

Shared responsibility for different land classifications

This table comes from page 25 of the Draft Bushfire Landscape Mitigation Strategy which can be accessed via engage.ahc.sa.gov.au

This section explains what everyone's responsibilities are for different land classifications. At the end of each section are helpful resources for further information.



Responsibilities: Private Property Preparation	
Council responsibilities	Under the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (Section 105F), <i>Authorized officers, including certain Council staff, may request in writing that private landholders rectify issues on their properties relating to bushfire preparedness and prevention. Maximum penalty for failing to comply is \$10,000.</i> Council has a role to play in clearly informing residents of their obligations according to relevant legislation. Our public-facing resources will be updated regularly to reflect this.
Resident responsibilities	Under the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (Section 105F): <i>Owners of private land must take reasonable steps to prevent or inhibit the outbreak or spread of fire through the land.</i> This involves clearing a defensible space around your dwelling, clearing fine fuels in the lead up to fire season, thinning particularly dense vegetation that is likely to carry fire quickly. The most important factor in protecting a home is to appropriately manage vegetation within 20m of the building. See Department for Environment and Water - Fire prevention https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/native-vegetation/clearing/fire-prevention Residents may at times be requested to clear a fire break on their property, where fuel loads exceed safe thresholds. It's important to note that while fire breaks can slow or halt lower intensity fires, they don't offer protection against ember attack- so clearing a break as a standalone action is not enough to mitigate risk. You can find more information on our website at Bushfires and Fire Prevention https://www.ahc.sa.gov.au/services/waste-and-recycling/free-green-organics-drop-off-days
Other agencies (if relevant)	DEW delivers the Burning on Private Lands (BoPL) program, supporting public and private land managers to conduct prescribed burns on private properties identified as containing high fuel loads & providing strategic connectivity of other fuel reduced buffer zones at a landscape level. SA CFS is the lead agency when it comes to community education regarding bushfire mitigation.

Help: Private Property Preparation	
What Council is doing	Council is developing a series of case studies with photographic and visual elements to demonstrate good property preparation and share information on how this is achieved. This will cover a range of different property types. We work in partnership with the CFS wherever possible to deliver educational sessions and workshops- including “Bushfire Ready” (both online and in person), Firey Women, and targeted awareness campaigns. To assist with private property preparation, we offer up to 24 free green waste drop off days per annum. You can check dates on our website here Free Green Organics Drop Off Days https://www.ahc.sa.gov.au/services/waste-and-recycling/free-green-organics-drop-off-days
How Council can help	Our Regulatory Services team can provide advice on regulatory obligations and site-specific requirements as needed. For more information contact AHC on 8408 0400. Council also administers burning permits to help residents with the reduction of fuel loads on private properties. Strategic planting around homes and assets can be a great way to maintain biodiversity and help address fire risk. We have a Low Flammability Planting Guide that can be used to determine the best native species for your area. https://www.ahc.sa.gov.au/assets/downloads/environment/ENVIRONMENT-Low-Flammability-species_2020.pdf
Further information	For new homes and developments, the clearance of native vegetation may require approval from the Native Vegetation Council. Council approval may also be required for removal of trees with a circumference greater than 2m in some cases. If you are building or developing in the AHC, it is advisable to check with our Duty Planner before proceeding. Call AHC on 8408 0400 and ask to be put through. Property owners wanting more information about the BoPL program can contact DEW fire management staff following the links at www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/fire-management/contact-us Bushfire Resilience Inc. based in Victoria has a great selection of webinars and other resources about preparing private property. You can browse and watch them here Resource Hub - Bushfire Resilience Inc: https://bushfireresilience.org.au/resource-hub/ The ClimateWise communities website also has a range of very useful information about how residents can manage their vegetation effectively: https://climatewisecommunities.com.au/

Responsibilities: Fire Track Maintenance	
Council responsibilities	There are several different categories of fire tracks, with responsibility for their management falling to various organisations and land managers. While this is a complex space to manage, Council is committed to supporting the community in maintaining fire access tracks and will work closely with the CFS to ensure this is done.
Resident responsibilities	Where fire tracks traverse private land, Council does rely on landowners to maintain clear passage where possible, and to report any issues to Council. Council can provide assistance to maintain fire tracks on private property where the track is identified as high priority and the landowner is unable to manage without support.
Other agencies (if relevant)	CFS has its own Group Response Plans which contain information about fire tracks in each area. Any new tracks should complement those which already exist. ForestrySA maintains a network of fire tracks in forest reserves (plantation and native forest) under its jurisdiction. SA Water maintains a network of fire tracks in land under its jurisdiction (including reservoir reserves). DEW maintains a network of fire tracks in land under its jurisdiction (including Conservation Parks and National Parks). The removal of any native vegetation at a distance greater than 5m from fire tracks, is subject to approval through the Native Vegetation Council. This is regardless of who owns the land.

Help: Fire Track Maintenance	
What Council is doing	We are currently working with the support of the CFS to design an audit process for all fire tracks in the AHC district, and to determine how best to manage them.
How Council can help	If you do have a fire access track on your property and are unable to maintain it yourself, you can contact Council to notify us of maintenance required. We will program maintenance if the condition of the track warrants it. Contact AHC's Technical Officer, Parks & Reserves through council's Customer Contact Centre 8408 0400.
Further information	For clear detail on types of fire access tracks and how they are constructed, visit www.landscape.sa.gov.au/mr/publications/bushfire-prevention-constructing-fire-access-tracks You can also reflect to Section 5.4 of SAFECOM's fire track guidelines here https://safecom-files-v8.s3.amazonaws.com/current/docs/fire_breaks_and_fire_access_tracks_2005%20%281%29.pdf

Responsibilities: Public Parks and Reserves	
Council responsibilities	Under Section 105G of the Fire and Emergency Service Act 2005: <i>A council that manages land in a bushfire risk area must take appropriate steps to prevent and inhibit fires, and to minimize the risk to property and life.</i> In order to achieve this, AHC maintains fire breaks, fire access tracks and Asset Protection Zones in strategic areas across our district. Our Biodiversity team also undertakes control measures for woody weed infestations that increase fuel loads in public areas.
Resident responsibilities	A number of active Landcare groups assist Council with the management of natural area reserves through revegetation and weed control, as well as site monitoring which allows for early management interventions when issues arise.
Other agencies (if relevant)	DEW has Fire Management Plans for 15 reserves across the Mt Lofty Ranges, 10 of which are located within the Adelaide Hills Council LGA. The responsibility for these reserves rests with state government. See the Fire Management Plans here: https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/environment/docs/fire-management-plan-hills-face-zone-plan.pdf Local government has no authority to direct other government agencies to conduct any works on State Government or Federal Land. ForestrySA has Forest Management Plans for 19 forest reserves, including five (5) Native Forest Reserves, within the Adelaide Hills Council LGA. The responsibility for these reserves rests with state government. To see existing ForestrySA forest management plans, visit https://www.forestrysa.com.au/forest-management/conservation/native-forest-reserves/

Help: Public Parks and Reserves	
What Council is doing	According to AHC's Biodiversity Strategy, approximately fifty Council reserves and Crown land parcels in the AHC are managed for conservation. This involves active revegetation as well as threat abatement measures including pest plant management and prescribed burning. https://www.ahc.sa.gov.au/assets/downloads/council/Strategy/Biodiversity-Strategy-2019-24.pdf We are exploring opportunities for working with traditional owners to manage public land in accordance with First Nations cultural values and knowledge. We are also currently assessing opportunities to enhance management options for natural area reserves, through development of formal site management plans where possible.
How Council can help	AHC supports Landcare groups with equipment and material resources to conduct their on ground work. We can support initiatives to engage traditional owners from the Kurna and Peramangk Nations to participate in natural area management and potentially incorporate cultural burning practises into prescribed burning programs.
Further information	For details on involvement in Landcare groups, contact AHCBiodiversity@ahc.sa.gov.au To see existing National Parks Wildlife Service park management plans, visit:

	Management plans - National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/park-management/management-plans Department for Environment and Water - Park management plans https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/park-management/statewide-park-strategies/park-management-plans For details on weed control programs across the region, contact Hf.LandscapeBoard@sa.gov.au
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Responsibilities: Roadside Verge Management	
Council responsibilities	Council has a Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (RVMP) which has been endorsed by the Native Vegetation Council, and guides our work on roadsides. The AHC commitment to roadside vegetation is <i>to maintain road traffic safety within legislative parameters while retaining remnant roadside vegetation of high biodiversity value</i>. According to the SA Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (Section 105G): <i>A council that manages land in a bushfire risk area must take appropriate steps to prevent and inhibit fires, and to minimize the risk to property and life</i>. Council is responsible for less than 5% of roadsides in the AHC area. We do schedule works on a priority basis on these roadsides as outlined below. Whilst other Councils do maintain all verges in their district, AHC is in a unique position where it is not feasible for us to do this due to our topography and high levels of vegetation. Instead, we prioritise maintenance based on set criteria, and where possible identify opportunities for neighbouring Councils to assist with works along shared boundaries.
Resident responsibilities	All native vegetation is protected under the SA Native Vegetation Act 1999, and may not be pruned or removed without formal approval. Fines of up to \$5000 can apply. Therefore, any activity on a road verge undertaken by a resident requires permission from Council under Section 221 of the Local Government Act. Application forms are found here: Authorisation to Alter a Public Road • Adelaide Hills Council (ahc.sa.gov.au) Where verges have been identified as containing high biodiversity value, and are included on the Native Vegetation Marker Scheme, works may only be carried out by council or their approved contractors. Residents can contact council's Customer Contact Centre to request works as appropriate. Any work on roadside verges that are considered to be for amenity value or for general maintenance is the responsibility of the adjacent resident. Council is aware that there are community groups that have voluntarily formed to share resources and ensure fuel loads are reduced on adjacent roadsides prior to fire danger season. We are looking at opportunities to further showcase and support these initiatives.
Other agencies (if relevant)	Neighbouring Councils do exchange information on roads where boundaries are shared. We are continually looking at scheduled maintenance works on these sites and assessing how best to share resources and carry out works in a timely and effective manner. Under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 (Section 194), Landscape Boards are responsible for managing declared weeds on all roadsides regardless of who owns them. This includes those covered under the Native Vegetation Marker Scheme. DIT is responsible for maintaining their own roadside verges, but only to within 1.5m of the sealed road edge. The remainder of the verge is technically the responsibility of council, but we only carry out mitigation works on those deemed highest priority according to data from the Bushfire Management Area Plan.

Help: Roadside Verge Management	
What Council is doing	Council operates three programs to maintain road verges: Annual Roads and Reserves Maintenance Program (RRAMP); which is focussed on fire mitigation & road safety; the Roadside Vegetation Management Program (RVMP) which is focussed on biodiversity protection; and the woody weed control works program undertaken in council managed reserves set aside for conservation. Read more here: Roadside Vegetation https://www.ahc.sa.gov.au/environment/roadside-vegetation We have initiated a cross-council reference group with neighbouring Councils looking at best practise management for verges and public lands. According to roadside maintenance plans developed interstate, <i>supporting and promoting leave early messaging should be the key focus, as driving on any road during a bushfire is inherently dangerous.</i>⁵ AHC is committed to supporting the CFS to share this message in the lead up to and during fire danger season each year via our website, social media, community education workshops run in partnership with the CFS. Where significant regrowth of native vegetation occurs following a fire event, Council assesses the need for fuel hazard reduction on a site-by-site basis. To preserve local biodiversity, we will only undertake works where vegetation fuel thresholds exceed acceptable levels.
How Council can help	When elevated fuel loads exist, and warrant council action, we will mechanically slash or chemically spray identified fuel loads. Our approach is to prioritise verges that present the greatest fuel load risk to infrastructure and assets. Council will consider waiving the fee of any S221 application based on the nature of proposed works, or if it is proposed to establish revegetation with native species.
Further information	If you have specific questions around management of a verge adjacent your property, contact Council on 8408 0400. There is not enough evidence to suggest that roadside vegetation, and native vegetation in general, is exclusively responsible for increasing or decreasing the landscape bushfire risk to life and assets; as fire behaviour is also determined by topography and weather. (Resilient Hills & Coasts Bushfire and Biodiversity report Discussion and Recommendations p3) https://engage.ahc.sa.gov.au/88841/widgets/417182/documents/271149