

# Fire Abatement Policy

August 2016

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## OUR VISION

Living our potential.

## OUR VALUES

We value:

- . Community spirit
- . Effective customer service
- . Openness
- . Respectfulness
- . Innovation; and
- . Responsiveness

## POLICY

This policy aims to:

- . Demonstrate the Council's commitment to ensuring that concerns over fire hazards on land under its control in residential areas, or areas abutting residential land are abated;
- . Provide direction to all Council staff and elected members;
- . Improve land management by Owners/Occupiers prior to the fire season;
- . Support the outcomes of the Council's Strategic Plan, namely:
  - A sense of community;
  - Sustainable environment;
  - Organisational best practice.

## OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to state the Council's position in regard to dealing with fire abatement issues as they relate to the nuisance provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Fire hazard reduction is the lowering of the potential of a serious fire threat to a manageable level and timeframe within which a Fire Service could attend and contain the threat.

The Council does not provide a property inspection service, the Council responds to community concerns and investigates accordingly.

### *IMPACT*

The Council supports and assists the implementation of initiatives of the Tasmania Fire Service in the management of fire through the Community Fireguard Program and local Fire Management Plans.

Owners or occupiers of land in urban residential areas where a potential hazard is identified before or during the first week in December will be served with a Fire

Hazard Abatement Notice requiring the abatement of the Hazard within fourteen (14) days.

Owners or occupiers of land where a hazard is identified after the first week in December will be served with a Fire Hazard Abatement Notice requiring the removal of the hazard within seven (7) days.

Where a hazard has been identified, and a Fire Hazard Abatement Notice has been issued and not complied with, the Authorised Deposit Taking Institution (ADTI) means a body corporate granted the authority to carry on a banking business in terms of section 9 of the *Banking Act 1959* as amended).

Council will arrange for a contractor to undertake the work and charge the cost of the inspection and abatement works to the owner/occupier of the land.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Public Safety Officer is charged with ensuring that the Council's responsibilities are met on privately owned land.

Hazards fall into three main categories, these being:

- 1 Rural areas consisting of broad-acre grass, scrub and bushland.
- 2 Fringe areas where bush, scrub and grasslands adjoin residential areas.
- 3 Residential land with hazards consisting of grass, weeds, rubbish etc.

Each of these categories need to be assessed according to the threat that they pose to the community. As a general rule, category one hazards are best dealt with pursuant to the local fire authority's Fire Management Plan and may include fuel reduction burns carried out over a pre-determined cycle.

Category two hazards may be dealt with in the same way as category one. However it is important that a buffer area (fire break) be maintained between residential premises and bushland, etc.

Category three hazards are best dealt with by the removal of the combustible material.

The slope of the land and the type of vegetation should be individually analysed to assess the level of the abatement needed.

In attempting to reduce the threat of fire to the community it is not possible to simply rely upon the enforcement provision of legislation. Rather, the community needs to be educated and encouraged in adopting appropriate fire management practices in meeting their obligations as owners and occupiers of property.

The most effective means of controlling hazards is to ensure that potential hazards do not develop into serious threats.

## OUTCOMES

For undeveloped properties within town boundaries equal to or less than 1 hectare in size the Council will require owners/occupiers to cut or slash the block (excluding trees or shrubs) completely to a height of less than 10cm.

For undeveloped flat properties within town boundaries, greater than 1 hectare in size the Council will require owners/occupiers to cut or slash the block (excluding trees or shrubs) with a 15m perimeter cut to a height of less than 10cm.

The Council recognises that the slope or steepness of the property also needs to be taken into account when fire abatement matters are considered.

For undeveloped properties with a gentle to moderate slope within town boundaries greater than 1 hectare in size the Council will require owners/occupiers to cut or slash the block (excluding trees or shrubs) with a 20m perimeter cut to a height of less than 10cm.

For undeveloped properties with a moderate slope within town boundaries greater than 1 hectare in size the Council will require owners/occupiers to cut or slash the block (excluding trees or shrubs) with a 25m perimeter cut to a height of less than 10cm.

For undeveloped properties with a moderate to steep slope within town boundaries greater than 1 hectare in size the Council will require Owners/Occupiers to cut or slash the block (excluding trees or shrubs) with a 30m perimeter cut to a height of less than 10cm.

For undeveloped properties with a steep slope within town boundaries greater than 1 hectare in size the Council will require owners/occupiers to cut or slash the block (excluding trees or shrubs) with a 40m perimeter cut to a height of less than 10cm.

Where concerns are raised in the case of lots outside of the town boundary, properties will be assessed on an individual basis taking into account the location, geography and measures available to minimise the risk.

Sandra Ayton  
**GENERAL MANAGER**