

# TO PROTECT A STRUCTURE

Bushfire is a real risk for all South Australians and you can't predict when a bushfire will strike. But your chances of survival are increased if you are prepared.

The State Government, SA Country Fire Service (SA CFS), the Native Vegetation Council and Local Councils are working together to protect life and property, while still recognising the value of native vegetation.

## What can I do without approval?

You can reduce, modify or remove native vegetation within 5m of a structure to help protect it in a bushfire. This type of fuel management is part of the Asset Protection Zone and when combined with other measures will help to reduce the impact of radiant heat during a bushfire.

If you want to remove or modify a large Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) or Black Box (*E. largiflorens*) that is situated within the 1956 flood plain area of the River Murray (other than where it is within a city or township) you will need to apply to the Native Vegetation Council for approval (see overleaf for contact details).

You can also undertake any activity that is compliant with an approved bushfire prevention plan.

Definitions and more information about the Asset Protection Zone are provided overleaf.

You may love your native trees and plants and want to retain as much as possible on your property. Discuss this with the SA CFS and you will

receive good advice on the most suitable activities to reduce fuel on your property. In some circumstances, fuel loads can be reduced by simply removing weeds. In others, retaining trees in strategic areas offers protection for your structure.

## What activities do I need approval for?

You may be concerned about the fuel load in native vegetation that is further than 5m from your structure. In these instances you will need approval to reduce, modify or remove native vegetation if there is no bushfire prevention plan in place, or if your proposed fuel reduction activities are not incorporated under the plan. You can download the application form (see [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)) to apply to the SA CFS for approval.

In considering your application the SA CFS will refer to the Australian Standard *Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas AS3959-1999 (2005)* that recommends distances to manage native vegetation around a structure dependent upon the surrounding type of vegetation and slope. Again, the intention is to reduce the impact of radiant heat during a bushfire. The SA CFS will also consider ways to manage bushfire risks whilst minimising the impacts on native plants, animals and their ecosystems. As an example, removing weeds may be the most suitable method to reduce the fuel load on your property.

If you want more information refer to *A guide for managing Native Vegetation to reduce the impact of Bushfire (2009)* (download a copy from [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)).

## Are you Bushfire Ready?

Actions you can take today:

- Reduce
- Remove
- Dispose
- Replace



## Cut down the impact of bushfires

# Managing native vegetation to protect a structure

(see separate information sheet on 'Managing native vegetation to protect a building')

### Asset Protection Zones

An Asset Protection Zone aims to provide the highest level of protection to human life and built, or other, assets. The goal for an Asset Protection Zone is to reduce the overall fuel hazard to a level of *moderate*<sup>1</sup>. This means that they generally contain highly modified vegetation, such as a cultivated garden or grassland areas that will reduce the radiant heat impact during a bushfire. Asset Protection Zones provide a defensible space to allow residents and firefighters some degree of safety before, during and after the passage of the fire front.

Management of vegetation within an Asset Protection Zone alone cannot provide complete protection during a bushfire and should be accompanied by other measures to maximise your safety in bushfires. These can include:

- implementation of Bushfire Buffer Zones to further reduce fuel loads and minimise ember attack,
- appropriate building location, design, construction and maintenance,
- use of appropriate building materials, and
- installation and use of sprinklers.

For more information on these you can contact your local SA CFS Office (see [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au) for contact details).

## Things you will need to consider:

- If you want to remove or modify a Significant Tree you will need approval as outlined in the *Development Regulations 2008*. You need to identify if you have a Significant Tree and contact your Local Council for further information on how to apply.
- If you want to remove a large overhanging limb you should contact an arborist for advice.



**Large Tree** means a tree (including a dead tree) where the circumference of the trunk of the tree is 2m or more, when measured at a height of 30cm from the base of the tree.

**Significant Tree** means any native or non-native tree that has a trunk with a circumference of 2m or more at a point 1m above natural ground level. In the case of trees with multiple trunks, the total circumference of the trunks must be 2m or more and the average circumference of each trunk must be 62.5cm or more.

**Structure** means any permanently fixed construction that is not defined under the definition of a 'building'. This includes constructions used for primary production, the housing or feeding of animals, the storage of fodder, and the storage of vehicles or vessels. This also includes any other structure declared by the Minister by notice in the SA Government Gazette to be included within this definition (*Native Vegetation Regulations 2003*).

For example, a structure could be any of the following if they are permanently fixed to the ground: a small aviary or other animal enclosure, a small shed constructed around a pump or other small infrastructure, a small garden shed or greenhouse, a pool shed, a gazebo, or a children's playhouse.

See separate information sheet on 'Managing native vegetation to protect a building'.

If you want to find out more, *A guide for managing Native Vegetation to reduce the impact of Bushfire (2009)* can be downloaded at [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au) or as individual information sheets.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FIND OUT IF THE ACTIONS YOU ARE PROPOSING TO UNDERTAKE REQUIRE APPROVAL UNDER OTHER LEGISLATION.

**South Australian Country Fire Service (CFS) In an emergency, please call 000.**

**Headquarters:** (08) 8463 4200

**Region 1** – Southern Mount Lofty Ranges and Kangaroo Island: (08) 8391 1866

**Region 2** – Northern Mount Lofty Ranges and Yorke Peninsula: (08) 8522 6088

**Region 3** – Murraylands and Riverland: (08) 8532 6800

**Region 4** – Flinders, Mid North and Pastoral Areas: (08) 8642 2399

**Region 5** – South East: (08) 8762 2311

**Region 6** – Eyre Peninsula and West Coast: (08) 8682 4266

**Web:** [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

**Native Vegetation Council**

Telephone: (08) 8303 9733

Fax: (08) 8303 9780

Email: [nvc@sa.gov.au](mailto:nvc@sa.gov.au)

Web: [www.nvc.sa.gov.au](http://www.nvc.sa.gov.au)

<sup>1</sup> See page 30 of the Overall Fuel Hazard Guide for South Australia (DEH 2008).