

Future urban form and bushfire risk in South East Queensland

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A significant proportion of the future population of South East Queensland will live, work and recreate in the newly emerging, but environmentally vulnerable western corridor. Identified in the recently released regional plan, the western corridor occupies a belt which runs from Brisbane to Toowoomba. Whilst the rationale for the corridor is not difficult to contest in terms of countering development pressure at the Pacific Ocean coastline, the spatial capacity and topographical appropriateness of the corridor to accommodate future growth relative to environmental risk is called into question. The corridor is vulnerable to regular environmental traumas that threaten lives, damage buildings and infrastructure. Principal among these traumas is the bushfire hazard. This paper questions the adequacy of extant land and environmental management structures and exposes the vulnerability of new urban development within the corridor through an historical analysis of bushfire activity. The culmination of the paper's analysis is the encouragement of adaptation strategies which reduce environmental vulnerability. The consequences of such reach beyond the western corridor and have implications for other Australian metropolitan areas under pressure to accommodate significant demographic change in a land prone to bushfire hazard.

Managing fire in modified landscapes