Bushfire Assessment Report Proposed Farm Building NCC Class 5-7

Lot 1 DP1166147 Bucketts Way Wards River NSW 2422

Prepared for

Todd Bowd Electrical C/- Brown Commercial Building

28 March 2025

Version V1.0







Project Details

Project Name:	J358 – Proposed Farm Building, WARDS RIVER
Client Details:	Todd Bowd Electrical C/- Brown Commercial Building PO Box 596 East Maitland NSW 2323
Project Address	Lot 1 DP1166147 Bucketts Way, Wards River NSW 2422
Local Government Area	Mid Coast Council – (FDI 80)
Zoning (LEP)	Great Lakes Local Environmental Plan 2014 (pub. 3-5-2024) RU2 - Rural Landscape: (pub. 3-5-2024)
Bushfire Prone Land	YES – Cat 1 (forest) and Cat 3 (grassland)
Proposed Development	NCC defined Farm Building (Non-habitable)
Approval Path	Council Development Application (DA)
Building Classification	PBP 2019 defined 'Other Development' – Class 5-7 Structures (NCC)

Document Control

Version	Primary Author	Reviewed	Description	Date Completed
V1.0	Daniel Smith	Dan Pedersen	Bushfire Threat Assessment - draft	28 March 2025

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. Location	5
1.2. Proposed Development	5
2. Legislative Framework	6
2.1. General Objectives of Planning for Bushfire Protection	6
2.2. Objectives for Building Classes 5-7 of the NCC	7
3. BUSHFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT	8
3.1. Bushfire Prone Land	8
3.2. Fire Weather	8
3.3. Vegetation Assessment	8
3.4. Slopes Influencing Bushfire Behaviour	9
4. RECOMMENDED BUSHFIRE PROTECTION MEASURES (BPM'S)	10
4.1. BPM - Asset Protection Zones	11
4.2. BPM - Landscaping	11
4.3. BPM - Construction	12
4.4. BPM – Access	14
4.5. BPM - Water Supply for Bushfire Purposes	15
4.6. BPM – Gas and Electricity Supply	16
4.7. BPM – Emergency Management	17
5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	18
6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF PBP	19
References	21
Appendix 1 Site Plan and Proposed Development Site Mapping	22

1. INTRODUCTION

Todd Bowd Electrical C/- Brown Commercial Building has engaged Cool Burn Pty Ltd (Cool Burn) to prepare a Bushfire Assessment Report in support of a Development Application (DA) for the proposed construction of a farm building on Lot 1 DP1166147, Bucketts Way, Wards River, within the Mid Coast Local Government Area (Appendix 1, Figure 1).

The proposed 'non-habitable' farm building is classified as a National Construction Code (NCC) Class 5-7 structure. Under Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019 (PBP 2019, Section 8.3.1), the development is categorised as "Other Development", which includes 'non-residential' structures such as industrial, commercial, and agricultural buildings that are not classified as vulnerable or special-purpose developments.

While bushfire-specific construction requirements under AS 3959:2018 and the NASH Standard do not apply to Class 5-8 buildings (PBP 2019, Section 8.3.1), the proposal must still comply with the general fire safety provisions of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and the NCC. Additionally, bushfire protection measures must be implemented in accordance with PBP 2019 aims and objectives to mitigate bushfire risks and ensure occupant safety, firefighting access, and property protection.

The report is based on site plans prepared by Brown Commercial Building (BC 0555 dated 28.02.2025). This assessment has utilised the following standards and guidelines:

- Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019 (PBP 2019) Section 8.3.1 (Other Development)
- Bushfire Prone Land Mapping by Mid Coast Council

This bushfire assessment report provides a detailed bushfire risk assessment and outlines mitigation strategies for access, water supply, services, emergency evacuation, and construction.

Cool Burn is a recognised and suitably qualified bushfire consultancy (BPAD Level 3), experienced in the preparation of bush assessments for this type of development.



1.1.Location

The proposed farm building site is located at Lot 1 in DP1166147, The Bucketts Way, Wards River NSW 2422, within the Mid Coast LGA. The site is situated on a 714.677-hectare rural zoned property (RU2 – Rural Landscape) primarily used for agricultural purposes including grazing and cropping. The vegetation on the eastern parts of the site consists of a mix of open grazing land and scattered trees. The western part of the site consists of undisturbed native bushland. The site is surrounded by large-lot rural developments and agricultural grazing activities.

The property has direct frontage to The Bucketts Way, a two-way sealed arterial road providing primary access to and from the site. There is an existing gravel property access road leading from The Bucketts Way to the proposed building site (approx. 1.4km). This access road shall comply with PBP 2019 access requirements to ensure safe movement of emergency vehicles and property occupants.

The electricity supply to the area is by way of overhead powerlines.

1.2.Proposed Development

The proposed development involves the construction of a double-storey farm building (NCC Class 5-7) with a footprint of 792m², designed to accommodate:

- Multiple vehicles and machinery storage (NCC Class7b)
- Offices (x2) and a meeting room (NCC Class 5)
- Kitchen, toilet and shower facilities (ancillary to office)
- Upper-level general storage (NCC Class 7b)
- The development will require an extension to the existing property access road (driveway) to provide direct access from The Bucketts Way to the new building.

Plans prepared by Brown Commercial Building (BC0555 dated 28.02.25) used as the basis for this assessment are provided in Appendix A – Site Plans.



2. Legislative Framework

Under Section 4.14 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP&A) Act, the consent authority (e.g., Council) is only required to consult with the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) if the proposed development does not comply with the aims and objectives outlined in Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019 (PBP 2019) or fails to meet relevant performance requirements.

Development approval may be granted by the consent authority through one of the following methods:

- <u>Compliance with PBP 2019</u> The consent authority is satisfied that the development meets the specifications and requirements of PBP 2019.
- <u>Certification by a Qualified Bush Fire Consultant</u> A certificate from a NSW RFSrecognised bushfire consultant confirms that the development complies with PBP 2019.
- <u>Consultation with the NSW RFS Commissioner</u> If the development does not fully conform to PBP 2019 specifications, the consent authority may still approve it after consulting with the Commissioner of the NSW RFS to determine any necessary bush fire protection measures for safeguarding persons, property, and the environment.

2.1. General Objectives of Planning for Bushfire Protection

All development on Bushfire prone land (BFPL) must satisfy the aim and objectives of PBP 2019. The aim of PBP 2019 is to provide for the protection of human life and minimise impacts on property from the threat of bushfire, while having due regard to development potential, site characteristics and protection of the environment.

The objectives are to:

- a. afford buildings and their occupants protection from exposure to a bush fire;
- b. provide for a defendable space to be located around buildings;
- c. provide appropriate separation between a hazard and buildings which, in combination with other measures, prevent the likely fire spread to buildings;
- d. ensure that appropriate operational access and egress for emergency service personnel and occupants is available;
- e. provide for ongoing management and maintenance of BPMs; and



f. ensure that utility services are adequate to meet the needs of firefighters.

2.2. Objectives for Building Classes 5-7 of the NCC

The proposal for a farm building with an office component is classified as a Class 5-7 structure under the National Construction Code (NCC). The NCC does not provide any bushfire specific performance requirements for these classes of buildings. AS 3959:2018 and the NASH Standard (National Association of Steel-Framed Houses) are not considered as a set of Deemed to Satisfy provisions, however compliance with AS 3959:2018 and the NASH Standard must be considered when meeting the aims and objectives of PBP 2019.

Whilst bushfire is not captured in the NCC for Class 5-7 buildings, the following objectives will be applied in relation to access, water supply and services, and emergency and evacuation planning:

- to provide safe access to/from the public road system for firefighters providing property protection during a bush fire and for occupant egress for evacuation;
- to provide suitable emergency and evacuation (and relocation) arrangements for occupants of the development;
- to provide adequate services of water for the protection of buildings during and after the passage of bush fire, and to locate gas and electricity so as not to contribute to the risk of fire to a building; and
- > provide for the storage of hazardous materials away from the hazard wherever possible.

The general fire safety construction provisions of the NCC are taken as acceptable solutions however construction requirements for bushfire protection will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.



3. BUSHFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

3.1.Bushfire Prone Land

Bushfire-prone land (BFPL) is designated by local councils and includes areas that can support a bushfire or are vulnerable to bushfire attack. BFPL maps are prepared by local council and certified by the Commissioner of the NSW RFS. The site is identified as 'bushfire prone land' as per the Mid Coast Council BFPL map. Appendix 1 Figure 2 shows that the site is affected by:

- Category 1 (Forest)
- Category 3 (Grassland).

3.2.Fire Weather

The Forest Fire Danger Index (FFDI) is used to assess fire risk in forested landscapes, while the Grassland Fire Danger Index (GFDI) applies to grassland environments. Under PBP 2019, development assessments must use the FFDI and GFDI relevant to the local government area. The development site is located within the Mid Coast LGA and North Coast fire weather district, where the designated values are:

- FFDI: 80
- GFDI: 110.

3.3.Vegetation Assessment

In accordance with Appendix 1 of PBP 2019, a classification of bushfire prone vegetation on and surrounding the site of the proposed building, (out to 140 metres in all directions) has been undertaken (Appendix 1 - Figure 3). Vegetation classification follows the system adopted by Keith (2004) and the general descriptions provided in PBP 2019. Results of the vegetation assessment are provided in Table 1.



Table [*]	1. V	egetation	and	effective	slopes
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Direction	Vegetation Type	Detailed Description	Distance	Effective Slope
North	Forest	Hunter-Macleay Dry Sclerophyll Forest (PCT: 3446) and Dry Rainforest (PCT: 3244) on adjoining Lot 2 DP829617 (No. 2419 The Bucketts Way).	10m	0° Upslope/Flat
South	Grassland	Open grazing pasture (PCT: 0) within the subject site.	Within site	5°-10° Downslope
East	Forest	Hunter-Macleay Dry Sclerophyll Forest (PCT: 3446) on the subject site and adjoining Lot 2 DP829617.	Within site - 68m	0°-5° Downslope
West	Grassland	Open grazing pasture (PCT: 0) within the subject site.	Within site	0°-5° Downslope

3.4. Slopes Influencing Bushfire Behaviour

The bushfire behaviour assessment methodology assesses the slope of the land, out to 100m from the site of the proposed Farm Building (Appendix 1 - Figure 3). The landform surrounding the Farm Building site is:

- North: 0 degrees flat/upslope.
- South: 5-10 degrees downslope.
- East, West: 0-5 degrees downslope.



4. RECOMMENDED BUSHFIRE PROTECTION MEASURES (BPM'S)

Bushfire Protection Measures (BPMs) address key risks by incorporating Asset Protection Zones (APZs), access requirements, water supply, electricity and gas services, construction standards, landscaping, and emergency evacuation (Plate 1).

Plate 1 Bushfire Protection Measures



In accordance with PBP 2019, bushfire-specific provisions are not explicitly required for Class 5–7 buildings under the National Construction Code (NCC). However, to ensure the safety of the proposed farm building and its occupants, the following BPMs have been developed to meet the key objectives of Section 8.3.1 of PBP 2019, which include:

- Providing safe access to and from the public road network for both firefighting operations and occupant evacuation.
- Ensuring appropriate emergency and evacuation procedures to facilitate safe relocation or sheltering of occupants during a bushfire.
- Providing an adequate water supply for active firefighting before, during, and after bushfire events, while ensuring gas and electricity services do not increase fire risk.

• Safely storing hazardous materials to prevent them from exacerbating fire hazards or becoming an ignition source.

4.1.BPM - Asset Protection Zones

To mitigate the risk of direct flame contact, radiant heat, and ember attack, <u>a minimum 10m</u> <u>Asset Protection Zone (APZ) is recommended around the proposed farm building</u>. The APZ must comply with PBP 2019 Appendix 2 requirements, including:

- APZ Management: 10m APZ to be established around the entire building and managed in perpetuity to the standard of an Inner Protection Area (IPA) in accordance with Appendix 4 of PBP 2019 and Section 4.2 of this report (see below).
- Reduction of fuel loads: No accumulation of combustible materials, such as firewood stacks or flammable liquids, within the APZ.

The recommended 10m APZ will provide a level of protection, reducing bushfire intensity and improving firefighter access if suppression efforts are required.

4.2.BPM - Landscaping

Landscaping within the recommended minimum 10m APZ must be managed to minimise fuel loads and reduce bushfire risks. This bushfire assessment recommends that the APZ be managed in accordance with the Inner Protection Area (IPA) standards, as detailed in Appendix 4 of PBP 2019.

Inner Protection Area (IPA) Requirements

The IPA is a fuel-managed area designed to:

- Minimise the impact of direct flame contact and radiant heat on the development
- Act as a defendable space for firefighting efforts
- Reduce risks by maintaining vegetation at controlled levels.

To achieve these objectives, vegetation within the IPA must be kept to a minimum level as follows:

• No trees or shrubs within the 10m APZ.

- Grass within the IPA should be kept mown to a maximum height of 100mm, as shorter grass will reduce the intensity of potential fire behaviour and make firefighting efforts more effective.
- Leaves and vegetation debris should be regularly removed to minimise combustible material within the IPA.

By implementing these landscaping controls, the IPA within the APZ will provide a strategic buffer that enhances building protection, firefighter safety, and emergency evacuation conditions during a bushfire event.

4.3.BPM - Construction

The proposed farm building (NCC Class 5-7) is not subject to the bushfire-specific construction requirements of AS3959:2018 or the NASH standard (s8.3.1 PBP 2019).

However, it must comply with the general fire safety provisions outlined in the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and National Construction Code (NCC) for the building's relevant classification.

Although AS 3959:2018 does not apply to Class 5-7 buildings (non-habitable), the following bushfire related construction measures are identified to enhance resilience to ember attack and radiant heat:

- Building foundations: Concrete slab construction to minimise risk from ground fires.
- External walls: Constructed of non-combustible materials such as pre-cast concrete or metal cladding.
- Roofing, entry doors and roller doors, and window systems are to be non-combustible (metal).
- Entry doors and roller doors to be non-combustible and tight fitting (draught excluders, ember brushes on roller doors) to prevent ember entry.
- All glazing to be toughened glass 6mm thickness.
- Glazing elements (window assembly) on the northern elevation should be protected by:
 - o a bushfire shutter system to standards of Clause 3.7 (AS3959:2018); or

- a steel mesh screen over the whole window system (such as a Crimsafe © product), to prevent ember entry in potential window system failure.
- Glazing elements on the eastern and southern elevations should be screened with a non-corrosive metal screen (max. aperture 2mm) to prevent ember entry.
- The glazing door systems (eastern and southern elevation of meeting room)
 - be completely protected by a bushfire shutter that conforms with Clause 3.7 and Clause 8.5.1 (as3959:2018); or
 - conform with the following:

(i) Frame material The material for door frames, including fully framed glazed doors, shall be made from metal.

(ii) Hardware Externally fitted hardware that supports the panel in its functions of opening and closing shall be metal.

Trims or other components may use materials other than metal.

(iii) Glazing Where doors incorporate glazing, the glazing shall be toughened glass a minimum of 6 mm in thickness.

(iv) Seals and weather strips Seals to stiles, head and sills or thresholds shall be manufactured from materials with a flammability index not exceeding 5.

(v) Screens Both the fixed and openable portions of doors shall be screened externally with screens that conform with Clause 3.6 and Clause 8.5.2.

(vi) Sliding doors shall be tight-fitting in the frames.

- Ember protection: provide adequate ember protection by utilising sarking insulation, enclosing all openings or covering openings with a non-corrosive metal screen (max. aperture 2mm). This includes any openable windows, entry doors, vents, weepholes, and eaves.
- Doors (roller doors and entry doors) to be sealed with draft excluders or weather strips to the bottom, stiles, and head of the door against the opening/frame to prevent the entry of embers into the building.
- Any proposed fencing should be non-combustible.



4.4.BPM – Access

To ensure safe and efficient access for both firefighting operations and occupant evacuation during a bushfire event, the proposed development must meet the access requirements outlined in PBP 2019 and align with the general fire safety provisions of the BCA and NCC. The following access provisions are recommended for the development:

- The existing gravel property access road leading to the farm building site from the eastern boundary (nearest to The Bucketts Way) will be used for access.
- This access road should be maintained and upgraded (where required) to ensure it can accommodate fully loaded firefighting vehicles and emergency vehicles (23t capacity).
- The access road must have a minimum width of 4m.
- There must be a minimum vertical clearance of 4m from any overhanging obstructions, including tree branches and other obstacles along the entire access route.
- The access road must have an all-weather surface (e.g., gravel or compacted earth) that can support the weight of firefighting vehicles, particularly during wet conditions.
- The access road must provide a suitable turning area at the farm building site in accordance with the specifications outlined in Appendix 3 of PBP 2019, ensuring that vehicles can safely turn around if needed.
- Access for a Category 1 firefighting appliance must be provided to within 4m of the required static water supply (SWS) tank (see Section 4.5).
- Passing bays that are 20m long by 2m wide must be provided every 200m along the access road to allow emergency vehicles to pass safely.
- The minimum distance between inner and outer curves along the road must be 6m to prevent bottlenecks and allow smooth passage of emergency vehicles.
- The crossfall must not exceed 10 degrees.
- For unsealed roads, the maximum grade must not exceed 10 degrees.

By following these recommended access provisions, the farm building development will provide safer and efficient access for both firefighting efforts and emergency evacuation, in line with the requirements of PBP 2019.

4.5.BPM - Water Supply for Bushfire Purposes

A reliable and accessible water supply is essential for firefighting operations and building protection in the event of a bushfire. The proposed farm building must ensure compliance with the water supply objectives of PBP 2019 while also meeting any general fire safety requirements of the BCA and NCC. The following water supply provisions are recommended:

- Provide a dedicated Static Water Supply (SWS) for bushfire protection, with a minimum volume of 20,000 litres. The tank should be steel or concrete (not plastic).
- The SWS supply tank must be located within the APZ.
- A hardened ground surface suitable for Cat 1 vehicle access must be provided, allowing firefighting vehicles to reach within 4m of the SWS firefighting connection point.
- A connection for firefighting purposes must be provided on the non-hazard side and positioned away from the structure. The connection must include a 65mm Storz outlet with a ball valve fitted to the outlet, ensuring compatibility with standard firefighting equipment.
- The ball valve and pipes must be metal and sized adequately to ensure sufficient water flow for firefighting.
- The supply pipes from the SWS tank to the ball valve must have the same bore size to ensure that the flow volume is not restricted.
- All above-ground (exposed) water supply pipes and taps external to the SWS and the farm building must be metal to ensure fire resistance and durability under bushfire conditions.
- A clearly visible SWS sign must be installed at the street front to indicate the location of the water supply for emergency responders.

- Where pumps are provided, they are a minimum 5hp or 3kW petrol or diesel-powered pump, and are shielded against bush fire attack; Any hose and reel for firefighting connected to the pump shall be 19mm internal diameter; and
- Fire hose reels are constructed in accordance with AS/NZS 1221:1997 Fire hose reels and installed in accordance with the relevant clauses of AS 2441:2005 Installation of fire hose reels.

These recommendations ensure that the building is equipped with reliable and accessible water supplies for firefighting, in accordance with the requirements outlined in PBP 2019.

4.6.BPM – Gas and Electricity Supply

Electricity Supply: It is recommended that all electricity and gas provisions to the proposed development site are installed to relevant standards and will limit the possibility of ignition of surrounding bushland or the fabric of buildings. In particular:

- Where practicable, electrical transmission lines are underground.
- If overhead, electrical transmission lines must be installed with short pole spacing (30m), unless crossing gullies, gorges or riparian areas and no part of a tree is closer to a power line than the distance set out in accordance with the specifications in ISSC3 Guideline for Managing Vegetation Near Power Lines.

For Ground Mounted Solar:

- Be located a minimum 10m from the building;
- Provide a minimum 10m APZ (IPA Appendix 4 PBP 2019) for the structures and associated infrastructure.

For Gas Services:

- Be installed and maintained in accordance with AS/NZS 1596:2014 and the requirements of relevant authorities, and metal piping is used.
- All fixed gas cylinders are kept clear of all flammable materials to a distance of 10m and shielded on the hazard side.
- Connections to and from gas cylinders are metal.



- Polymer-sheathed flexible gas supply lines are not used.
- Above-ground gas service pipes are metal, including and up to any outlets.

4.7.BPM – Emergency Management

It is recommended that a Bush Fire Survival Plan (BFSP) be developed and displayed in the farm building. A BFSP template is provided on the NSW RFS website (<u>Bush fire survival plan - NSW</u> <u>Rural Fire Service</u>). The Bush Fire Survival Plan will help ensure preparedness and safety to occupants in the event of a bushland or grass fire, outlining essential steps to protect life and property.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This Bushfire Assessment Report supports the Development Application (DA) for the proposed farm building (NCC Class5-7) development on Lot 1 DP 1166147, The Bucketts Way, Wards River in the Mid Coast LGA. Key recommendations include:

- **APZ:** Establishment of a minimum 10m APZ around the farm building.
- Landscaping: Management of APZ to specifically adhere to Inner Protection Area standards as detailed in Section 4.2 of this report & Appendix 4 PBP 2019.
- **Construction:** General fire safety provisions of the NCC and BCA are to apply. Bushfire specific measures for increased ember protection and radiant heat are also recommended in Section 4.3 of this report.
- **Property Access Road:** Property access road to comply with Section 4.4 of this report and Appendix 3 PBP 2019.
- Water Supply: Provide 20,000L steel or concrete SWS tanks with 65mm Storz outlets for firefighting use.
- Utilities: Gas and electricity services can meet acceptable solutions.
- Emergency Management: Building occupants are to prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan and display it in the building.

With the implementation of the recommended bushfire protection measures, the proposed development is considered to address bushfire risk and comply with the general aims and objectives of Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019.

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6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF PBP

The bushfire assessment identifies the extent to which the proposed development conforms with or deviates from the aims and specific objectives set out in PBP 2019. Table 2 details the compliance with PBP aims and objectives.

Table 2 Compliance with Aim & Objectives of PBP

Aim	Meets Aim	Comment
to provide for the protection of human life and minimise impacts on property from the threat of bush fire, while having due regard to development potential, site characteristics and protection of the environment.	Yes	The location of the proposed development has considered bushfire risk and applied relevant bushfire protection measures (Section 4 of this report) to mitigate bushfire impact, commensurate with the risk and class of development.
General Objectives	Meets Objective	Comment
afford buildings and their occupants protection from exposure to a bush fire;	Yes	The proposed development is afforded acceptable bushfire protection and defendable space, commensurate to the identified risk and class of development.
provide for a defendable space to be located around buildings;	Yes	The design will provide for a minimal defendable space around the building.
provide appropriate separation between a hazard and buildings which, in combination with other measures, prevent the likely fire spread to buildings;	Yes	The design will provide for a minimal defendable space around the building. Bushfire specific construction measures recommended in Section 4.
ensure that appropriate operational access and egress for emergency service personnel and occupants is available;	Yes	Access can be provided to acceptable PBP2019 standards (see Section 4).
provide for ongoing management and maintenance of BPMs; and	Yes	Bushfire management and maintenance (APZ) responsibility contained within the site.
ensure that utility services are adequate to meet the needs of firefighters.	Yes	Water and services can be provided to acceptable PBP 2019 standards
Specific Objectives	Meets Objective	Comment
to provide safe access to/from the public road system for firefighters providing property protection during a bush fire and for occupant egress for evacuation;	Yes	Vehicle access can be provided to acceptable PBP standards providing safe access and egress from the public road system



to provide suitable emergency and evacuation (and relocation) arrangements for occupants of the development;	Yes	Occupants to prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan and display in building.
to provide adequate services of water for the protection of buildings during and after the passage of bush fire, and to locate gas and electricity so as not to contribute to the risk of fire to a building; and	Yes	Occupants to prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan and display in building.
provide for the storage of hazardous materials away from the hazard wherever possible.	Yes	Design and operations to incorporate measures to provide for the storage of hazardous material away from the hazard where possible.



References

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Appendix 1 Site Plan and Proposed Development Site Mapping



Figure 5. Existing property access road (driveway) off The Bucketts Way.

NSW Planning Portal Spatial Viewer













REV. 3



or construction.		
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	SHEET TITLE:
	SITE PLAN
0: 11	STREET: BUCKETTS WAY
	PROJECT STATUS:
	DEVELOPMENT AP







