



WELLINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL

# Fire Prevention Guide

## Winter & Spring Maintenance

### Annual Fire Prevention Inspections

Wellington Shire Council conducts annual private property fire hazard inspections in accordance with the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*.

The program aims to reduce overall fuel loads across the landscape to minimise the threat of ignition or spread of bushfires.

We enforce minimum standards of grass slashing and mowing across all private landholdings and identify properties where more substantial work is required.

Landowners must remove or reduce any hazards identified during these inspections to lower the fire risk. The best way to do this is proactive property maintenance.

### What is Winter & Spring maintenance?

Although most fire prevention work involves slashing and mowing grass, some landowners will need to remove more substantial undergrowth or separate ground fuels from the tree canopy and nearby dwellings.

Winter and spring maintenance is any fire prevention work that can be conducted well before the fire season. This includes slashing undergrowth and weeds, removing fallen

timber, green waste or rubbish piles, as well as pruning tree branches back from dwellings and fences.

This can be more difficult, time-consuming or expensive than grass slashing, so if you complete this work over winter and spring it spreads out the workload. Clearing the undergrowth will also make your future fire season grass slashing much easier.

If you need a contractor to help complete the work, they'll be more readily available in winter and spring than just before the fire season.

### How do I find a contractor?

Several local contractors offer fire hazard property maintenance services. Search online, check local business directories, speak to a neighbour or contact your local garden supply centre.

For landowners who do not live locally, we recommend asking your contractor to take before and after photos to ensure any work is completed to your satisfaction.

### What about my Green Waste?

Options for disposal of green waste include mulching and composting, permitted burning or transport to a waste facility.

If you engage a contractor, they will likely dispose of the vegetation as part of their service.

Please note that the fine for dumping green waste is \$330.00. Report illegal dumping to Council on 1300 366 244.

## No Fee Green Waste weekend

We hold an annual No Fee Green Waste Disposal weekend on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday before the Melbourne Cup.

You can dispose of green waste between 9am and 5pm at our Kilmany, Maffra, Rosedale, Loch Sport, Seaspray, Heyfield, Stratford, and Yarram waste facilities.

At all other times, these facilities accept green waste disposal for a small fee. See the [Waste Facilities](#) page on our website for more details.

## Removing native vegetation and trees

A planning permit is generally required to remove native vegetation. In some circumstances you may be able to remove native vegetation without a permit for bushfire protection under the 10/30 and 10/50 rules.

Check if these rules apply to where you live by contacting our Environmental Planner on 1300 366 244.

## Burning Off

Outside of the Fire Danger Period you may be able to burn the vegetation you have cleared on your property.

If you live in a rural living zone or farm zone, you do not require a permit to burn on your property, but you must comply with the Standing Requirements for Every Burn.

If you live in any other zone, including residential zones, you will need to apply for a permit and demonstrate that there is no alternative to burning. Visit our [Fire](#) webpage for more information about burning off, including the Standing Requirements for Every Burn.

## What happens if I don't clean up my property?

Maintaining your property in winter and spring is not compulsory, however you are expected to have your property prepared before the fire season. If your property is deemed a fire risk during an inspection, you will be served a Fire Prevention Notice directing you to:

- Carry out fire prevention works to remove any specified hazards, and
- Maintain your property for the duration of the declared Fire Danger Period.

If you do not follow the directions of the Fire Prevention Notice, we will issue you an Infringement Notice (penalty of \$1,652).

We can also arrange for the hazard reduction works specified in the notice to be completed by our authorised contractors at your cost, plus an administration fee.

## Where do I find more information?

- Visit Council's 'Fire' webpage [www.wellington.vic.gov.au/fire](http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/fire)
- Contact the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer on 1300 366 244 for specific advice
- Visit the CFA's 'Prepare your Property' webpage [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/how-to-prepare-your-property](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/how-to-prepare-your-property)

