

A new risk management process for bushfire risk management planning in NSW

Simon P Heemstra, NSW Rural Fire Service, Australia

Bush Fire Risk Management Planning is a strategic level process which provides greater protection for the community by setting the direction for all bush fire risk management programs undertaken within an area which are designed to bring the residual risk down to an acceptable level. In NSW, it is compulsory under section 52 of the Rural Fires Act 1997 that the Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMC) prepare a bush fire risk management plan and review the plan within each successive 5 years period. Due to recent changes to legislation and amalgamation of local government areas and BFMC, a review of the bush fire risk planning process has been undertaken and as a result of this review a new bush fire risk planning process has been established. Compared with the existing process, the new bush fire risk planning process has made a number of improvements. Firstly, it is an AS/NZS 4360 compliant process which enables bush fire risk planning to be carried out in a standard way. Secondly it comprises a more sophisticated risk analysis methodology for determining the level of risk for various types of assets. Thirdly, it allows risk treatments to be prioritized and registered in a systematic way. In addition, it allow the use of information science and GIS technology in collecting, storing, reporting and mapping the hazard or risk rating associated with an asset. This paper will explain the components of the new bush fire risk management process and its application in developing next generation bush fire risk management plans in NSW.

Facilitating increased community consciousness towards bushfires