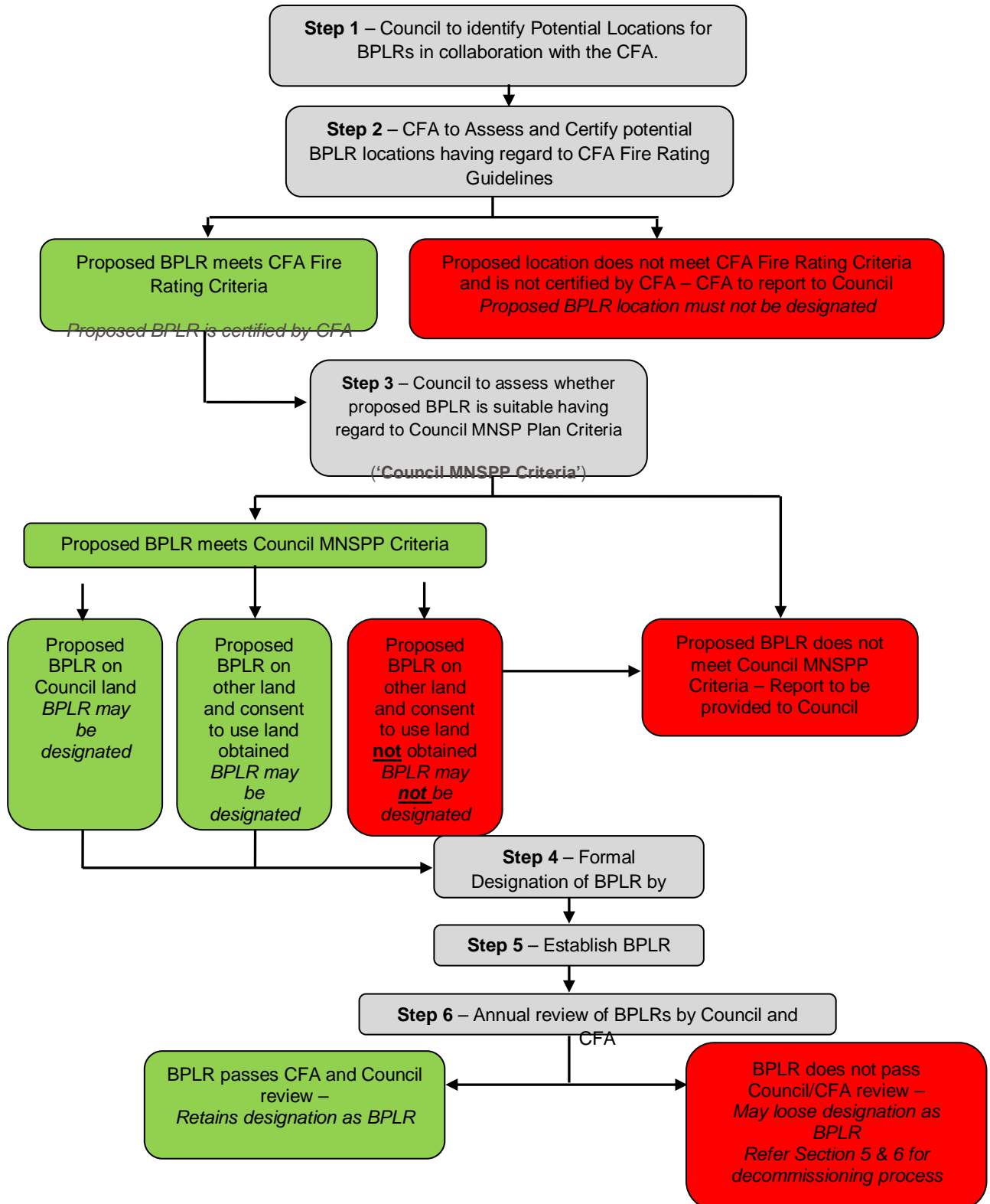
Section 5 contains a flow chart which summarises the process for Councils to adopt in decommissioning BPLRs within their municipal district.

Section 6 contains a more detailed summary of the steps outlined in the flow chart found in Section 5.

Section 1

Flow Chart Showing Process for Identifying, Designating, Establishing and Maintaining BPLRs.

Overview of the process for establishing and maintaining BPLRs after adoption of this Plan by Council



Section 2

Detailed Summary of Steps for Establishing BPLRs.

Overview of the Steps Associated with BPLRs

1. Identification of Potential BPLR Locations

1.1 Who is responsible for identifying places as potential BPLRs?

From 2010-onwards, Council will be responsible for identifying potential places as BPLRs within its municipal district. Section 50G of the CFA Act requires Council to identify potential BPLR locations.

1.2 When do potential BPLRs need to be identified?

Councils should identify potential additional places as BPLRs by 31 May in each year. This should allow sufficient time for:

- a) (CFA Certification) first, assessment and certification of the potential BPLR by the CFA;
- b) (Council Designation) secondly, designation of the potential BPLR location by the Council; and
- c) (Establishment) thirdly, and subject to the outcome of the assessment and designation process, establishing the BPLR, including the erection of signage and other steps by Council.

The process of BPLR identification is ongoing. Following each fire season, Council should assess whether any additional potentially suitable BPLR locations can be identified within the municipal district.

1.3 What factors should be considered when identifying potential BPLR locations?

When identifying potential BPLR locations, Council should. Consider matters such as:

- a) The environment surrounding the potential BPLR;
- b) What other uses are made of the potential BPLR, and whether or not those uses could be inconsistent with its designation as a BPLR
- c) Whether the land on which the potential BPLR is located is Council-owned or non-Council-owned land;
- d) Whether there are clear means of access and egress to and from the potential BPLR; and
- e) Whether the potential BPLR is in close proximity to population centres.

1.4 Who should undertake the identification of potential BPLRs?

Under the CFA Act, all Councils whose municipal district is located wholly or partly in the 'country area' of Victoria are required to identify and designate BPLRs.

Council should ensure that the following actions are completed prior to making any determinations regarding the assessment, designation and certification of BPLRs:

- a) A risk assessment considering the matters outlined in Section 1.3 (above) must be undertaken by Council's Municipal Emergency Resource Officer ("MERO") and Municipal Fire Prevention Officer ("MFPO") (which may be initiated through the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee as a sub-committee of the

- Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (“MEMPC”), using appropriate available information such as Integrated Fire Management Planning data and/or Victorian Fire Risk Register data and any applicable Community Information Guides (formerly Township Protection Plans);
- b) The MEMPC must review the results of the risk assessment, as summarised in the MERO’s and MFPO’s report prepared under section 1.4(a) (above), and submit a written report to Council with a recommendation as to whether CFA assessment and Council designation of the potential BPLR is warranted in the area under consideration.
 - c) Council should formally review the MEMPC report. Council should only decide that BPLR assessment and designation is not warranted in the area under consideration where Council is satisfied that:
 - I. The risk assessment undertaken by the MERO and MFPO has addressed the matters raised in sections 1.3 of this MBPLRP; and
 - II. The MEMPC has recommended that assessment and designation of the BPLR is not warranted.

2. CFA to Assess and Certify Potential BPLR Locations

2.1 Who is responsible for assessing potential BPLRs against guidelines issued by the CFA (‘CFA Fire Rating Guidelines’)?

Under section 50G(5) of the CFA Act, the CFA is responsible for assessing potential BPLR locations against the CFA Fire Rating Guidelines.¹ This will be done by appropriately qualified and experienced CFA personnel. Council is not responsible for the assessment and certification of potential BPLRs by the CFA.

2.2 What criteria must the CFA take into account in assessing potential BPLR locations?

In assessing potential BPLR locations which have been identified by the CFA (for the 2009-2010 fire season), or by Councils (from 2010-onwards), the CFA must consider the criteria and other considerations as set out in the CFA’s Fire Rating Guidelines as issued from time to time by the CFA.

The key matters to be considered by the CFA under the current CFA Fire Rating Criteria are:

1. If an NSP-BPLR is an OPEN SPACE, the maximum potential radiant heat impacting on the site should be no more than **2kW/m²**;

By way of example this equates to greater than 310 metres* separation distance from the outer edge of the NSP-BPLR to a forest fire hazard.

2. If an NSP-BPLR is a BUILDING, the maximum potential radiant heat impacting on the building should be no more than **10kW/m²**;

By way of example this equates to greater than 140 metres* separation distance from the outer edge of a building to a forest fire hazard.

*It is acknowledged that for NSP-BPLR abutting less than extreme fuel hazards the separation distance may be reduced so long as the criteria for maximum radiant heat impact are met.

¹ The CFA Act refers to “Country Fire Authority Assessment Guidelines”. For ease of reference in the context of this MNSP Plan, these guidelines are referred to as the CFA Fire Rating Guidelines.

3. Council Assessment of BPLRs Following CFA Certification

3.1 What factors should be applied by Councils in assessing the suitability of a place as a potential BPLR location?

Following certification of a place as a BPLR by the CFA, and once Council has received the CFA assessment and any criteria and CFA assumptions which underpin the assessment, Council must assess the place in accordance with the factors outlined below to determine whether it is suitable to be designated as a BPLR. Unless a potential BPLR satisfies each of the criteria outlined below, it should not be designated by Council as a BPLR.

Council's assessment of CFA-certified potential BPLRs may, if reasonably practicable, be conducted by the MEMPC, with a preliminary assessment to be provided to the MEMPC by the MERO and the MFPO.

The factors to determine the suitability of the place as a BPLR are as follows: ('Council MNSPP Criteria'):

a) Consents and rights of access

There must be appropriate land access and tenure arrangements so that Council has the right to:

- Use the place as a BPLR;
- Access the site and surrounding areas for maintenance; and
- Erect appropriate signage at the BPLR, including the Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) signage and additional BPLR information signage.

If the potential BPLR is on land owned or controlled by Council, appropriate rights of land access and tenure are unlikely to be an issue. However, Council will need to ensure that where Council land is leased or licensed to a third party it must be possible to put in place appropriate arrangements on reasonably satisfactory and acceptable terms with the tenant or licensee permitting Council to use the land as a potential BPLR. In taking these matters into account, Council should consider what alternative uses may be made, whether temporarily or semi-permanently, of land under Council control or management.

If the potential BPLR is on Crown land not owned or controlled by Council, then the consent of the Crown land manager is likely to be required. If the land has been leased or licensed to a third party, such as a caravan park operator, then the consent of the tenant or licensee to use the place as a potential BPLR will also be required. In obtaining the consent of the relevant Crown land manager, it will be necessary to consider whether or not the Crown Grant or reservation authorises the place to be used as a potential BPLR.

Where it is proposed that a place on privately-owned land is to be used as a BPLR, then the consent of the relevant landowner (and, where applicable, occupier) for the place to be designated and used as an BPLR is required. If the landowner (or occupier) does not consent to the place being designated and used as a BPLR on terms which are reasonably satisfactory and acceptable to the Council, it must not be so designated and used.

Where a potential BPLR is located on non-Council land, with the result that consent and rights of access need to be negotiated with the owner and (where necessary) occupier, Council officers responsible for negotiating such consent and rights of access should provide a draft form of consent to the owner/occupier for their consideration. The form of consent will be required to be approved either by Council (through a formal resolution), or by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) acting under delegation.

Any amendments to the form of consent which may be requested by the landowner or occupier would need to be thoroughly considered before they are agreed to by Council. If it is not possible or appropriate for Council to agree on amendments that may be requested to the consent document, then the proposed BPLR should not be designated by Council.

b) Access and Egress

Council must assess whether there is sufficient access to the potential BPLR which will allow:

- Anticipated potential numbers of people to move to and from the place; and
- The CFA and other emergency services to attend the place for asset and personnel protection activities and operations.

Council must assess potential access and egress routes, bearing in mind the fact that BPLRs are bushfire places of last resort.

As people may be seeking access to a BPLR in a rushed or panicked state, a number of people could be seeking access in a relatively short time and visibility could be affected by smoke. Easily navigable routes to and from a BPLR are crucial.

In considering whether access and egress routes are adequate, consideration should be given to issues such as:

- I. The condition of the road surface;
- II. The proximity of the BPLR to major roadways and population centres;
- III. The type and amount of vegetation along any access routes, and whether that vegetation could be affected by fire and pose a risk of harm to those seeking access to the potential BPLR, or otherwise block access to the BPLR;
- IV. The capacity of access routes to accommodate potentially large numbers of vehicles, and to accommodate potential vehicle break-downs;
- V. Parking at the place;
- VI. Any hazards that may exist for persons accessing the place by foot, including in the buffer zone; and

- VII. Any relevant matter contained in Council's Road Management Plan prepared pursuant to the Road Management Act 2004 (Vic).

If appropriate and satisfactory access and egress routes are not available, then the proposed BPLR should not be designated by Council.

c) Maintenance of potential BPLR in accordance with CFA assessment criteria

Council must ensure that the potential BPLR can be maintained in accordance with the criteria taken into account by the CFA in arriving at its fire rating assessment.

If additional information is required from the CFA to understand the criteria they have considered in arriving at their fire rating assessment, Council should seek this information from the CFA. If necessary, Council may request the CFA to undertake a further assessment to provide Council with additional information.

d) Opening of the BPLR

Council must consider:

- I. Whether it will be possible or practicable to open the potential BPLR or otherwise make it available for use on a 24 hour basis during the declared fire danger period;
- II. The potential for damage to the place during times that it is open and available for use, but is not being used as a BPLR;
- III. The potential costs to Council associated with (i) and (ii) above; and
- IV. The possibility that a potential BPLR could be used for unintended purposes, such as an emergency relief centre.

e) Defendable space and fire suppression activities

CFA have advised that there is no guarantee that fire units will attend an BPLR, and that individuals who use BPLRs are doing so at their own risk. There should be no expectation that fire units or other emergency services personnel will attend a BPLR during a bushfire.

Despite this, the potential BPLR should be surrounded by sufficient open space to enable the CFA and other fire services to conduct asset protection and fire suppression operations around the place.

Any open space should be reasonably free of obstacles which could hinder fire suppression activities. Obstacles may include, amongst other things:

- Fences;
- Buildings and sheds;
- Steep inclines in close proximity to the potential BPLR;
- Vegetation, particularly large trees;
- Other land formations, including rocks, boulders or knolls which could substantially hinder fire suppression operations.

If necessary, advice should be sought from the CFA about their defendable space and fire vehicle access requirements.

When assessing the defendable space factor, Council must consider whether or not approval to clear or disturb flora and/or fauna could be required, whether under legislation such as the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth) ('EPBC Act'), Flora

and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic) ('FFG Act') or the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic) ('PE Act'). If such approval is required, then it must be obtained before the potential BPLR location is designated.

If the proposed BPLR does not have adequate defensible space around it, or if approval to clear or disturb flora and/or fauna is required but cannot be obtained before the BPLR is required to be established, or cannot be obtained on reasonably satisfactory conditions, it should not be designated as a BPLR by Council.

f) Defendability of Buildings

If the potential BPLR is a building, Council must consider whether or not it is likely to be subject to risk from ember attack.

As the CFA is not required to assess the risk of ember attack to a building in undertaking the CFA fire rating assessment when certifying the BPLR, the Council should consider this issue. In considering this issue, Council may need to seek expert advice from appropriately-qualified CFA personnel.

If there is an appreciable risk of the proposed BPLR being compromised by ember attack which cannot be satisfactorily defended, then the building is unlikely to be suitable as a BPLR and should not be designated by Council.

g) Signage

Council must assess whether it will be possible to have signage at the entry to, and in the vicinity of, the potential BPLR. Such signage must generally be in accordance with the Signage Template, which is in Section 4 of this Plan.

Council must refer to the Signage Template when considering whether or not appropriate signage can be erected.

If signage must be placed on private land, then the consent of the landowner will be required.

h) Maintenance and maintainability

Council must assess whether ongoing maintenance of the proposed BPLR, and the surrounding area, is both possible and practical, having regard to the resources reasonably available to the Council. This factor should be considered by the Council not only in relation to the suitability of a proposed BPLR, but also as to the total number of proposed BPLRs that can be reasonably maintained within the municipal district. This is needed to ensure that the place remains suitable for use as a BPLR during each fire season.

Specifically, the place must be capable of being maintained so as to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council MNSPP Criteria. It is Council Policy that if it is not possible to maintain a potential BPLR, then it must not be designated as such.

When assessing the maintainability of the potential BPLR, both the BPLR and the Buffer Zone may require various maintenance activities to be undertaken on a periodic basis. The potential introduction of hazards into the Buffer Zone, such as structures, animals and vehicles, should be taken into account.

There may be cases where maintenance activities can only be undertaken by, or with the consent of, an adjoining landowner. This may, in turn, require assurances from such landowners that the place, and areas surrounding it, will be maintained to a satisfactory level.

When assessing the maintainability of a potential BPLR, Council must consider whether or not approval to clear or disturb flora and/or fauna could be required, whether under legislation such as the EPBC Act, FFG Act or the PE Act. If such approval is required, then it must be obtained before the potential BPLR location is designated.

If the proposed BPLR is not capable of being satisfactorily maintained, then it should not be designated by Council.

i) Disabled access

Council must consider whether or not there are clear means of access for disabled and mobility-impaired persons to the potential BPLR.

In considering this issue, regard should be had to such matters as whether or not it would be necessary for cars or other vehicles to enter the BPLR area to allow persons with disabilities to be dropped off within the place.

j) Alternative Uses of potential BPLR

Council must consider what other uses may be made of the potential BPLR which could impact upon its ability to properly function as a BPLR.

Where a potential BPLR which is used for an operational purpose at many times has been assessed by the CFA as meeting the criteria in the CFA Fire Rating Guidelines, and has been certified by the CFA, then the CFA has advised that those operational activities will be able to continue (to the extent practicable in the circumstances) while the place is being used as a BPLR.

If the place is used for other uses which could compromise its ability to be used as a BPLR, then it should not be designated as a BPLR by Council.

k) Communication with the community

Council must be able to communicate the location of the potential BPLR to the community. There should be good community awareness of the location of the place, together with the risks that relate to the use of the potential BPLR, and the risks associated with travelling to the potential BPLR in the event of a bushfire.

l) Public Liability Insurance

As a matter of prudent risk management, Council should have regard to:

- I. Any additional factors which are relevant to Council's maintenance of insurance coverage for legal claims relating to the identification, designation, establishment and decommissioning of a place as an BPLR, as well as travel to an BPLR; and
- II. Any statutory defences to claims.

3.2 Who is responsible for undertaking the Council assessment of potential BPLRs?

A report prepared by the MERO and MFPO detailing whether or not the potential BPLR meets the above criteria should be prepared and provided to:

- a. The MEMPC, where it is practicable for the MEMPC to be involved in the Council assessment process; and
- b. The Council.

The MEMPC must assess the potential BPLR, taking into account the MERO's report, and make a recommendation to Council as to whether or not to designate the potential BPLR.

3.3 When are potential BPLR locations required to be assessed by Council?

Any potential BPLRs certified by the CFA should be assessed by Council no later than 30 June each year, so as to allow time for the places to be designated and established as BPLRs by Council, and for any appropriate amendments to be made to the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) and Casey Municipal Fire Management Plan (CMFMP) prior to the commencement of the bushfire season.

This timing is obviously subject to the CFA assessing and certifying the potential BPLR location in a timely manner.

4. Council Designation of BPLRs

4.1 Who is responsible for Council designation of BPLRs?

Council must formally determine whether or not to designate a place as an BPLR. Council should not designate a place as a BPLR unless it is satisfied that the place is suitable, having regard to the Council MBPLRP Criteria.

A BPLR may only be designated by a resolution of the Council.

4.2 When should Council consider the designation of a potential BPLR?

Following preparation of an assessment of a potential BPLR by the MEMPC, Council should determine whether or not to designate a potential BPLR location by no later than 31 July of each year. This will enable any necessary establishment works to be undertaken.

4.3 What must the MFPO do once a potential BPLR is designated by Council?

Once the Council has designated a place as a BPLR, the MFPO must provide an updated list of all designated BPLRs within the municipality to the CFA under section 50K of the CFA Act. This updated list must be provided by no later than 30 September in each year.

5. Establishment and Maintenance of BPLRs Following Designation

5.1 Who is responsible for establishing BPLRs?

Following designation, Council will establish all designated BPLRs within the municipal district.

5.2 What must be done when establishing BPLRs?

To establish a BPLR after its designation, Council must:

- Erect appropriate signage at and near the BPLR;
- Undertake any necessary preparatory works, including the construction or establishment of any required infrastructure and the clearance of vegetation, so as to enable the area to be used as an BPLR;
- Publish the location of the BPLR on the Council website; and
- Update Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan and Municipal Fire Management Plan to include the location of the BPLR.

The MFPO must provide an up-to-date list of BPLRs to the CFA no later than 30 September each year under section 50K of the CFA Act.

Following designation, all designated BPLRs within the municipality must be identified in:

- The CMFMP, under section 55A(2) of the CFA Act; and

- The MEMP, under section 20(2) of the EM Act.

5.3 When must BPLRs be established?

BPLRs should be established no later than 30 October each year.

5.4 Maintenance of BPLRs

BPLRs within the municipality need to be maintained by Council. The MERO (on behalf of Council) is responsible for ensuring that all facets of maintaining an BPLR occur.

Maintenance activities must include vegetation management, hazardous tree removal and the maintenance of infrastructure required for the satisfactory functioning of the place as a BPLR. If additional works have been required to establish the BPLR, then those works should be subject to periodic review by the MERO.

The fuel load in the vicinity of the BPLR must not increase so as to affect the fire rating of the BPLR.

The MFPO must ensure that defensible spaces, the Buffer Zone and access and egress routes are appropriately maintained.

The MFPO must inspect the BPLR, Buffer Zone and access and egress routes on a periodic basis, and in any event not less than once every month during the declared fire danger period, to ensure that the BPLR continues to be capable of functioning as a BPLR. If the MFPO identifies issues that may impact upon the functioning of the place as a BPLR, then Council must:

- a) Address the issue;
- b) Take reasonable steps to have the issue addressed, such as requesting the owner of the land on which the BPLR or Buffer Zone is located to address the issue; or
- c) Consider decommissioning the BPLR and revoking the designation of the place as a BPLR.

The BPLR, Buffer Zone, and Access and Egress Routes Inspection Template [Fire Danger Period (FDP)] is shown below as Figure 5.4A.

The MFPO is responsible for maintaining a record of maintenance document for all designated and established BPLR sites. The record must stipulate:

- a. Name and location of the BPLR being inspected;
- b. Time and date of BPLR inspection;
- c. Name of MFPO conducting inspection;
- d. What maintenance is required;
- e. Timeframe to have maintenance works completed;
- f. Time and date maintenance works were completed;
- g. Record of what maintenance was completed;
- h. Who undertook the maintenance works (Officer or Contractor).

The 'BPLR Record of Maintenance' Template is shown below as Figure 5.4B:

Figure 5.4A BPLR, Buffer Zone, and Access and Egress Routes Inspection Template [Fire Danger Period (FD)]

BPLR Site	Date of Inspection (FDP)	Time of Inspection (FDP)	Inspection Notes – Record Whether it is a Buffer Zone; Access Route; and/or Egress Route	Actions Required
			Buffer Zone:	
			Location/proximity to BPLR (N<S<E<W):	
			Access Route (Road/Track Name):	
			Location/proximity to BPLR (N<S<E<W):	
			Egress Route (Road/Track Name):	
			Location/Proximity to BPLR (N<S<E<W):	
Comments:				
Inspection Completed By (Officer/Contractor Name): _____				
Signature: _____				

Figure 5.4B 'BPLR Record of Maintenance' Template

BPLR Site	Date of Inspection	Time of Inspection	Maintenance Works Required	Scheduled Maintenance Works Date
MFPO/MERO Name: _____				
MFPO/MERO Signature: _____				
BPLR Site	Date of Maintenance Works	Time of Maintenance Works	Maintenance Works Completed	
Works Completed By (Officer / Contractor Name): _____				
Signature: _____				

6. Annual Inspections of BPLRs

6.1 Who is responsible for the annual review of BPLRs?

The MFPO (on behalf of Council) must undertake an annual review of all designated BPLRs within the municipality.

The MFPO must also request the CFA to undertake an assessment against the CFA Fire Rating Criteria of each BPLR within the municipality on an annual basis.

These reviews are intended to ensure that each BPLR remains suitable for use as a BPLR during the up-coming fire season.

6.2 What must be considered when undertaking inspections?

BPLRs should be assessed annually against the Council MNSPP Criteria. The CFA will assess BPLRs against the CFA Fire Rating Criteria.

If a BPLR no longer meets:

- a) The CFA Fire Rating Criteria, then it must be decommissioned (refer to Section 5 – Decommissioning Flow Chart and Section 6 – Decommissioning Details); and
- b) The Council MNSPP Criteria, then Council must determine whether or not it wishes to address any of the identified non-compliances. If it does not, then the BPLR must be decommissioned (refer to Section 5 – Decommissioning Flow Chart and Section 6 – Decommissioning Details).

6.3 When must BPLR locations be inspected?

BPLRs must be inspected prior to 31 August each year under section 50J of the CFA Act.

Section 3**Summary of Factors for Council to Consider in Assessing Potential BPLR Locations Prior to Designation**

Factors to Consider in Assessing Potential BPLRs

Council MNSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes / No
Consents and rights of access See Section 2, 3.1(a)	If the potential BPLR is located on Council-owned land, can Council use the land as a BPLR if required? Consider whether or not Council allows the land to be used for potentially inconsistent purposes, such as for farmers' markets, fetes, circuses etc.		
	If the potential BPLR is on private land, or public land under the control of a Crown Land Manager (other than Council), can Council enter into arrangements which allow it to use the land as a potential BPLR on reasonably satisfactory terms? Also consider whether Council has the right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access the site and surrounding areas for maintenance; and • Erect appropriate signage at the BPLR. 		
Access and egress See Section 2, 3.1(b)	Do access routes to the potential BPLR allow for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The anticipated potential number of people to move to and from the place; and • The CFA and other emergency services to attend the place for asset and personal protection activities? 		
	Are access routes easily navigable, bearing in mind they could be affected by smoke? Consider the condition of the road surface, proximity to population centres and major roads, capacity of access routes to accommodate large numbers of vehicles, the availability of car parking at the place and any other relevant matters.		
Maintenance of BPLR in accordance with CFA assessment See Section 2, 3.1(c)	Can Council maintain the potential BPLR in accordance with the criteria taken into account by the CFA in arriving at its fire rating assessment? <i>If the CFA have not provided sufficient information in relation to the criteria it has taken into account in arriving at its fire rating assessment, it may be necessary for Council to seek further information from the CFA.</i>		

Council MNSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes / No
Opening of the BPLR See Section 2, 3.1(d)	Will it be possible and practicable to make the potential BPLR available for use on a 24 hour basis during the declared fire danger period? This is a particular issue where the potential BPLR is a building.		
	Consider the potential for damage to the BPLR which could result during times that it is open and available for use, but is not being used as a BPLR.		
	What costs could be incurred by Council in making the potential BPLR available on a 24 hour basis during the declared fire danger period? Are these costs reasonable, and capable of being borne by Council?		
	Could the potential BPLR be used for an unintended purpose which could impact upon its use as an BPLR (such as an emergency relief centre)?		
Defendable space and fire suppression activities See Section 2, 3.1(e)	Is the potential BPLR surrounded by sufficient open space to enable the CFA to conduct asset protection and fire suppression operations? Is that open space reasonably free of obstacles (such as fences, buildings, steep gradients, vegetation and other land formations)? Council should seed CFA advice concerning the defendability of the potential BPLR and the Buffer Zone, including in relation to fire vehicle access requirements.		
	Will approval be required under legislation such as the Environment Protection and <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cwlth), <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i> (Vic) and the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> (Vic)? Can such approval be obtained before the BPLR is established?		
Defendability of buildings See Section 2, 3.1(f)	If the potential BPLR is a building, has Council sought expert advice from the CFA to determine whether the BPLR is likely to be subject to risk from ember attack? If it is subject to such a risk, can that risk be safely managed?		
Signage See Section 2, 3.1(g)	Can appropriate signage be erected at the entry to the potential BPLR, and in its vicinity?		
	If signage needs to be placed on private land, can Council obtain the consent of the relevant landowner for the erection of the signage?		

Council MNSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes / No
Maintenance and maintainability See Section 2, 3.1(h)	Is the potential BPLR capable of being maintained to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council MNSPP Criteria? Where relevant, consider whether adjoining land owners and occupiers will provide Council with an assurance that both the potential BPLR and the Buffer Zone can be maintained to a satisfactory level.		
Disabled access See Section 2, 3.1(i)	Are there means of access for disabled and mobility-impaired persons to the potential BPLR, including vehicle access to drop off people with disabilities?		
Alternative uses of potential BPLR See Section 2, 3.1(j)	Can Council manage alternative uses which may be made of the potential BPLR so as to ensure that those uses will not compromise the function of the place as a potential BPLR? <i>The CFA has advised that where a potential BPLR which is used for an operational purpose at many times meets the CFA Fire Rating Criteria, then the CFA considers that those operational activities will be able to continue (to the extent practicable in the circumstances) while the place is being used as a BPLR.</i>		
Community Communication See Section 2, 3.1(k)	Will it be possible to ensure that there will be good community awareness of the location of the potential BPLR, and the risks associated with using the potential BPLR?		

Section 4

BPLR Signage

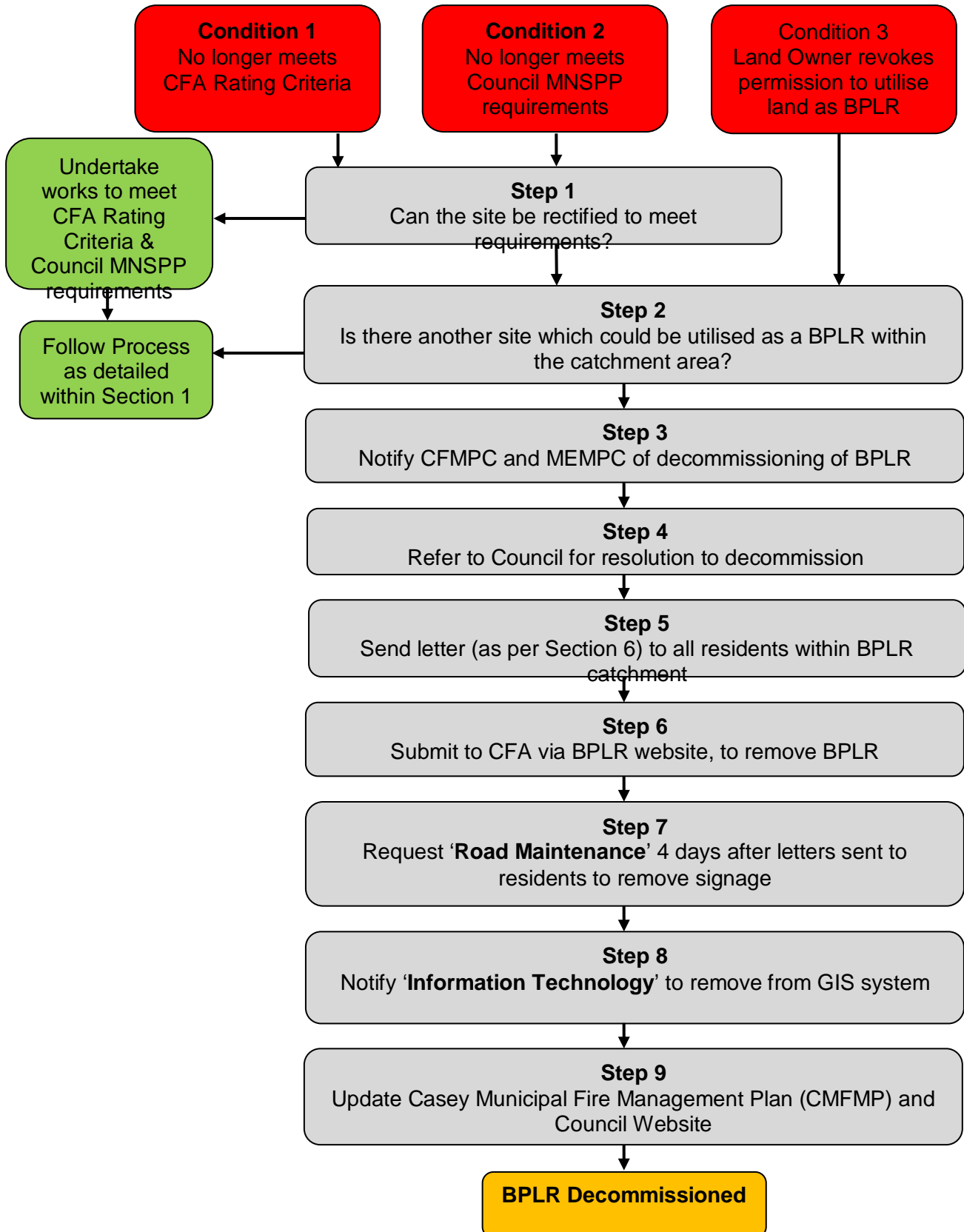
In October 2015, Emergency Management Victoria, under the direction of the Commissioner Emergency Management developed the Neighbourhood Safer Places – Bushfire Place of Last Resort Signage Manual (The Manual).

The Manual provides the guidelines for sign wording, size, colour, fixing, installation and type of material used, and aligns this with existing applied road signage standards.

The Manual can be accessed directly from the Emergency Management Victoria Web-site by clicking on the following link: <https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/publications/neighbourhood-safer-places-bushfire-place-of-last-resort-signage-manual>

Section 5
Flow Chart for Decommissioning BPLRs.

Overview of the process for decommissioning BPLRs if conditions requiring decommissioning have been met



Section 6

Detailed Summary of Steps Showing Process for Decommissioning BPLRs.

1. Decommissioning Process

Section 50J of the CFA Act outlines the processes required for the annual assessment of designated BPLRs, and includes the capacity for the decommissioning of BPLRs based on the following criteria:

Sub-section 4 – If the Authority’s assessment determines that a designated BPLR is no longer suitable, it must be decommissioned; and

Sub-section 5 – The Municipal Council may also decommission a designated BPLR if-
the

- a) Authority has certified the place under this section but the Council is satisfied on reasonable grounds that it is not appropriate for the place to continue to be a designated BPLR; or
- b) the place is on non-Council land and the occupier or the person in control of the land has withdrawn consent to the designation of the place as a BPLR

1.1 Who is responsible for the decommissioning of BPLRs?

Council is responsible for undertaking the decommissioning process.

CFA will determine whether the BPLR still meets current BPLR requirements. If the BPLR no longer meets requirements, then the CFA will notify Council of this Council will then make a decision to either improve the standards of the BPLR to make it compliant, or decommission the BPLR.

1.2 What are the conditions that determine when a BPLR requires decommissioning?

There are three conditions that would require the decommissioning of a BPLR.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Condition One: | The BPLR no longer meets the requirements detailed within the CFA Rating Guidelines. |
| Condition Two: | The BPLR no longer meets the requirements detailed within Council’s MNSPP, or changes in Council policy towards BPLRs means they no longer meet council objectives. |
| Condition Three: | The BPLR is located on land other than Council’s and the owner revokes permission for the use of the land as a BPLR. |

1.3 What factors should be considered when decommissioning a BPLR?

There are a number of factors which should be considered before decommissioning a BPLR.

Initial consideration should be made to identify if any remedial works could be undertaken to bring the location within specification, and the costs associated with such works either to meet requirements of the CFA Rating Guidelines or the Council MNSPP. If this option is not feasible, then consideration should be made as to whether there is another location within the BPLR catchment which could meet the requirements.

Both of these options will need to follow the process within Section 1 once determined.

If neither option is feasible, then decommissioning will be the only option.

1.4 Decision making process for Decommissioning

Upon meeting either Condition 1, 2 or 3 (in 1.2 above), a report is to be presented to Council outlining reasons for, and resolving to decommission to BPLR.

1.5 Who is to be notified of the decision to decommission a BPLR?

Once Council has resolved to decommission the BPLR, the following stakeholders and interested parties are to be notified in writing:

- CFMPC;
- MEMPC;
- Local residents living within close proximity to a BPLR. In small communities this would be the whole postal area (e.g. Cannons Creek, Warneet or Blind Bight, whilst in larger communities such as Endeavour Hills, this would be restricted to residents living within a one kilometre radius of an BPLR);
- Land owner (if applicable);
- Council's Communications Department for relevant media releases; and
- Council's Road Maintenance and Information Technology teams for the removal of BPLR signage, and any BPLR reference from IntraMaps (Casey's Geographic Information System (GIS)).

1.6 What information/resources are to be modified when a BPLR is decommissioned?

A number of documents and references will need to be updated during and after the decommissioning process has been undertaken including:

- **Casey Municipal Fire Management Plan** - the listing of BPLRs within the document will need to be reviewed, with the decommissioned BPLR removed from the document;
- **BPLR list displayed on Council's website** - will require updating and the decommissioned BPLR removed from the list;
- **IntraMaps** - Fire Hazard Management Layer;
- **Bushfire Information Boards**; and
- **CFA's Community Information Guides** (removal of BPLR reference is undertaken by the CFA's Community Safety Department).

2. Letter Content for Decommissioning an BPLR

2.1 Decommissioning Letter Process

When providing written correspondence on the decommissioning of a BPLR, the following points are to be included:

- Who the intended recipient/agency is;
- Their relationship to the BPLR;
- The location of the BPLR;
- The reason(s) for its decommissioning;
- Advice on modifying Bushfire Survival Plans to factor in the changed circumstance (residents only);
- Where to access further bushfire safety information (residents only); and
- Who to contact within the City of Casey for further information.

5. Administrative Updates

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.

6. Review

The next biennial review of this document is scheduled for completion by 31 October 2019.

7. Breaches