

Strategic bushfire management plan

South Western
OVERVIEW



The South Western Strategic Bushfire Management Plan outlines the fuel management strategy that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Parks Victoria (PV) will implement on public land.

Managing bushfire fuels on public land is a key way of protecting our communities and our natural environment. When shrubs, bark and leaf litter that fuel bushfires are reduced we can decrease the intensity of bushfires and control them more easily. Planned burning is the main way we reduce fuel on large areas of public land.

The type, quantity and arrangement of bushfire fuel is different in each landscape, and our actions need to be tailored accordingly.

DELWP undertakes strategic bushfire management planning, which includes working with multiple agencies and local communities to understand what they value in their landscape, to make sure our fuel management strategy meets the needs of local communities.

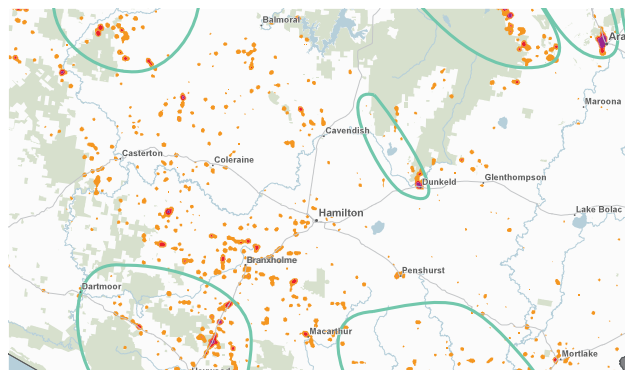
With the help of communities we have identified values in the landscape that need protection from bushfire, and used sophisticated computer simulations to tell us how bushfires spread, based on factors like vegetation, weather and terrain. The modelling tells us where to reduce fuel hazard in the places where the most damaging bushfires are likely to start and spread.

This plan brings together knowledge from local communities, fire agencies, and best available science and technology. The result is a fuel management strategy that guides on-ground operations to the most effective places to reduce risk. The strategy also takes into account the effects of fire on ecosystems.

There will always be bushfire risk in the South Western landscape. The nature of this risk will change over time, as bushfires occur in the landscape and alter the fuel loads, as science and technology advances, and people move in and out of landscapes. Our approach must continually improve and adapt to ensure our actions target where the risk is, and they are appropriate for the local environment.

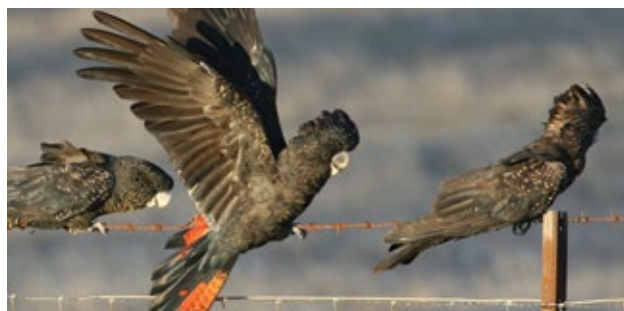
While we can never completely eliminate bushfire risk, we can reduce and manage it in many ways. Managing fuel on public land is just one way of reducing risk, and land and fire agencies will work in partnership with local communities to find the right mix of risk reduction strategies.

As a first step, in 2016 we will build on this plan to manage bushfire fuels across public and private land.



Sophisticated and detailed

By using the best available information about the landscape to run modelled simulations, we can identify where we will get the greatest risk-reduction benefits from fuel management. We also know which areas to exclude from the planned burning program to protect ecosystems and other valuable parts of the landscape. We use fire management zones to specify where and how frequently we will burn. We can also adjust the way we burn, from low intensity burns in sensitive areas to more intense burns where suitable.



Threatened species

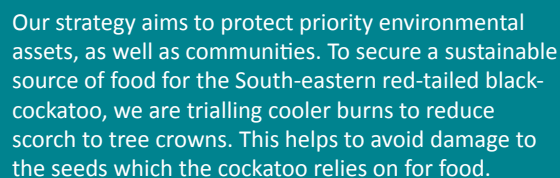
The South-eastern red-tailed black cockatoo is a rare, fire-sensitive species found only in a small area of Victoria and South Australia. We participate in a national recovery team which coordinates the management and recovery of this cockatoo. We work with species experts and land managers to increase knowledge of how to protect this species, and we monitor and evaluate the effect of our fuel management activities on the cockatoo.



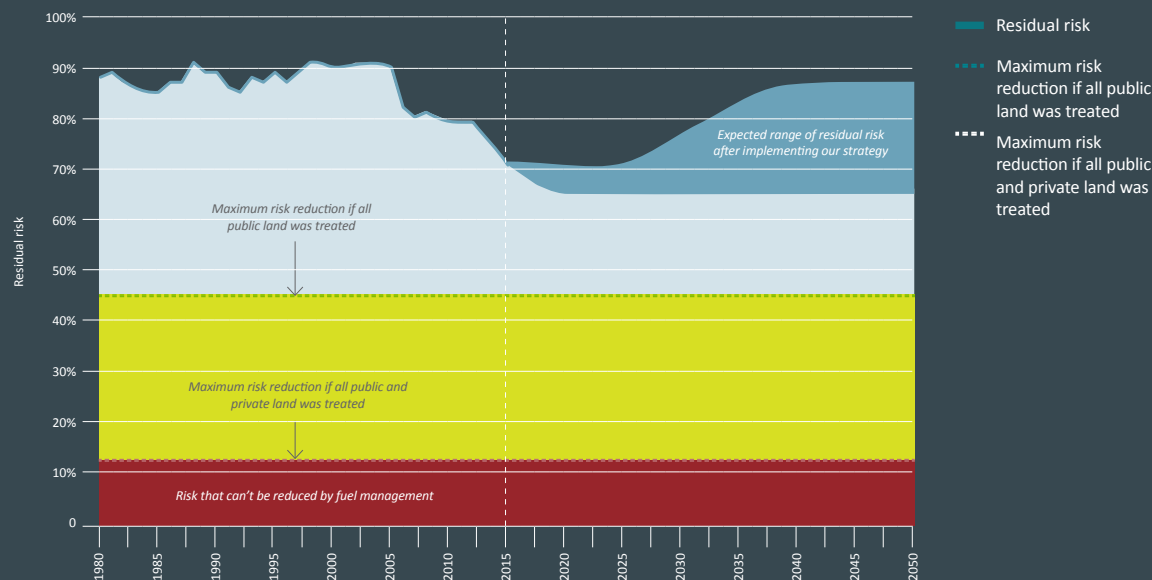
Cultural Heritage

The South Western landscape has cultural heritage stretching back thousands of generations, and has many Aboriginal cultural heritage sites that we want to protect. The Grampians National Park (Gariwerd) is one of the richest indigenous rock-art sites in south-eastern Australia. We protect known cultural heritage sites from disturbance when undertaking fuel management, and watch for unidentified sites during our management activities. This is important for connection to Country, and to protect the cultural history of our landscape.

The map shows our fuel management strategy. Our modelling shows us where to locate our fuel management activities so that they have the greatest impact in reducing bushfire risk.



Residual risk to life and property 1980-2050



This graph shows residual risk to life and property in our landscape from 1980 to the present, and it also shows forecast residual risk as we implement our fuel management strategy.

Residual risk is what is left following fuel management works and bushfires. In this way we are able to show the effects of the work that we do, and provide an understanding of the risk that remains in the landscape.

Continuous Improvement

Implicit in a high-quality strategic approach is a commitment to continuous improvement. The processes used to develop this plan build on and improve what has gone before, and bushfire management will continue to evolve with advances in science, technology and how we engage with the community.

To further improve our approach in future, this plan includes actions to measure and report on our progress and the impacts of our activities on communities, businesses and ecosystems. Importantly, this includes testing how effective our partnerships with communities and stakeholders are, to build productive, long-lasting and trusting relationships.

Thanks to those who were involved

We thank all those who have given their time to contribute to the process of preparing this plan, including staff and representatives of our department, Parks Victoria, CFA, Victoria Police, local governments, water corporations, Traditional Owner groups, utility services, regional and municipal fire management planning committees, environmental groups and communities in the South Western landscape.

How to get involved

Our planning process is done all year round and we need the help of local communities to understand what you care about most, and to work with us to determine local solutions.

To find out more about the large body of research and analysis that underlies this plan, or how to be involved in activities to review and update this plan in future, go to www.delwp.vic.gov.au

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