

Closure of Public Facilities due to Bushfire Risk Operational Management Standard



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Wingecarribee Community Strategic Plan 2041 - Places – Goal 3.4 We have safe, maintained and effective assets and infrastructure

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1 Objectives

The objectives of this Procedure are:

- Provide clear procedures for closing certain public assets during heightened bushfire risk periods, and
- Outline the communication process and responsibilities associated with actions under this Procedure.

2 Scope

This Procedure covers assets that are in mapped bush fire prone land, are open to the public and either under Council's management or are managed by delegated 355 committees.

This Procedure does not cover:

- Council owned assets that are fully leased to a third party. Council does not have operational control over these sites under the lease arrangements. See section 3.3.5 for more details.
- Procedures for staff entering bush fire prone land. This is addressed through other safe systems of work.
- Council or community run events on Council land that require a development application. The development approval contains conditions of consent.
- Assets not in bushfire prone land.

It should be noted that there are no Neighbourhood Safer Places covered by this Procedure.

3 Procedures for closure of Public Assets due to Bushfire Risk

1.1 Assessment of sites

A risk assessment has been undertaken for sites assessed based on whether:

- The site is on mapped bush fire prone land,
- the type of site and activity
- capacity of venue (likelihood of large numbers), and
- two access components distance to non-bushfire prone land, the number of route options to non-bushfire prone land.

This site assessment categorises sites into groups based on its characteristics. Each group triggers a different level of closure action due to the combined site characteristics and function.

The site assessment can be found in Attachment 1.

Sites that are not on bushfire prone land do not require closure actions under this Procedure.

1.2 Triggers for closure

3.2.1 Fire Danger Ratings

This Procedure uses <u>Fire Danger Ratings</u> to trigger caution or closure actions for assets other than bushland reserves. Wingecarribee is in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven fire danger region. Fire danger ratings range from Moderate to Catastrophic, with ratings of Extreme and above triggering closure actions. Fire Danger Ratings are published on the Rural Fire Services (RFS) website generally by 4pm each day for the following day. However, ratings can also be changed at any time to reflect changing weather conditions.

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More information on fire behaviour in relation to Fire Danger Ratings can be found on the RFS website.

3.2.2 Total Fire ban

For bushland reserves there are two different triggers for restrictions. Fire Danger Rating is used to determine closures. The <u>Total Fire Ban</u> status is used as the trigger for mitigation actions due to the risk of fire starting from recreational activities within bushland reserves. Total Fire Ban status is updated as per the Fire Danger Ratings.

1.3 Site closures

3.3.1 Sports fields and pools

Table 1. below lists the sports fields and pools covered, and the closure actions triggered based on <u>Fire Danger Ratings</u>.

3.3.2 - 355 Committee halls

Table 1 lists the halls managed by 355 Committees that are included and the closure actions triggered based on <u>Fire Danger Ratings</u> as for the sports fields and pools.

Table 1. Closure trigger for sports fields, pools and halls covered by the procedure. Excludes							
Bundanoon Pony Club grounds as these							
				lhaven region			
Asset	Moderate	High	Extreme	Catastrophic			
Sports fields							
Mount Alexandra Mtn biking tracks	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Tourist Road Oval and Tennis courts	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Berrima District Pony Club Grounds	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Berrima River Campground	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Bill O'Reilly Oval	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Boronia Park Sports fields	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Colo Vale Tennis courts	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Jurd Park sports fields	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Ferndale Reserve Sports fields	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Mittagong Oval	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Ironmines Oval	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Loopline Pony Club grounds	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Penrose Tennis Courts	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Welby Hockey Fields	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Yerrinbool Oval	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Centennial Park Sports Fields	Open	Open	Caution	Closed			
Eridge Park Sports Fields	Open	Open	Caution	Closed			
Mittagong Tennis Courts	Open	Open	Caution	Closed			
Welby Oval	Open	Open	Caution	Closed			
Pools							
Mittagong Pool	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Halls							
Canyonleigh Community Hall	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Hill Top Community Centre	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Penrose Hall	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Wingello Mechanics Institute	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			
Yerrinbool Hall	Open	Caution	Closed	Closed			

^{*}Caution = additional actions recommended such as monitoring the RFS Fires Near Me app for new fires and reviewing evacuation plans.

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3.3.3 Cemeteries

Minimising disruption to cemetery function is important and mitigation measures are used to reduce exposure while still providing essential services. Mitigation measures include holding over a burial to next day, relocating memorial services, limiting the number of people at burials and varying the time of day of burials. Mitigation and closure actions based on <u>Fire Danger Ratings</u> are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Closure triggers and mitigation measures for cemeteries.							
	Fire Danger I	Rating for Illawarra	Shoalhaven region				
Cemetery	Moderate	High	Extreme	Catastrophic			
Penrose Cemetery Welby Cemetery Robertson Cemetery Bundanoon Cemetery Berrima Cemetery	Open	Caution	Mitigation actions are required: 1. Hold over the burial where possible. 2. Relocate graveside services to alternative venues. 3. Limit the number of people at burial. 4. Undertake activities in the early morning.	Closed. Hold over burials			

3.3.4 Bushland reserves

Bushland reserves are managed differently due to the dispersed nature of bushland reserves and how people use them. Unlike facilities that have a booking system, there is no direct communication with various users of reserves. Therefore, different measures are used for bushland reserves.

Bushland reserves are closed on Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating days. This is consistent with other agencies such as National Parks.

In addition, Signs as Remote Supervision at the reserve main entrances or access points advise potential users of the reserve. The advice 'entry not recommended' applies during a Total Fire Ban as shown in Table 3.

Not all bushland reserves or access points have signs installed. Where signs are missing, the same recommendation applies, and entry is not recommended during a Total Fire Ban. This information will be contained on Council's website.

Table 3. Bushland Reserves						
	Total Fire Ban (TOBAN)	Catastrophic Fire				
		Danger Rating				
Bushland Reserves	Signs as remote supervision are installed saying "entry not recommended during a Total Fire Ban". A QR Code on the sign links to the RFS website with information on fire bans. Where a sign is not installed, entry is not recommended.	Closed				

3.3.5 Leased sites

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Sites that are covered by a licence or lease arrangement which does not require the user to follow Council policies, procedures or guidelines are not covered by this Procedure. This applies to Bundanoon Pony Club grounds currently leased. Welby Hockey Fields however have a licence that includes a requirement to follow Council policies or guidelines relevant to playing fields, so this Procedure does apply. See Attachment 2 for a list of leased sites as at the time of endorsement of this Procedure.

1.4 Communicating closure actions

Council's website is the primary active communication of asset closure for sports fields, halls and pools. Processes for bush fire risk are similar to wet weather sport field closures.

There are two ways the website is used to advise of asset closures:

- Council's website includes the 'live' bushfire danger rating and a table (as in Table 1-3) of assets and status when certain bushfire danger ratings are activated. By automating the link to the Fire danger rating this reduces the risk of staff not being available to update the website over weekends.
- Secondly the website has a manually changed assets status box like the wet weather procedures.

It is the community user's responsibility to check Council's website for the asset status noting that the Fire Danger Ratings can change overnight. Users are notified of the requirement to check the website through:

- Sports field and hall user agreements, booking forms and terms and conditions
- Pool Rules and Safety Brochure
- 355 committee procedure manuals
- Cemeteries registration
- Council's website.

If conditions for a closure are triggered, the Bushfire Officer notifies, via a stakeholder email, the Cemeteries officer, Assets Parks and Buildings officer, Pools coordinator, Tourism and online services. Council will also advise 355 committees, sporting groups and funeral directors via email as a courtesy during business hours. Council may also distribute a media release or other communication.

Attachment 3 is a flow chart with further information of responsibilities covering the full policy cycle as well when a closure is triggered.

1.5 Closure Actions

When an asset closure is triggered, the closure is communicated as described in Section 3.4. As this Procedure is aimed at organised groups rather than individuals, physical closure actions are not required as there are pre-emptive measures in place, such as the user agreements and Council's website describing the closure triggers. In addition, Council is often not able to physically close assets such as bushland reserves and ovals as there may be no gates, multiple informal entrances or because roads may be required to remain open. Putting up gates, barriers or signs may also put staff at risk by being in bushfire prone land in the event of a fire.

Sporting groups, hall users and funeral directors are required under their various user agreements to not use facilities when closed.

Council will not undertake compliance actions for individuals entering ovals or bushland reserves that are closed.

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During catastrophic fire weather further communication will also be undertaken to alert individuals.

1.6 Immediate threat from fire and other changes

This procedure focuses on minimising risk of exposure to high risk areas. In the event of an unexpected fire or rapidly changing conditions, additional closure actions may be put in place. A request for closure of a vulnerable facility or a public place in high risk bush fire prone areas may be made by the NSW RFS commissioner in writing during Catastrophic weather in accordance with section 60L and 61 of the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989*. Any additional closure recommendations should be provided by the Local Emergency Management Officer to the General Manager. Recommended actions should be guided by advice from emergency services.

Any requests for opening a facility to provide community support or pre-fire briefings should be provided by the Local Emergency Management Officer to the General Manager. Recommended actions should be guided by advice from emergency services.

1.7 Reviewing risk assessment of sites and changing the status of sites

The status of sites may need to be changed from time to time outside of the review of the Procedure. The foundation of the risk assessment of sites is whether a site is on Bush Fire Prone Land. The Bush Fire Prone Land mapping can change over time. This may lead to sites being included or excluded under this Procedure. In addition, sites may move from a user agreement to a lease that would affect this Procedure also.

The NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) certifies the Bush Fire Prone Land map, following the development of a Bush Fire Prone Vegetation map by Council in consultation with the RFS. Council reviews the map every five years. More frequent changes to the map can occur if required.

The Environment Officer (Bushfire) will undertake the risk assessment process at Attachment 1 for any sites that need to be re-evaluated. The Environment Officer (Bushfire) will provide an updated table (Table 1 and 2 of this Procedure) to Assets.

Tables of closure actions in the Procedure and on Council's website will need to be updated for any changes to risk assessment of a site and also where a site enters or leaves a lease agreement. Assets will update website information and communicate any changes with the relevant groups.

In the case of an approaching fire or other emergency see section 3.6 for making decisions on any additional actions.

4 Responsibilities

Responsibilities for the implementation of this Procedure are shared as follows:

4.1 Executive

The Executive shall:

- o provide guidance to Councillors as to the content and implementation of this Procedure;
- o decide on any proposed changes during an emergency in line with this Procedure; and
- o support the implementation of this Procedure.

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4.2 Manager Assets

The Manager Assets shall:

- provide guidance to Executive and other Council staff as to the content and implementation of this Procedure;
- consult with Manager Environment and Sustainability for changes to the risk assessment of sites;
- implement communication of asset closures and supporting processes related to this Procedure;
- support Coordinator Tourism and Events in the implementation of this Procedure for management of the Berrima Campground site;
- o provide guidance to 355 committees as to the content and implementation of this Procedure;
- o ensure the timely review of this Procedure in collaboration with Environment and Sustainability;
- o conduct investigations into internal alleged non-compliance with this Procedure; and
- o assist the Local Emergency Management Officer during emergency situations.

4.3 Manager Shire Presentation

The Manager Shire Presentation shall:

- o assist the Manager Assets in the implementation of this Procedure; and
- o assist the Local Emergency Management Officer during emergency situations.

4.4 Manager Environment and Sustainability

The Manager Environment and Sustainability shall:

- through the Environment Officer (Bushfire Management), notify internal stakeholders when conditions for a closure are triggered;
- assist the Manager Assets in the implementation of this Procedure;
- provide updated site risk assessments as needed, for example when the Bushfire Prone Land mapping is updated or at the review of this Procedure; and
- o assist the Manager Assets in the review of this Procedure.

4.5 Chief Information Officer

The Chief Information Officer shall assist the Manager Assets in implementation of this Procedure in relation to website management as a key part of the Procedure communication.

- provide guidance to 355 committees as to the content and implementation of this Procedure; and
- o implement communication of asset closures for sports fields and hireable facilities.

4.6 Managers

Managers shall:

- provide guidance to Council staff within their respective branches as to the content and implementation of this Procedure, seeking guidance from the Procedure owner as required;
 and
- o assist the Manager Assets in implementation of this Procedure.

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4.7 Council staff

Council staff shall implement this Procedure.

5 Performance Measures

The success of this Procedure will be measured by asset closure and communication in line with this Procedure.

6 Definitions

Fire Danger Rating The Fire Danger Ratings are issued by the Bureau of Meteorology each day during the Bush Fire Danger Period and are found on the <u>Rural Fire Service website</u>. Ratings give an indication of the possible consequences of a fire, if one was to start. Ratings are based on predicted conditions such as temperature, humidity, wind and the dryness of the landscape.

The higher the fire danger rating, the more dangerous the

conditions.

Bush Fire Prone

Land

Land designated and mapped as Bush Fire Prone Land in line with the *Environment, Planning and Assessment Act* 1979, Part 10.3.

Total Fire Ban A Total Fire Ban Order prohibits the lighting, maintenance or use of

any fire or class of fire in the open air for the period specified in the

order under the Rural Fires Act 1997.

Open The facility is available for use. Individual and group users should

undertake their own risk assessment processes prior to use, for

example undertaking a ground inspection.

Caution Due to the increased risk of impact from fire that may start,

additional actions are recommended for all groups using this facility including monitoring the RFS Fires Near Me app for new fires and

reviewing evacuation plans.

Closed Use of the site by organised groups, including those with a booking,

is suspended until the Fire Danger Rating is below the closure

trigger level for the site.

Closed -Bushland reserves Bushland reserves are closed for use by organised groups and

individuals.

7 Non-compliance with this Policy

Non-compliance with this Procedure should be reported to Manager Assets who will investigate and determine the appropriate course of action.

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8 Document Control

8.1 Version Control

Version	Adoption Date	Notes
1.0	27 October 2021	Original version
1.1	November 2023	Minor changes due to AFDR system update and style guide
1.2	June 2024	Minor change to Section 1.7 regarding updates to the bush fire prone land map

9 Attachments

- 1. Site Assessment process
- 2. List of leased assets not currently covered by procedure
- 3. Asset Closure Communication responsibilities

Approved by:

WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE COUNCIL

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Attachment 1 - Site Risk Assessment

There are a series of steps in undertaking the risk assessment for this Procedure. The following steps do require some knowledge of bushfire prone land (BFPL) and asset risk. Therefore, the risk assessment process is undertaken by the Bushfire Officer.

Site Risk Assessment

The steps are as follows:

- 1. Identify which Council managed and 355 managed halls, ovals, cemeteries and pools are on bushfire prone land or the buffer of bush fire prone land using WINMap. Include sites that are fully leased for sporting facilities.
- 2. Assess the sites against the scoring categories below with the highest score in each category representing a higher level of risk.
 - a. Bushfire Prone Land and buffer (score of 0 for non-BFPL; score of 1 less than 50% of the site on BFPL including buffer; score of 2 for sites with more than 50% BFPL or buffer)
 - b. Safe Egress the number of alternate routes to non-bushfire prone land (score of 1 for many options for leaving BFPL; score of 2 for few options for leaving BFPL)
 - c. Distance to safety the distance from the asset to non-bushfire prone land (score of 1 for a short distance to safety and score of 2 for a long distance to safety for example Welby Oval would be a short distance and Canyonleigh Hall would be a long distance)
 - d. Possible number of people that may be present depending on the type of sport or event (score of 0 for under 15; score of 1 for 15-29; score of 2 for over 30).

Where there is uncertainty over the scoring of a particular category for a site, the higher score should be given.

Closure Trigger categories

Once the scores are completed the assets are grouped into 4 categories. Assets that are scored 0 for BFPL are the lowest category regardless of their total score. The remaining assets (i.e. all sites that are in BFPL) are grouped by their total scores with the highest scoring group being 7-8, the second group 4-6, and the final group 1-3.

The highest risk group are closed on extreme and catastrophic fire danger ratings.

The second highest risk group is closed on extreme and catastrophic fire danger ratings.

The second lowest risk group is closed on catastrophic fire danger ratings.

The lowest risk group, i.e. the sites not on BFPL, are not closed during any fire danger ratings.

Cemeteries

Cemeteries are categorised the same as other sites and the action trigger levels remain the same for the groups. However, the closure actions are different due to the time sensitive nature of cemeteries function. Mitigation measure are put in place instead of closure for high and extreme fire danger ratings and closure is in place for catastrophic fire danger ratings.

Leased sites

While leased sites may be scored Council does not have operational control over these sites. Therefore, Council does not close these sites. These sites are encouraged to establish their own risk assessment and closure steps and Council's procedure can be provided as a recommendation.

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information in case				Distanc		Toto	Graun
Asset	Activity Type	Bushfir e Prone (0-2)	Route Options /Egress (0-2)	e to Safety (0-2)	Possibl e No's People Present	Tota I	Group
Canyonleigh Community Hall	Various social gatherings and meetings	2	1	2	2	7	Highest risk
Mount Alexandra Reserve Mtn Biking area, Welby	Mountain Biking	2	1	2	2	7	Highest risk
Penrose Cemetery	Cemetery	2	1	2	2	7	Highest risk
Robertson Cemetery	Cemetery	2	2	1	2	7	Highest risk
Tourist Rd Oval, Glenquarry	Cricket, Astronomy	2	2	2	1	7	Highest risk
Tourist Road Tennis courts, Glenquarry	Tennis	2	2	2	1	7	Highest risk
Welby Cemetery	Cemetery	2	2	1	2	7	Highest risk
Berrima Cemetery	Cemetery	2	1	1	2	6	Second highest risk
Berrima District Pony Club Grounds, Burradoo	Equestrian	2	1	1	2	6	Second highest risk
Boronia Park, Stanley St HT	Cricket, Soccer	2	1	2	1	6	Second highest risk
Bundanoon Pony Club grounds	Equestrian	2	1	1	2	6	Second highest risk
Bundanoon Cemetery	Cemetery	2	1	1	2	6	Second highest risk
Ferndale Reserve Sports Fields	Soccer	2	1	1	2	6	Second highest risk
Hill Top Community Centre, Cumberteen St	Various social gatherings and meetings	2	1	1	2	6	Second highest risk
Ironmines Oval	Soccer	2	1	1	2	6	Second highest risk



information in case						1	1
Asset	Activity Type	Bushfir e Prone (0-2)	Route Options /Egress (0-2)	Distanc e to Safety (0-2)	Possibl e No's People Present	Tota I	Group
Jurd Park, Wattle St Colo Vale	Equestrian and tennis	2	1	1	2	6	Second highest risk
Loopline Pony Club Grounds, Jurd Park	Equestrian	2	1	1	2	6	Second highest risk
Mittagong Oval, Old Hume Hwy	Oz Tag	2	1	1	2	6	Second highest risk
Mittagong Pool	Water Polo	2	1	1	2	6	Second highest risk
Welby Hockey Fields	Hockey	2	1	1	2	6	Second Highest risk
Yerrinbool Community Facilities Hall, Everest St	Various social gatherings and meetings	2	1	1	2	6	Second highest risk
Berrima River Campground	4 campsites	2	1	1	1	5	Second highest risk
Bill O'Reilly Oval, Kareela Rd	Cricket	2	1	1	1	5	Second highest risk
Penrose Hall, Kareela Rd	Various social gatherings and meetings	1	1	0	2	4	Second highest risk
Wingello Mechanics Institute Hall	Various social gatherings and meetings	2	0	0	2	4	Second highest risk
Yerrinbool Oval	Astronomic al Society, RC Car Club	1	1	1	1	4	Second highest risk



Asset	Activity Type	Bushfir e Prone (0-2)	Route Options /Egress (0-2)	Distanc e to Safety (0-2)	Possibl e No's People Present	Tota I	Group
Penrose Tennis courts, Kareela Rd NOTE: For clear communication as requested by Assets this site is in the same risk group as Penrose Hall	Tennis	2	1	0	0	3	Second Highest group – see note
Eridge Park Sports Fields	Cricket, Touch Football, Athletics, Velodrome, Netball	1	0	0	2	3	Third highest risk
Welby Oval, Berrima St	Cricket	1	0	1	1	3	Third highest risk
Centennial Park, Centennial Rd	Cricket	1	0	0	1	2	Third highest risk
Mittagong Tennis courts, Lake Alexander	Tennis	2	0	0	0	2	Third highest risk
Bowral Botanic Gardens	Various social gatherings and meetings	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
Bowral Memorial Hall	Various social gatherings and meetings	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
Bowral Pool		0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
Bundanoon Oval	Cricket	0	0	1	1	2	Non-BFPL
Bundanoon Pool	Swimming Club	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
Church Rd Sports Fields	Soccer	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
East Bowral Community Centre	Various social gatherings and meetings	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
Exeter Oval	Cricket	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL



Asset	Activity Type	Bushfir e Prone (0-2)	Route Options /Egress (0-2)	Distanc e to Safety (0-2)	Possibl e No's People Present	Tota I	Group
Lackey Park Sports fields	Cricket, Oz Tag	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
Loseby Park Youth Centre Hall	Various social gatherings and meetings	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
Mittagong Memorial Hall	Various social gatherings and meetings	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
Moss Vale Senior Citizens Hall	Various social gatherings and meetings	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
Moss Vale Tennis courts, Corlette Park	Tennis	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
Robertson Tennis courts, Hoddle St	Tennis	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
Robertson Community Centre, Caalong St	Various social gatherings and meetings	0	0	0	2	2	Non-BFPL
Bundanoon Tennis courts, Erith St	Tennis	0	0	0	1	1	Non-BFPL
Burrawang Sports fields, Church St	Cricket, Astronomic al Society, Archery, Hockey	0	0	0	1	1	Non-BFPL
Community Oval, Donkin Ave	Football	0	0	0	1	1	Non-BFPL
Hampden Park Sports Fields, Caalong St	Cricket, soccer	0	0	0	1	1	Non-BFPL
New Berrima Hall, Sydney St	Various social gatherings and meetings	0	0	0	1	1	Non-BFPL
Stephens Park, Derby St	Cricket	0	0	0	1	1	Non-BFPL



This table includes sites that are currently leased however these are excluded from closure as Council does not have operational control of these sites. The leased sites are included here for information in case the site is no longer under a lease arrangement.

Asset	Activity Type	Bushfir e Prone (0-2)	Route Options /Egress (0-2)	Distanc e to Safety (0-2)	Possibl e No's People Present	Tota I	Group
Sutton Forest Hall	Various social gatherings and meetings	0	0	0	1	1	Non-BFPL
Welby Community Hall, Currockbilly St	Various social gatherings and meetings	0	0	0	1	1	Non-BFPL
Burrawang Tennis courts, Church St	Tennis	0	0	0	0	0	Non-BFPL
David Woods Playing Field, Boardman Rd	Soccer	0	0	0	0	0	Non-BFPL
Exeter Tennis courts	Tennis	0	0	0	0	0	Non-BFPL
Loseby Park Tennis Courts	Tennis	0	0	0	0	0	Non-BFPL

Attachment 2 - Leased site

List of leased sites on bushfire prone land at the time of writing:

Bundanoon Pony Club Grounds

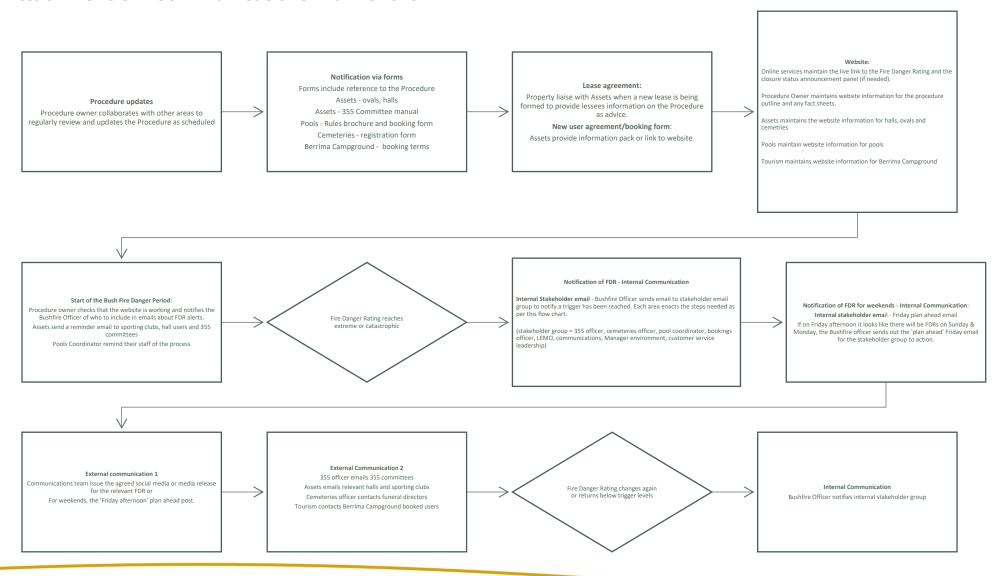
Welby Hockey Fields have a licence rather than a lease. The Licence includes a clause that any Council procedures relating to sporting fields are to be followed. Therefore, Welby Hockey fields is included in the list of sites that this Procedure applies to.

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Attachment 3 - Communications Flow Chart



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