



Finance Technical Guideline

TG015 Building in Bushfire Prone Areas

1. Purpose

This guide sets out Finance's requirements for non residential government building projects located in bushfire prone areas. This guide should be circulated as appropriate to consultants.

2. Background

On 7 December 2015, State Planning Policy 3.7 Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas was gazetted. (Department of Planning, 2015) This policy applies to all land designated as bushfire prone by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) as highlighted on their Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas. (DFES, 2015)

3. Requirements for government projects

All State Government building projects must be designed in accordance with:

- [State Planning Policy 3.7 and Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas](#),
- DFES's [Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas](#) and
- AS 3959 *Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas*.

This requirement applies to all Finance projects, whether development approval is required or not.

The National Construction Code (NCC) refers to AS 3959 in relation to residential buildings. However, it is noted that in relation to the NCC, non-residential buildings are not required to meet AS 3959. This aspect of design and construction compliance is therefore not addressed by Building and Occupancy Permit certification requirements.

It is a requirement that all State Government building projects with an assessed BAL 12.5 or above meet the requirements of AS3959 for the assessed BAL, whether or not they are residential. Where required, a suitably qualified BAL assessor or Fire Engineer should be engaged to provide certification of compliance with the standard.

Refurbishment projects

This requirement is to be considered and applied on building alteration and addition projects with the intent that any new building elements (particularly to the external façade and mechanical services) do not increase the potential for ignition caused by burning embers, radiant heat or flame generated by a bushfire, and the intensity of the bushfire attack on the building.

4. Process for government projects

Design teams are required to check each project site on DFES's [Map of Bush Fire Prone areas](#). If any part of the site is marked as being at risk of bush fire, design teams are required to undertake a [BAL Assessment \(Basic\)](#) to determine if the proposed building has a low risk of fire exposure. The Department of Planning provides guidance on how to complete this assessment, refer to the [BAL Assessment \(Basic\) Factsheet](#).

If the site's BAL is assessed as being LOW, no further action is required. If a DA is required, the BAL Assessment (Basic) documentation will form part of the application.

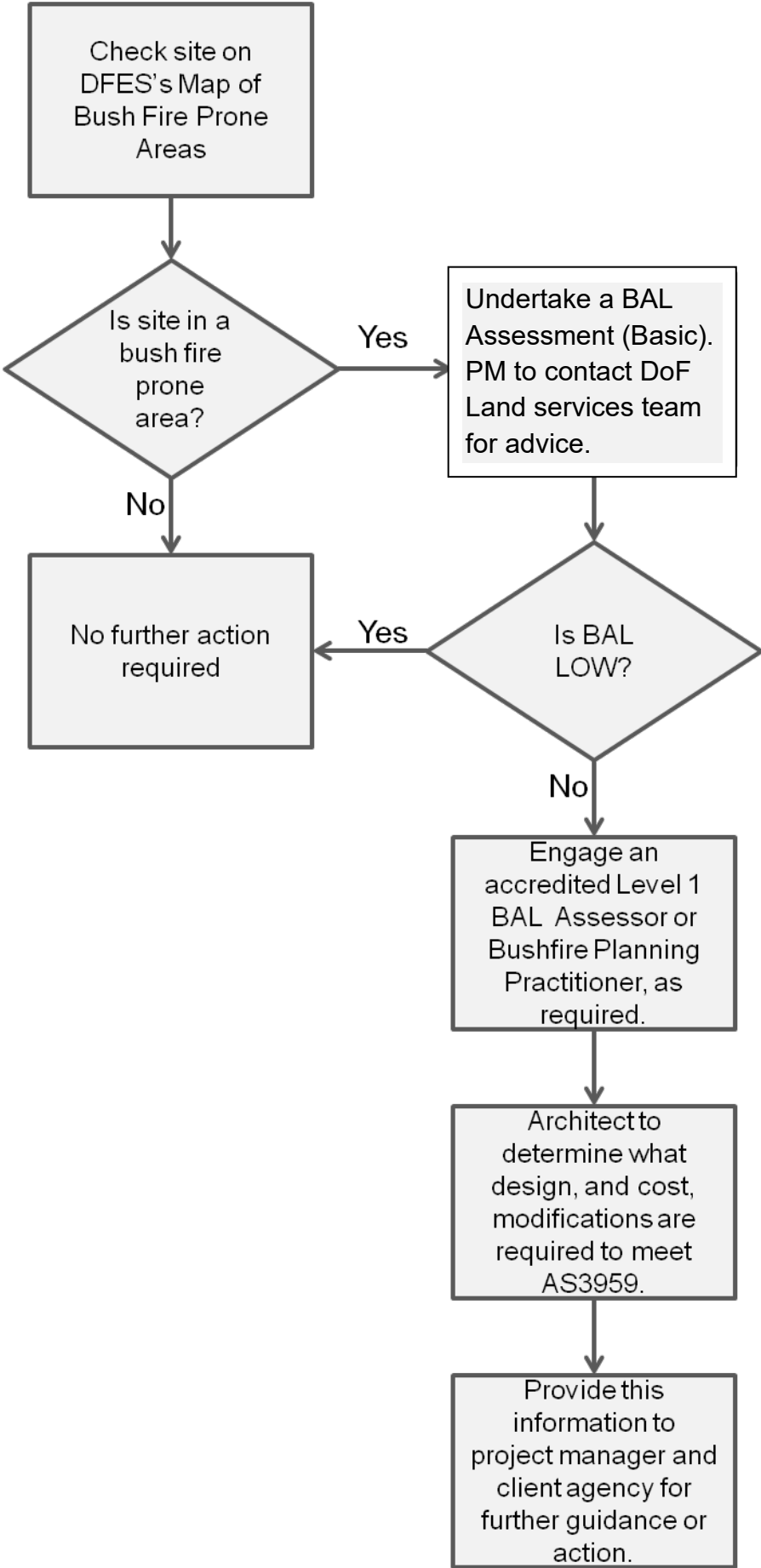
If the criteria for a BAL Assessment (Basic) cannot be met, the design team will need to engage an accredited Level 1 BAL Assessor or a Bushfire Planning Practitioner to:

- confirm the site's BAL,
- advise on required design and construction measures in accordance with AS 3959 and
- develop a bushfire management plan for the site.

The project architect will need to identify what site or design modifications are required, in accordance with AS 3959, and any associated costs. This information must be provided to the project manager and client agency, for further guidance and action. This documentation will form part of a Development Approval application if DA is required.

For further clarification on these requirements, project managers and design teams are to contact Finance's Statutory Planning and Asset Policy branch, who can provide guidance on planning requirements and BAL assessments.

This process is illustrated in the flowchart below:



5. References

1. Department of Fire and Emergency Services, *Map of bushfire prone areas*
<https://maps.slip.wa.gov.au/landgate/bushfireprone/>
2. Department of Planning, *State Planning Policy 3.7 and guidelines*
<https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/state-planning-policy-37-planning-bushfire-prone-areas>

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