



Summary for Consultation

What is the Bushfire Mitigation Landscape Strategy?

Fire is a part of our landscape and can't be avoided, but we can reduce our risk by taking some simple steps together.

Adelaide Hills Council has developed this draft strategy to help our community understand what we are doing about fire prevention in our landscape, as well as what you as a resident can do to prepare your own property.

We have engaged with many different community members, groups, and organizations so far. We are now looking for wider feedback from our community about what might be missing or need further explanation.

The three major aims of the strategy are:

- To have an informed, empowered and proactive community that effectively contributes to vegetation management.
- To bring together Council's operational plans and processes related to vegetation management and bushfire mitigation in one place, and to clarify our responsibilities.
- To ensure Council's approach is effective and expectations of both Council and community are realistic.

We have drafted four priorities which we would like your feedback on:

1. Strengthening partnerships with other agencies to foster a landscape scale approach to bushfire mitigation.
2. Improving education and providing clear direction and resources to the community around vegetation management for bushfire risk.
3. Using latest fire science approaches to assist in balancing bushfire mitigation with biodiversity.
4. Continuous improvement of Council's operational plans in line with best practice approaches and using a rigorous ongoing review process.

The strategy sets out Council's current programs and initiatives relating to each of these priorities, as well as providing further detail on what private landholders can do on their own property and where to find more information.

At the end of the strategy is a roadmap which captures future opportunities and suggestions for extending our current programs. These will be subject to available funding, and to appropriate partnership arrangements with other organisations including the SA Country Fire Service (CFS) and Department for Environment and Water (DEW).

Over the following pages we describe what you can expect in each section of the full Strategy.

<https://engage.ahc.sa.gov.au/bushfire-mitigation-landscape-strategy>

Share your feedback

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Section 3: Background and Purpose: Background and Purpose

This section explains why we need the strategy and sets out some key characteristics and considerations that are specific to the Adelaide Hills Council (AHC) area. It explores some key challenges around community, environment, infrastructure and education, and how those might be addressed. It also refers to the key areas of our Strategic Plan which the strategy will help to deliver.

In section 3.6, you will find an overview of our existing fire mitigation works programs which are related to vegetation and landscape management. Council owns around 5% of the total land within our area, but that 5% is still a very large geographical area to manage and we aim to use our existing resources in the most effective way possible.

Section 3.7 acknowledges that Traditional Owners have long held knowledge around fire in our landscape and explains that Council would like to explore this more in the future. We would like to ensure any cultural burning practices are led by members of the Kaurna and Peramangk nations and supported by AHC. This will require dedicated resources in order to be done in a meaningful way.

Section 4: Strengthening partnerships with other agencies (Strategic Priority 1)

In this section, you will find an overview of the different legislation related to fire mitigation. We have identified the most relevant sections of each piece of legislation to help provide a clearer picture.

We have also provided a breakdown of the relevant frameworks and committees within South Australia, including the Adelaide Mt Lofty Ranges (AMLR) Bushfire Management Committee and the State Bushfire Coordination Committee, and outlined how Council is involved.

This section outlines our involvement in the AMLR Cross-Council Bushfire Action Group, which is comprised of five councils within the Bushfire Management Area, and refers to the ways in which AHC will collaborate with neighbouring Councils where possible to achieve landscape scale results.

Section 5: Improving education and providing clear direction (Strategic Priority 2)

It is important to note that while Council has its own responsibilities for managing fire risk across the Hills, residents are also expected to be proactive in managing their own land. There are steps we can all take to mitigate the overall risks to our landscape, and those are set out in this section.

We have worked with a focus group of community members and key agencies to put together a set of tables outlining the responsibility of residents, Council and other agencies (including the SA Country Fire Service and Department of Water). This relates to four distinct land types:

- Private property
- Fire tracks
- Public parks and reserves
- Roadside verges



Section 7: Utilising latest fire science approaches (Strategic Priority 3)

There is a large and continuously growing body of research around fire science and ecology. In Australia, fire has always been part of the landscape and when it is understood and managed effectively, it provides benefits to both the natural environment and the people who live there.

This section of the strategy provides information about the ecological benefits of fire and highlights the importance of considering biodiversity in fire mitigation activities. In this section you will find details about the following:

- Cultural burning, hazard reduction and ecological burns (including the difference between these techniques)
- Understanding the impacts of climate change on fire behaviour and seasons, and how we can best manage this
- What available mapping technologies we can use to understand risk and inform our work
- How we can manage native vegetation effectively following significant fires

This section also describes key features of some best practice examples from interstate; including the Hotspots program in NSW and Bushfire Resilience Inc. in NSW; and outlines how these might be adapted for use in SA.

Section 8: Continuous improvement of Council's operational plans (Strategic Priority 4)

The final section provides an overview of the review process for this strategy, and for the associated operational plans. It sets out which Council staff will be responsible, and what will be incorporated into the review.

The formal review process will occur every four years to coincide with the review of AHC's Strategic Plan. The strategy will also be reviewed for general updates annually following the fire danger season, and operational plans will be adjusted as needed. When a significant fire event has occurred in the AHC area, key staff will also review the strategy to identify any areas that may need further consideration or prioritisation.

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