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# **BUSINESS PAPER**

**Ordinary Council Meeting**

**20 February 2024**

**Aaron Johansson**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

We hereby give notice that an Ordinary Meeting of Council will be held on:  
Tuesday, 20 February 2024 at 6pm  
in the Council Chambers, Civic Centre  
184 - 194 Bourke Street, Goulburn

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**Cr Peter Walker**  
**Mayor**

**Aaron Johansson**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

**16.3 RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT STRATEGIC BUSHFIRE STUDY**

**Author:** Business Manager Strategic Planning  
Director Planning & Environment

**Authoriser:** Aaron Johansson, Chief Executive Officer

**Attachments:** 1. Residential Settlement Strategic Bushfire Study (separately enclosed)   
2. NSW Rural Fire Service Response [↓](#) 

<b>Reference to LSPS:</b>	Planning Priority 8: Natural Hazards – Vision 2040 – Natural hazards are identified, planned for and mitigated where possible throughout the planning process.
<b>Key Issue:</b>	Strategic Bushfire Risks & Urban Growth

**RECOMMENDATION**

That:

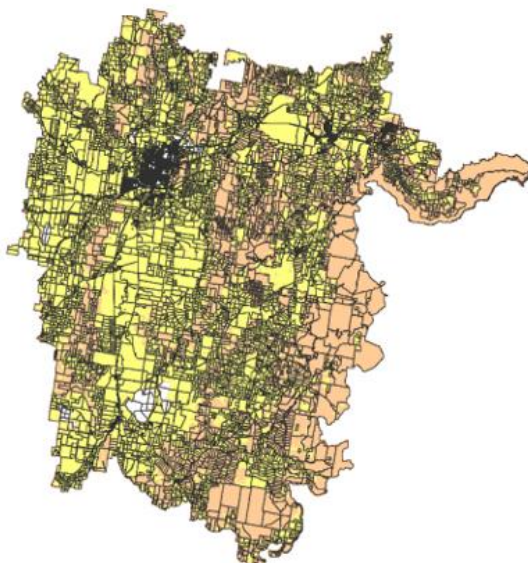
1. The staff assessment report on the Residential Settlement Strategic Bushfire Study be received.
2. The Residential Settlement Strategic Bushfire Study be adopted and published on Council's website.

Section 375A of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires General Managers to record which Councillors vote for and against each planning decision of the Council, and to make this information publicly available.

**BACKGROUND**

The Goulburn Mulwaree Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) identifies natural hazards as a specific priority for consideration in strategic planning.

Almost the entirety of the local government area (LGA) is identified as bushfire prone land except for the urban areas in Goulburn and Marulan. Bushfire prone land is indicated by the yellow and orange areas on the LGA map below.



**Figure 1: Bushfire Prone Land, GM LGA**

In consultation with the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) the LSPS included the following action:

*8.6 Prepare a Bushfire Management Strategy as part of the planning for urban growth.* This action is identified as a short-term action in the LSPS.

Consultation in relation to the expansion of urban areas of Goulburn and Marulan did occur with the *Urban and Fringe Housing Strategy* (UFHS) but had not previously been undertaken at a strategic level for the villages.

Prior to the further development of strategies for each village (and given the context of the 2019/2020 bushfire season) it was decided that consideration of development potential for each area should be undertaken at a strategic level to determine compliance with the RFS document *Planning for Bushfire Protection (PBP) Guidelines 2019*.

The Study has been undertaken by Ecological Australia and assessed against the PBP Guidelines. A copy of the Study is provided in **Attachment 1**.

## REPORT

### Purpose of the Study

The central purpose of the study is to answer one question:

*Is there any impediment due to bushfire risk hazard to increasing populations in the towns and villages in Goulburn Mulwaree LGA?*

The Study has considered both the UFHS areas (Goulburn/Marulan) as well as the following villages which have an existing RU5 Village Zone: Bungonia, Tallong, Tarago, Lake Bathurst, and Towrang.

It is important to note that this study is only considering bushfire hazard and risk to each area in the absence of other important planning considerations such as water/sewer servicing, flooding, biodiversity, heritage, feasibility of access etc.

Test sites for villages used in the Study generally considered existing areas of RU6 Transition zoned land, noting that these areas have not had other assessment for suitability for residential expansion to date. The identification of this land for this study does not imply future residential expansion into these areas, nor is it intended to suggest any overall development potential.

### Assessment Considerations

The strategic planning phase of development is particularly important in contributing to the creation of safer and sustainable communities (Council of Australian Governments, 2011). It is an effective way of achieving bush fire protection objectives in new developments. Strategic bush fire planning and studies are needed to avoid high risk areas, ensure that zoning is appropriate to allow for adequate emergency access, egress, and water supplies, and to ensure that future compliance with this document is achievable.

The most important objective for strategic planning is to identify whether new development is appropriate subject to the identified bush fire risk on a landscape scale. An assessment of proposed land uses and potential for development to impact on existing infrastructure is also a key element of the strategic planning process in bush fire prone areas. **Land use planning policies can be introduced to limit the number of people exposed to unacceptable risk.**

The following is an extract of the relevant considerations for strategic bushfire planning as set out in *Planning for Bushfire Protection (PBP) 2019*:

ISSUE	DETAIL	ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS
<b>Bush fire landscape assessment</b>	A bush fire landscape assessment considers the likelihood of a bush fire, its potential severity and intensity and the potential impact on life and property in the context of the broader surrounding landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The bush fire hazard in the surrounding area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Vegetation</li> <li>➤ Topography</li> <li>➤ Weather</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ The potential fire behaviour that might be generated based on the above;</li> <li>➤ Any history of bush fire in the area;</li> <li>➤ Potential fire runs into the site and the intensity of such fire runs; and</li> <li>➤ The difficulty in accessing and suppressing a fire, the continuity of bush fire hazards or the fragmentation of landscape fuels and the complexity of the associated terrain.</li> </ul>
<b>Land use assessment</b>	The land use assessment will identify the most appropriate locations within the masterplan area or site layout for the proposed land uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The risk profile of different areas of the development layout based on the above landscape study;</li> <li>➤ The proposed land use zones and permitted uses;</li> <li>➤ The most appropriate siting of different land uses based on risk profiles within the site (i.e. not locating development on ridge tops, SFPP development to be located in lower risk areas of the site); and</li> <li>➤ The impact of the siting of these uses on APZ provision.</li> </ul>
<b>Access and egress</b>	A study of the existing and proposed road networks both within and external to the masterplan area or site layout.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The capacity for the proposed road network to deal with evacuating residents and responding emergency services, based on the existing and proposed community profile;</li> <li>➤ The location of key access routes and direction of travel; and</li> <li>➤ The potential for development to be isolated in the event of a bush fire.</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency services</b>	An assessment of the future impact of new development on emergency services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Consideration of the increase in demand for emergency services responding to a bush fire emergency including the need for new stations/brigades; and</li> <li>➤ Impact on the ability of emergency services to carry out fire suppression in a bush fire emergency.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	An assessment of the issues associated with infrastructure and utilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The ability of the reticulated water system to deal with a major bush fire event in terms of pressures, flows, and spacing of hydrants; and</li> <li>➤ Life safety issues associated with fire and proximity to high voltage power lines, natural gas supply lines etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Adjoining land</b>	The impact of new development on adjoining landowners and their ability to undertake bush fire management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Consideration of the implications of a change in land use on adjoining land including increased pressure on BPMs through the implementation of Bush Fire Management Plans.</li> </ul>

## Findings

Based on the outcomes of this assessment, each identified town/village has the potential to comply with the strategic bushfire planning requirements of Chapter 4 of PBP, subject to the following recommendations:

- The proposed level of increased residential densities for all areas, but in particularly Tallong, Towrang and Bungonia should be supported by a traffic study demonstrating evacuation capacities that can support increased residential densities, and confirmation of emergency management adequacy by relevant agencies.
- Further consideration to the capacity of evacuation routes and confirmation that identified routes can support increased residential densities on bush fire prone land.

- Sealed, two-way access should be the objective for any road upgrades.
- Provision of an additional access connection for Tallong and Marulan East.
- Consideration to second access point for future development on Gorman Rd (Goulburn)
- Consideration to any limitation for access along Highland Way e.g., passing under Marulan Rail Bridge.
- Feasibility for static water supply for fire-fighting requirements in investigation areas, where reticulated water is not provisioned or required under the DCP.
- Discussion with emergency services regarding further resources required within the district resulting from the potential development.
- Liaison with the Southern Tablelands Bushfire Risk Management Committee (BFRMC) regarding the merit of any new neighbourhood safe places (NSPs), and further parallel investigations were recommended by the BFRMC for Tallong Public School, Bungonia and Towrang villages for added resilience.

The Study has been prepared to provide strategic guidance in the development of villages plans or planning proposals. There are no specific recommendations for individual properties. Given the nature of this Study it is considered that public exhibition is not warranted as the relevant level of consultation for this document has been undertaken by Council with the NSW Rural Fire Service. The Study can be made generally available to the public for information purposes on the Council web site.

### **Consultation – NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)**

NSW RFS has been consulted during the preparation of this Study and its advice has been incorporated in the final version. A copy of the referral response letter from NSW RFS is provided in **Attachment 2**.

NSW RFS generally accepted the findings of the Study except for a recommendation to investigate the potential for additional Neighbourhood Safe Places at Tallong and Bungonia in future planning proposals. To clarify this position the RFS has advised that it is a matter to be considered in parallel to a planning proposal (i.e. a rezoning) and a consideration of the Bushfire Management Committee with final endorsement by the Commissioner. Based on this feedback this recommendation has been amended in the final version of the document attached.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

In conclusion, as previously stated in the report, the Study has been prepared to provide strategic guidance in the development of villages plans or planning proposals. There are no specific recommendations for individual properties. Given the nature of this Study it is considered that public exhibition is not warranted as the relevant consultation for this level of strategic consideration has been undertaken by Council with the NSW Rural Fire Service.

The Study suggests that in principle that bushfire threat can be mitigated when planning for any expansion to the towns and villages. If undertaken in accordance with PBP 2019 and in consultation with the NSW RFS and Bushfire Management Committee. The Study suggests that compliance with PBP 2019 is possible and offers several recommendations to follow to assist with future planning.

It is recommended that the Study be adopted and made available to the public for information purposes on the Council web site.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications in relation to the adoption of this Study. The Study does identify matters for Council to consider when undertaking further strategic planning for the expansion of the towns and villages in relation to bushfire hazard. Some actions will have no cost to Council except in relation to staff resources, other matters may require additional study or infrastructure as the need arises. There are no commitments to identified recommendations at this stage, as other issues may arise with planning that may affect development potential etc.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications in relation to the adoption of this Study.



**NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE**

Goulburn Mulwaree Council  
Locked Bag 22  
GOULBURN NSW 2580

Your reference: Dated 23/6/23  
Our reference: SPI20230623000082

**ATTENTION:** Jack Miller / Kate Wooll

Date: Tuesday 15 August 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Strategic Planning Instrument****Other - Other****Goulburn Mulwaree Residential Settlement Strategic Bushfire Study****Consideration of residential growth areas and future planning proposals**

I refer to your correspondence dated 23/06/2023 inviting the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) to comment on the above Strategic Planning document.

The NSW RFS has considered the information submitted and provides the following comments.

It is understood that Goulburn Mulwaree Council (GMC) is undertaking preliminary investigations for future residential growth within seven towns and villages across the Local Government Area, that being Goulburn, Marulan, Tallong, Towrang, Bungonia, Lake Bathurst and Tarago. It is also understood that following investigations intended land use outcomes will be enabled via amendments to the Goulburn Mulwaree Local Environment Plan (LEP) and/or Development Control Plan (DCP). Given the proposed areas for growth are located on bush fire prone land the consent authority must have regard to s9.1 of the *Environmental Planning and Protection Act 1979 Direction by the Minister* and Local Planning Direction 4.3 Planning for Bush Fire Protection.

RFS have reviewed the Residential Settlement Strategic Bushfire Study by Eco Logical dated 11 May 2023.

All future planning proposals in bush fire prone localities will be subject to an assessment against the Strategic Planning chapter of *Planning for Bush Fire Protection (PBP)*. This will require provision of a Strategic Bush Fire Study in accordance with Table 4.2.1 of PBP and incorporate an indicative development layout including asset protection zones, provision of services and existing and proposed road networks. A traffic study to demonstrate evacuation capacities will be required where access issues are identified.

The assessment considerations and recommendations in part 8 of the Residential settlement Strategic Study are generally supported with the exception of the following:

- Investigate the potential for Tallong Public School to be considered as a NSP, subject to meeting the NSP requirements.

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- Exploration of potential NSP in Bungonia Village and Towrang for added resilience.

To clarify, a new Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP) shall not be included as a part of future planning proposals. While investigations may be undertaken in parallel to a planning proposal, any consideration for an NSP is made by the Bush Fire Management Committee, of which Council hold a seat. The endorsement of a NSP is then made by the Commissioner.

For any queries regarding this correspondence, please contact Anna Jones on 1300 NSW RFS.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Gray  
**Manager Planning & Environment Services**  
**Built & Natural Environment**