



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

State Planning Policy 3.7 Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas was first gazetted on 7 December 2015 with the most subsequent amendment occurring in November 2024. 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.

3. Requirements for government projects

All State Government building projects must be designed in accordance with the current version of:

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

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

3.1. NCC2022 Part G5 Construction in bushfire prone areas

New construction requirements have been introduced in NCC2022 for buildings built in designated bushfire prone areas to reduce danger to life, minimise the risk of loss of buildings and to provide shelter to its occupants who are unable to evacuate.

Part G5 applies to the following building classifications:

- Class 2 – a building containing two or more sole occupancy units,
- Class 3 – a residential building providing long-term or transient, accommodation for a number of unrelated persons,

- Class 9a health care building,
- Class 9b - early childhood centre and a primary or secondary school,*
- Class 9c residential care building, and
- Class 10a building or deck immediately adjacent or connected with the above class buildings.

***Class 9b – Primary and Secondary Schools and Early Childhood Centres**

Building Regulations 2012 will be amended to extend the transition for new bushfire construction requirements for Class 9b buildings.

From 1 May 2025 until 30 April 2028, a building permit proponent for Class 9b buildings in a designated bushfire prone area will be allowed to:

- comply with the whole of NCC 2022; or
- comply with the whole of NCC 2022 but use Part G5 of Volume One of NCC 2019 Amendment 1.

Projects adopting the latter approach are to follow the requirements of Section 4.2 of this Guideline.

Existing buildings

Fit outs and renovations that are internal only are not required to adhere to the NCC2022 Part G5 requirements. However, for projects that involve modification of the external building fabric or extending the building footprint, compliance with Part G5 must be met, either by a deemed-to-satisfy solution for projects rated as BAL-LOW or BAL-12.5 and/or through a Performance Solution.

3.2. Other building classifications

Where the building is not required to comply with NCC2022 Part G5 but is located in a bushfire prone area, Finance requires that it meets the requirements of AS3959 for the assessed BAL. The certifying Building Surveyor is to include the BAL assessment within their certification for Building and Occupation Permits.

Existing buildings

This requirement is to be considered and applied on building alterations and additions, and refurbishment 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, the design team shall carry out the following.

4.1. Class 2, 3, 9 and associated 10 buildings

For Part G5 applicable projects, 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 criteria for a BAL Assessment (Basic) cannot be met, the design team will need to engage an accredited Level 2 or 3 BAL Assessor or a Bushfire Planning Practitioner to:

- confirm the site's BAL, and
- develop a bushfire management plan for the site.

Note: a Level 3 assessor is to be used for a vulnerable land use in all instances

The design team shall apply the site or design modifications as required, in accordance with NCC2022 Part G5, with the assistance of the building surveyor through a deem-to-satisfy solution or performance solution.

Performance solutions shall be submitted as part of the building permit application.

For further clarification on the NCC requirements, project managers and design teams are to contact Finance's Permit Authority.

4.2. Other building classifications

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 2-3 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.

Note: a Level 3 assessor is to be used for a vulnerable land use in all instances

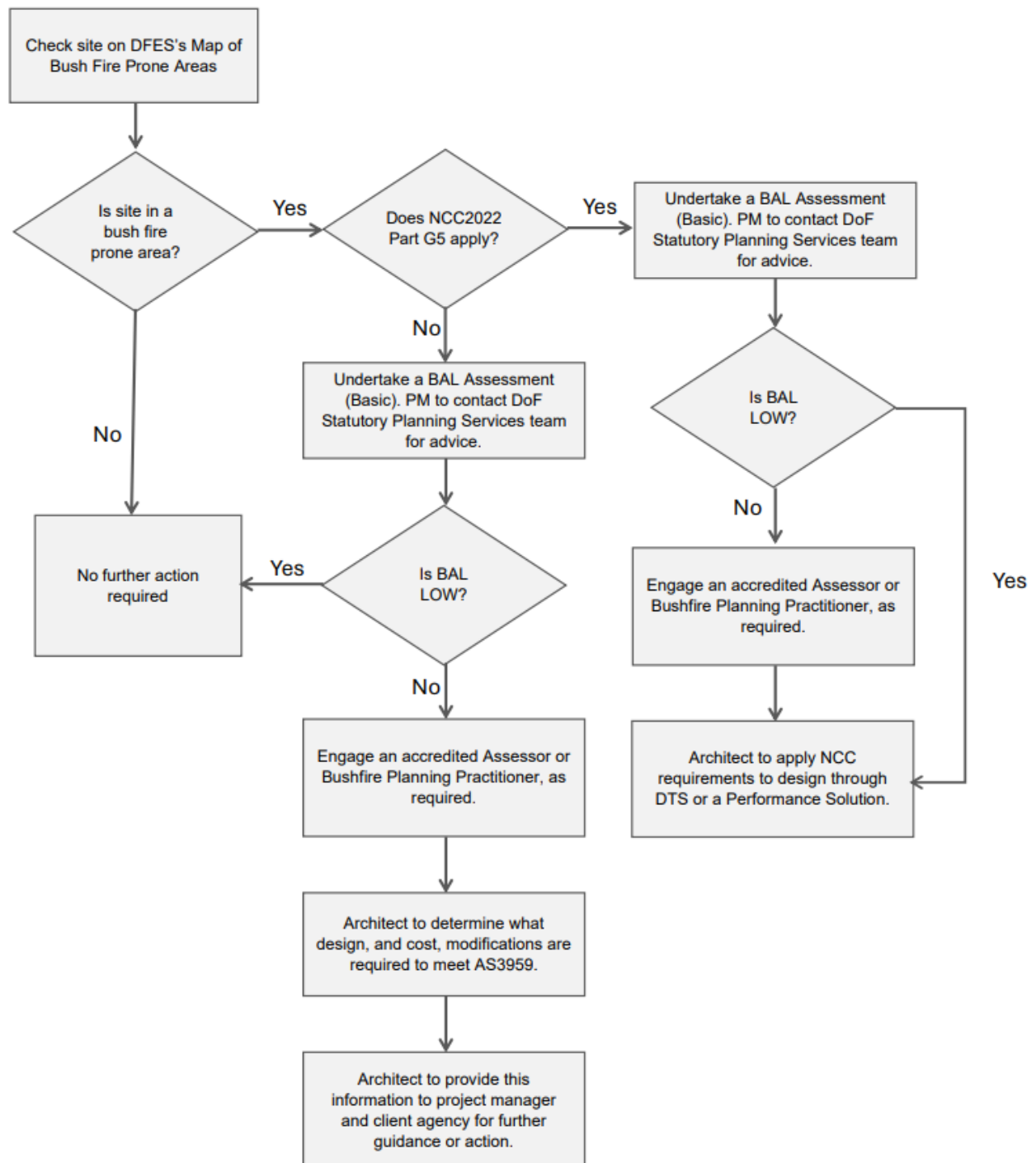
The project architect will need to identify what site or design modifications as required, in accordance with AS 3959, and any associated costs.

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.

4.3. Flow chart

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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