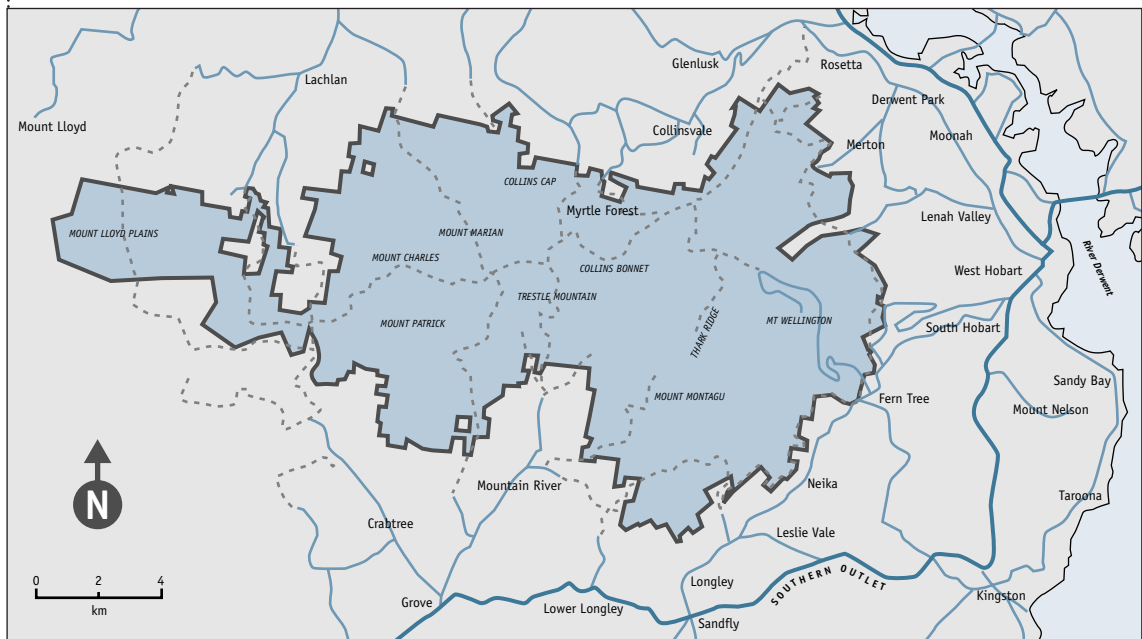


# Wellington Park Fire Information

**This information sheet** is aimed at landowners adjacent or near to Wellington Park, a natural bushland reserve covering over 18,000 ha. The information sheet provides an update on fire

management activities undertaken within the Park over the last twelve months, and factual information regarding property protection measures recommended on your land.

***Bushfires** are a natural component of the Park's environment. It is both undesirable and virtually impossible to exclude bushfires from the Park. However vegetation can be managed to ensure the protection of life and property, as well as for the protection of conservation and heritage values.*



## RESPONSIBLE FIRE MANAGEMENT

History has shown that, in Tasmania, people start most bushfires, either deliberately or by accident. All of the recent wildfires that have either ignited or moved in to Wellington Park have been caused by deliberate ignition.

Analysis has shown that escapes from fuel reduction or rubbish burning accounted for nearly 50% of fires in or near Wellington Park between 1993 and 1999. In several cases, land owners have been held accountable for damage to public and private assets due to negligence with fire use.

Each summer, the Tasmania Fire Service declares a Fire Permit Period. This means that land owners must have an inspection by the local TFS brigade prior to burning off and conditions may be placed on the use of fire. **This should not be seen as a hindrance to good fire management on your property.**

For further information regarding the use of outdoor fire, please refer to the *Using Fire Outdoors* brochure included with this information sheet.

The best approach to managing bushfire on your property is to:

- create a defensible space around buildings and other assets;
- ember proof buildings;
- ensure there is adequate access from the nearest public road to your buildings;
- be alert to reduce the risks of ignition;
- know where local water sources are (dams, pools, tanks, fire plugs) so that you can direct fire tankers to them;
- install a water source that is dedicated to fire fighting; and
- stay prepared all fire season.

## WELLINGTON PARK FIRE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Wellington Park Management Trust has these bushfire management goals:

- to protect life and property;
- to preserve the Park's natural and cultural values;
- to minimise the impacts of bushfire on drinking water quality;
- to reduce the potential for wildfire to move into or out of the Park; and
- to foster an integrated and co-ordinated approach to bushfire management.

The Trust and its land management agencies - the Parks and Wildlife Service, Glenorchy City Council, Hobart City Council and Hobart Water - have collaborated with the Tasmania Fire Service to develop the **Wellington Park Fire Management Strategy**.

Adopted in 2000, the Strategy covers a 15 year period. Each agency is responsible for implementing the recommendations relevant to its management area, however many actions relate to the whole of the Park. A committee of representatives from each agency, the Trust and the Tasmania Fire Service, meet twice yearly to report on progress and discuss plans for the future.

The Strategy makes recommendations relating to property both within and adjacent to the Park.

The Strategy has these objectives:

- the maintenance of a system of fire trails into and across the Park;
- the location and maintenance of defendable spaces around assets;
- the continued health and vigour of the natural plant and animal communities;
- to provide specifications for management burns; and
- to promote a close working relationship between management, the Tasmania Fire Service and Park neighbours.

The Strategy recommends that wildfires be suppressed as soon as possible. However the wild and remote nature of much of the Park means that, in difficult weather conditions, this may not be possible. Wildfires may not be contained before moving into or out of the Park and so it is imperative that Park managers and neighbouring property owners have adequate defences in place.

Management burns reduce fuel in designated 'compartments' or fire management units, bound by control lines which are usually tracks or trails. These compartments may become important lines of defence in the event of a bushfire. Management burns in compartments also allow for a mosaic of vegetation to persist at different ages and levels of fuel accumulation in the areas where they are carried out. Semi-rural areas in the north eastern part of the Park carry drier vegetation and, in this area, compartments are programmed for burning on a 10 - 15 year cycle. This regime assists with asset protection and promotes natural values including species diversity and wildlife habitat.

### FIRE MANAGEMENT WORKS

#### Completed 2002/2003

- a successful fuel management burn at the top of Montrose Trail
- fire trail upgrades completed on the East West, Water and Zig Zag trails
- fuel reduction works on the Main fire break
- major weed control works targeting Spanish Heath and Gorse along Curtis, O'Grady's, Middle Island and Inglewood fire breaks
- continued installation of fire trail signage
- additional gates installed to reduce fire trail damage by illegal vehicles
- partial waterhole upgrade along East West Trail
- partial replacement of the New Town Rivulet crossing on Lenah Valley Road
- continuation of the fire trail verge clearing program

#### Planned 2003/2004

- management burns in the Knights Creek area
- development of a fire trail maintenance program
- redesign and resurfacing of Grays Fire Trail
- adoption and implementation of new waterhole standards
- development of integrated weed management along transmission lines
- completion of the New Town Rivulet crossing
- development and maintenance of a spatial information database for use in bushfire planning

If you would like more information about these works, or if you have any comments regarding the Strategy, please contact the Trust's Fire Management Officer.

Copies of the strategy are available on the Trust's website, at [www.wellingtonpark.tas.gov.au](http://www.wellingtonpark.tas.gov.au)



Main fire break – fuel reduction works

## PROTECTING YOUR ASSETS

### 1. REDUCING IGNITIONS

The best way of reducing wildfires is to reduce the chance of ignition and report possible fires early so that they can be quickly contained, especially on high fire danger days.

The Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) introduces a Fire Permit Period every summer. The permit system ensures that burns are completed safely, during the correct weather conditions and with the correct equipment at the site. **The permit system does not make it harder for property owners to burn if they are planning their burns correctly.** It does, however, make it harder for burns to get out of control.

People have started 61% of the fires in or near Wellington Park between 1993 and 1999, either deliberately or accidentally through activities such as fuel reduction or rubbish burns. If you see someone burning off, check with the TFS to ensure that a permit has been issued. Notify the TFS if you have concerns.

The Fire Permit Period is now in effect and permits are required for all fires on private property except attended barbecues, campfires or incinerators. A fire permit is obtained by calling the TFS on 1800 000 699. There is no charge for a fire permit.

Remember that, year round, a permit is required to light any fire in Wellington Park, except at a few designated cooking-fire sites.

Property owners should be very alert on high fire danger days. Report any smoke to the TFS immediately. Keep an eye out for suspicious people and vehicles. Take down their details and registration plate numbers and forward the information to the Police.

### 2. ACCESS

Fire-fighters will try to attend your property during a bushfire. It is your responsibility to ensure that the property is as safe as possible for them. This means not only preparing the defensible spaces but also:

- ensuring your driveway is at least 4m wide, with no dense or overhanging vegetation along its sides;
- having a hard flat area near the buildings where tankers can turn around easily;
- having visible house numbers and street names; and
- erecting signs to your water points.

Please report blockages and damage on fire trails in and around the Park to the Trust or your local Council.

### 3. FUEL REDUCTION BURNING

Controlled burning can be used to control fuel levels and maintain healthy native vegetation. It can be cost-effective but there are several issues that must be considered.

A relatively high proportion of controlled burns, started by property owners for legitimate reasons, get out of control and become wildfires. Legal advice suggests that a person who lights a fire which gets out of control and damages other assets, could be found liable for that damage.

If an area is burnt too frequently, fire-adapted and flammable plant species will be promoted and the fire hazard may not be greatly reduced. In addition, weeds like gorse, which is highly flammable, may invade the area and the cost of control can be enormous.

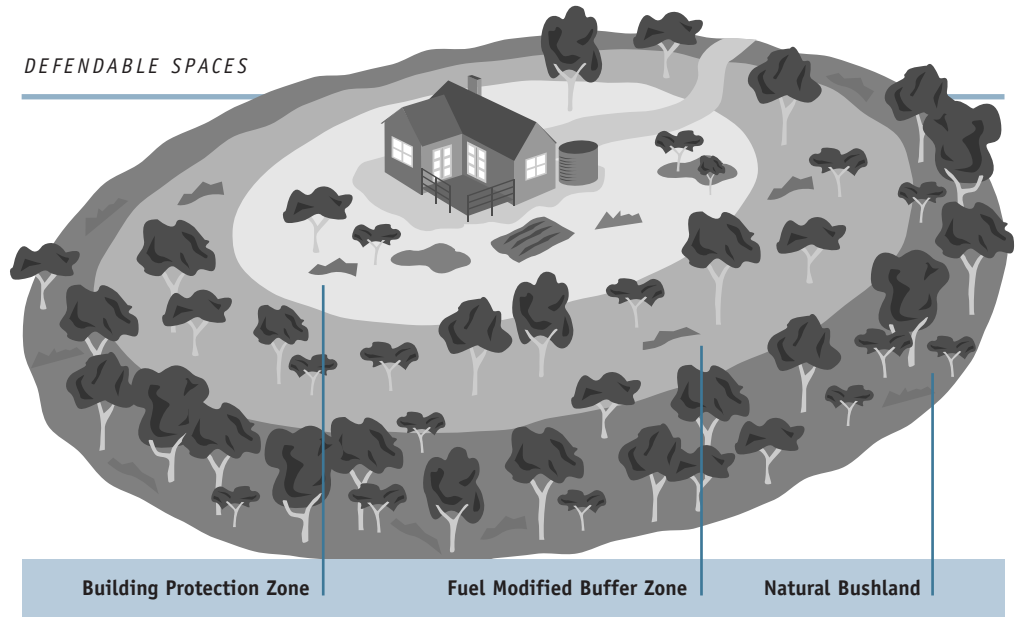
*So before you burn:*

- get the right advice (Councils, TFS); and
- get the right permits.



*Montrose Trail upgrade*

## DEFENDABLE SPACES



## 4. DEFENDABLE SPACES

Despite the efforts of the Tasmania Fire Service during bushfires, it is unlikely that there will be enough fire-fighters and tankers to attend every house during a serious bushfire event. You must be as self-reliant as possible.

**Bushfires need fuel.** A defendable space is a fuel-managed area around buildings and other assets that will cause a bushfire to lose speed and intensity as it approaches, providing buildings with flame and radiant heat protection, and allowing for easier control.

The Tasmania Fire Service recommends a two-zone defendable space around buildings. The zone closest to the building is the Building Protection Zone, where fuel levels are greatly reduced. The outer zone is the Fuel Modified Buffer Zone, where fuel levels are partially reduced. The width of each zone will depend on the slope and aspect (direction) of your property. See the *Will You Survive* brochure for more detailed information, available from the TFS or your council.

Where possible the **Building Protection Zone (BPZ)** should incorporate lawns, flowerbeds and vegetable gardens, driveways, paths and other paved areas, swimming pools and water tanks. Shrubs should be kept to a minimum and lawns should be kept watered and mown. Flammable material such as firewood should not be stored in this zone, and wind-blown debris like leaves and bark should be continually removed, including from roof gutters.

Isolated trees, if retained with minimal fuel underneath, will help protect buildings from embers and radiant heat.

The **Fuel Modified Buffer Zone (FMBZ)** should extend out from the BPZ. Fuels should be partially reduced. Some areas of ground vegetation and low shrubs should be slashed. Taller shrubs and trees should be selectively thinned out to form clumps rather than having continuous vegetation. FMBZ fuel levels can be reduced by occasional managed burns, however mechanical clearing and collection is usually adequate.

## CONTACTS

Reporting fires to the Tasmania Fire Service:

**000**

Tasmanian Fire Service Information:

**1800 000 699**

[www.fire.tas.gov.au](http://www.fire.tas.gov.au)

Reporting fire hazards:

**Contact your local Council**

Wellington Park Management Trust:

**6238 2176**

[www.wellingtonpark.tas.gov.au](http://www.wellingtonpark.tas.gov.au)

**email: [wellington@mailnet.hcc.tas.gov.au](mailto:wellington@mailnet.hcc.tas.gov.au)**

Wellington Park is managed co-operatively by:

