



FIRE HAZARD ABATEMENT POLICY

TITLE	FIRE HAZARD ABATEMENT POLICY
RESPONSIBLE PERSON	MANAGER HEALTH AND COMPLIANCE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL	18 NOVEMBER 2014
RESOLUTION NO	150/2014
AMENDED ON	15 NOVEMBER 2024
RESOLUTION NO	174/2024
REVIEW DATE	15 NOVEMBER 2028

OBJECTIVE

This policy is to outline the methodology and assessment criteria for determining fire hazards within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1993. It will also provide direction to Council staff and landowners as to the measures that should be adopted to minimise the risk of the escape of a fire to an adjacent property.

INTENT

To reduce fire hazards in residential areas by requiring landowners to:

- Reduce fuel loads by removing understory vegetation, where possible; and
- Create adequate buffer distances to habitable buildings allowing sufficient time for the fire to be extinguished or the asset to be protected.

The policy is not intended to be used for:

- Prevention or management of bushfires;
- Dedicating fire protection zones around dwellings;
- Reducing bushfire attacked levels (BALs) for proposed or existing dwellings by requiring neighbouring property owners to clear vegetation; and
- Protection of non-habitable structures such as sheds or fences.

SCOPE

This policy focuses on smaller residential properties within the Sorell municipal area and does not apply to Crown land or land managed by Sustainable Timber Tasmania.

Enquiries or complaints about these properties will be directed to the relevant government agency as these agencies have more expertise in fire hazard assessment and access to sophisticated fire hazard risk assessment models.

Many Crown reserves also have significant environmental and cultural heritage values that need to be taken into consideration before fire hazard reduction can occur.

POLICY

Council has varied land ownership throughout the Sorell Municipal area including local parks and playgrounds, roads and roadside reservations, reserves and coastal reserves. It is committed to actively inspect and maintain those properties to minimise fire hazards. This will include the periodic slashing and mowing of Council land including parks and reserves and maintenance of fire breaks identified in fire management plans.

Council will also inspect private land to identify fire hazards with priority given to high-risk residential areas. Where necessary, abatement notices will be issued.

Complaints from members of the public about fire hazards will be recorded in Councils' customer request management system and investigated by the Councils' Compliance Officers.

Council's Compliance Officers will commence fire hazard inspections usually in late spring to early summer depending on the weather patterns and fuel load. Properties will be given between 7 and 21 days to comply with an abatement notice depending on the threat and when during the fire season the hazard is identified.

Generally, properties under 2000m² will usually be required to clear the whole of the property by cutting long grass or vegetation to a height of 75mm. Properties over 2000m² will typically require a minimum 4-metre wide fire break around the property boundaries depending on the slope of the land and fuel load. Vegetation removal does not include the removal of trees and care should be taken to preserve them.

All properties where abatement notices have been issued will be re-inspected to determine if the notice has been complied with and if not, the property owner will be notified that Council's fire abatement contractor will clear the property. The owner of the property will be sent an invoice for the fire hazard removal in accordance with Council's fees and charges schedule.

ROBERT HIGGINS

GENERAL MANAGER