POTATO POINT VILLAGE FIRE PROTECTION PLAN

Your Fire Safety is Our concern but Your Responsibility



PREPARED BY: NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE AND POTATO POINT BRIGADE February 2016 The assistance of the Rural Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Corporation NSW and Eurobodalla Shire Council is acknowledged.

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1.0 Introduction

The Potato Point Village is surrounded by the Eurobodalla National Park and is at risk from fires from the north, south and west. Under extreme fire weather conditions, given there is forest country in these areas, the Village may be threatened.

Immediately south and west of the Village the Eurobodalla Shire Council controls a strip of land 20m wide at the rear of housing development. The Council also controls the area north of Riverview Street and the Ocean Foreshore Reserves. West of the Village, beyond the National Park, the land is privately owned or managed by the Forestry Corporation NSW. All these land owners have an obligation to control fire.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service has prepared a Fire Management Plan for the Eurobodalla National Park. In this Plan zones are identified to protect the Village. These zones however are not in themselves adequate to exclude all fire from the Village. The Village is made more vulnerable having only a single access by road and a single electricity supply line from the west. It is therefore necessary to have a Village Fire Protection Plan.

The objectives of the Potato Point Village Fire Protection Plan are:

- To establish a safe and effective fire response strategy;
- To establish a protocol for fire threat mitigation; and
- To protect the Potato Point Village from bush fire events through a joint fire management approach with the Local Community, Rural Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Corporation NSW and Eurobodalla Shire Council.

2.0 Fire History of the Potato Point Area

Whilst the Village itself has not experienced the devastation of a bush fire, it has been threatened on a number of occasions. Residents are very aware of the threat posed by fires and being cut off from external support.

3.0 What Assets are we trying to protect?

The Potato Point Village Protection Plan aims to protect the Village and its assets. Potato Point Village's assets fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Life
- Property
- Environment
- Economic loss
- Cultural / Historic Values
- Natural Values

3.1 Life

The protection of life is the most important and overriding consideration as injury or death can cause life long trauma for the survivors of a fire. Well prepared dwellings can directly contribute to the protection of people.

3.2 Property

This category includes any infrastructure that exists on the land (eg. dwellings, cars, sheds, power supplies etc.). Even a small, uncontrolled fire can cause a great deal of damage and destroy irreplaceable assets.

3.3 Economic Loss

The economic loss may be the direct result from death or injury or the loss of assets, which may enable a person or family to gain an income and/or sustain themselves.

3.4 Cultural/Historic Values

The Potato Point Village has a number of well-established gardens and a number of Norfolk Island pine trees that provide significant landmarks and add to the character of the Village. It is understood that Aboriginal middens are located in the vicinity of the Village. These sites are unmarked. Remains of a timber loading jetty can be seen on the headland.

3.5 Natural Values

The Natural Values of the area have been recognised with the inclusion of the surrounding country in the Eurobodalla National Park and special protection for the wetlands. A large colony of bandicoots is supported within the Village precinct. The Glossy Black Cockatoo, a vulnerable species, is known to visit the village.

Yellow tailed Black Cockatoos feed on the banksia trees in the Village. Rainbow Lorikeets, Galahs, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, King Parrots and Crimson Rosellas are also frequent visitors. Kangaroos, Wallabies and Emus wander the streets at times. Whales, Dolphins and Seals are frequently seen in the surrounding

waters. Fishing, diving and snorkelling are activities conducted in the adjacent Marine Park.

4.0 Land Tenure

The Potato Point Village comprises 172 building blocks. To date some 158 houses have been built in the Village, a large proportion of these are holiday homes.

A number of Public Reserves are located within and adjacent to the Village. The whole Village development is surrounded by the Eurobodalla National Park.

5.0 What Can We Do? - Fire Mitigation Planning

Effective fire planning involves both Agencies and Landowners working together on management objectives and then undertaking a set of strategies designed to achieve these objectives. *Fire management planning for the Potato Point area will put the village in the best possible position for protecting life and property while still enabling the community to enjoy the surrounding natural areas.*

A variety of fire management strategies have been developed for Potato Point Village including fuel reduction, fire trail establishment and maintenance, community education, development controls, Asset Protection Zones and Strategic Fire Advantage Zones in cooperative arrangements with National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Corporation NSW, Eurobodalla Shire Council and the Rural Fire Service.

Recent experiences have illustrated that early detection of wildfire is essential for fast response and success of direct attack. Fire detection is reliant on Forestry Corporation NSW Fire Towers, aerial searches after lightning, liaison with National Parks and Wildlife Service and response from the Local Brigades and the Community. Early detection and effective communication of information between Agencies is essential for a quick response.

5.1 Identification of Fire Risks and Advantages

So that fire risks and advantages can be identified the Rural Fire Service Customer Service Centre, Batemans Bay, has prepared three maps in standard Rural Fire Service format for the Potato Point Village.

Figure 1, titled "Bush Fire Survival Map" identifies zones of Fire, Radiant Heat and Ember Impact.

Figure 2, titled "Bush Fire Preparation Map" shows the Asset Protection Zones and Strategic Fire Advantage Zones adjacent to the Village and sets out a "Works Program" which details actions to be taken, targets and Agencies responsible.

<u>Figure 3</u>, is titled "Operational Brigade Map". This map shows Fire Trails, Water Points, Water Hydrants, Fire Boxes, Village Street layout, Neighbourhood Safer Place and Helipad locations.

Each Fire Box contains a standpipe, branch (nozzle), hydrant bar and three lengths of 38mm diameter hoses for use by trained persons.

Static Water Supply points have been identified in the Potato Point Brigade Area. Their locations are marked with reflective signs which display "SWS" on a white background.

Their locations are shown in Figure 4.

As the water in these locations is generally brackish, these sources should only be used during emergency situations to avoid salt damage to equipment.

5.2 Vegetation

Figure 2 shows that a mixture of banksias-, casuarinas- and varieties of eucalypt- trees border the north, south and western boundaries of the Village. The eastern side faces the sea and has the typical dune cover of banksias trees, saltbush, wattle, westringia and various grasses.

Such vegetation can support surface, shrub, bark and crown fires depending on environmental and physical conditions such as slope, aspect, temperature, humidity etc. The vegetation around the Village can thus be categorised as Grassy woodland, Dry sclerophyll forest (shrub/grass subformation) and Dry sclerophyll forest (shrub subformation).

5.3. Eurobodalla National Park Fire Management Plan

This plan establishes agreed fire management zones in and adjacent to the Potato Point Village, The zones allow for a means of fuel reduction by mechanical / manual / or hazard reduction burning in order to maintain manageable fuel levels. The plan also details the locations of access tracks and the standard to which these tracks are to be maintained. The objective of the Strategic Fire Advantage Zone (SFAZ) is to minimise the risk of bushfire damage to life and property.

5.4 Planning to Protect Dwellings

In combination with Strategic and Asset Protection Zones dwellings must be well prepared. New dwellings in bushfire prone land must comply with Australian Standard 3959-1999 when constructed. Residents of existing dwellings should take practical steps to improve the safety of their dwellings this includes the following:

- Clear gutters
- Ember-proof house and shed
- Ensure roofing is firmly fixed
- Install metal screens or shutters on existing windows
- Enclose under floor areas if practical or low to the ground
- Screen vents into the roof / floor space with fine wire mesh
- Vent LPG gas tanks away from the house.

Basic firefighting equipment should also be available and some residents may decide to maintain water tanks. Fire Authorities recommend that Residents prepare Bush Fire Survival Plans. The Rural Fire Service website, www.RFS.NSW.Gov.au, provides guide lines for the preparation of a Bush Fire Survival Plan.

Alternatively Brigade Officers can provide assistance in the preparation of a Plan when requested.

5.5 The Asset Protection Zones

The Asset Protection Zones(APZ) at Potato Point are made up of private land as well as Council Reserves and National Park. Asset Protection Zones surround assets and are managed to reduce bushfire fuels to a level that will minimize the impact of fire on the structure.

These zones incorporate both private and public land immediately adjacent to the Potato Point Village residential area, public utilities and individual dwellings. Figure 2 illustrates the boundary between fire management zones. The Asset Protection Zone includes the areas around all assets being protected within the Village and extends around three sides of the Village. The eastern side is on the sea front and is less vulnerable. The areas of vegetation adjoining structures require fuels levels to be reduced regularly by means of mechanical, hand removal and hazard reduction burning.

Desired Outcome for Potato Point Village Asset Protection Zone:

A zone which owner / occupiers are well informed of risks; assets are well constructed (For example in accordance with *Australian Standard AS 3959-1999*) and maintained. A prepared Asset Protection Zone provides effective protection from radiant heat damage to both assets and fire fighters in all but the most extreme wildfire events.

In effect this is a reduced fuel level zone, wild fires rarely spread within this zone. The Rural Fire Service Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code allows an absolute maximum distance of clearing of 50 metres based on factors such as environmental impact, slope of the terrain and vegetation type.

5.6. Strategic Fire Advantage Zones

The Eurobodalla National Park Fire Management Plan provides Strategic Fire Advantage Zones to west north and south of the Potato Point Village, see Figure 2. The Eurobodalla Bush Fire Risk Management Plan also identifies areas west of the Village as Strategic Fire Advantage Zones. In addition the Forestry Corporation NSW have a fuel reduction program in areas west of the Village.

Desired Outcome for Potato Point Village Strategic Zones:

A fuel reduced zone which is effective in the reduction of wild fire intensity and speed under extreme fire weather conditions and which reduces the risk of ember attack, reduces spot fire development and smoke nuisance.

The outer zone is a large area of land managed by both the Forestry Corporation and The National Parks and Wildlife Service to the west of the Village where fuel management for asset protection is a major consideration yet the protection of biodiversity is also important.

6.0 Fire Management Guidelines

6.1 Strategic Fire Advantage Zones

Responsibility for management of fuel in this zone rests with the owner including, National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Eurobodalla Shire Council. Prescribed burning is the most practical fuel management technique in Strategic Zones. These land management activities are supported by the Rural Fire Service [Potato Point Brigade]. Around Potato Point fuel management will be undertaken by mechanical, manual and prescribed burning to achieve reduced fuel levels, specifically raking, slashing, mowing, selective fine fuel removal, trail construction, and burning. The burning rotation frequency will depend upon the rate of fine fuel accumulation, the type of vegetation and weather conditions.

The Eurobodalla Bush Fire Management Committee has assessed these variables in the Bush Fire Risk Management Plan and has established the following Fire Thresholds for the various Vegetation Categories pertaining to Potato Point.

Vegetation formation	Minimum SFAZ threshold	Minimum LMZ threshold	Maximum threshold	Notes
Grassy woodland	5	8	40	Minimum interval of 10 years should apply in the southern Tablelands area. Occasional intervals greater than 15 years may be desirable.
Dry sclerophyll forest (shrub/grass subformation)	5	8	50	Occasional intervals greater than 25 years may be desirable
Dry sclerophyll forest (shrub/grass subformation)	7	10	30	Occasional intervals greater than 25 years may be desirable

Fire Thresholds for Vegetation Categories (Frequency in years)

The Bush Fire Risk Management Plan requires that the Land Management Agencies and the Fire Fighting Authorities responsible for the treatments identified include these treatments in their annual works programs.

6.2 Asset Protection Zones

Responsibility for management of fuel in this zone rests with the owner/occupier, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Eurobodalla Shire Council. A combination of mechanical, manual and prescribed burning is recommended as means of hazard reduction in this zone. Specifically raking, slashing, mowing, selective fine fuel removal, trail construction, planting fire resistant plants, well maintained lawns can act as fire breaks and burning beyond the Village limits are all techniques used to achieve the desired reduced fuel levels. Mechanical slashing around the perimeter of the village is generally expected to take place annually.

7.0 Fire Safety Plan

7.1 General

So that Life and Property in the Village can be safeguarded during an extreme fire event a Village Fire Protection Plan has been developed. The following elements make up this Fire Safety Plan component:

- Communications and Situation Control
- Safer Area
- Perimeter Protection with Static Equipment
- Mobile Response Unit
- Mobile Reserve Unit

7.2 Communications and Situation Control

When it becomes apparent that the Village will be under threat from a fire a Communication Centre will be set up in the Fire Station, the siren will be sounded and a vehicle will drive around the Village informing residents by public address system to implement the Residents Fire Safety Plan and trained Fire Fighters to report to the Fire Station. Due to its location the Fire Station may come under threat from the fire, when this occurs the Communication Centre will be relocated to the Neighbourhood Safer Place.

7.3 Neighbourhood Safer Place

This area is located on the corner of Bodalla Road and Long Point Street adjacent to the stairs providing access to the beach.

The risk associated with evacuation increase dramatically as a fire front approaches. It is recommended all people not physically or mentally prepared for fire fighting activities should find shelter at a neighbour's dwelling or move to the Neighbourhood Safer Place well ahead of the fire's arrival. Should upon arrival at the Neighbourhood Safer Place further assistance be required contact the Rural Fire Service person located there.

It should be noted that during a **CATASTROPHIC** fire event even a well prepared dwelling/ house/structure is not safe. Persons occupying such a place should evacuate to an emergency location such as the beach.

7.4 Perimeter Protection with Static Equipment

This part of the Plan provides for the placing of standpipes on a number of designated fire hydrants along Borang Street, Deraquin Street and Riverview Street. In addition hoses and branches will be provided at these locations for rapid deployment. It is intended that these hose lines be manned by residents under the direction of an appointed Fire Fighter who will be in radio contact with the local Situation Control [UHF Ch 13]. It must be understood that hose lines should be only run when really needed, as indiscriminate use will reduce water pressure and reserves.

7.5 Mobile Response Unit

The task assigned to this unit to put out spot fires in the Village reported to Situation Control. This Unit will have a crew of two trained fire fighters who are in constant contact with Situation Control.

7.6 Mobile Reserve Unit

The Mobile Reserve Unit will be crewed by trained fire fighters and will be held in reserve ready to assist in perimeter protection, spot fire control or any other task allocated to it by the Captain.

8.0 Residents Fire Safety Plan

It is recommended that Village Residents, once alerted to the development of an extreme fire threat to the Village, implement their Fire Survival Plan and take the following actions:

- 1. Close all windows and doors of houses, sheds, etc. and block spaces and gaps under doors.
- 2. Clear roof gutters, block down pipes, (with tennis balls, plastic coke bottles, towels etc), then fill the gutters with water.
- 3. Clear all inflammable materials from around buildings, eg. wood heaps, leaves, dry grass, door mats etc.
- 4. Dampen any mulched areas around buildings by hosing or rake away from buildings.
- 5. Fill all available containers with water and place around the outside of buildings.
- 6. Connect garden hoses to taps and organize other equipment (shovels, ladders, rakes etc) for possible use
- 7. Prepare for an electric power blackout: candles, torches matches etc.
- 8. Able-bodied residents who have decided to stay and defend your home must protect them-self as detailed in the Bush Fire Survival Plan guidelines
- 9. If well prepared consider opening your house to people that may seek refuge from camping areas or who may be physically or emotionally unable to cope on their own.
- 10. Anyone wishing to evacuate his or her home should do so early and take with them the items listed in their Bush Fire Survival Plan. If this is not possible you should go with these items to well prepared and resourced neighbour's house away from the bushland or the Neighbourhood Safer Place. Keep radios tuned to the ABC for more information relating to the situation.

It should be noted that experience has shown that property has a better chance of surviving when residents capable of fire fighting remain at the property. Young children and the elderly should go to safety prior to the fire this could include taking shelter with able bodied people in well-prepared houses more than 140 meters from bushland. Take woollen blankets, clothing food, water and medications, as detailed in your Bush Fire Survival Plan.

However during a **CATASTROPHIC** fire event even a well prepared dwelling/house/structure is not safe. Persons occupying such a place should evacuate to an emergency location such as the beach.

DO NOT USE TELEPHONES EXCEPT IN EXTREME EMERGENCY.

DO NOT USE ROADS AND KEEP THEM CLEAR AS SMOKE WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO SEE AND FIRE FIGHTING VEHICLES WILL NEED TO MOVE RAPIDLY TO ATTEND VARIOUS SITUATIONS IN THE VILLAGE.

DO NOT USE UHF RADIO FREQUENCIES.

Preparation efforts well in advance of a fire that will help include the following:

- Ember-proof the house and sheds i.e. seal all gaps
- Ensure roofing is firmly fixed
- Install metal screens or shutters on existing windows exposed to a hazard
- Enclose under floor areas if practical or low to the ground
- Screen vents into the roof / floor space with fine wire mesh
- Vent LPG gas tanks away from the house
- Install a rain water tanks and have a pump available

Appendix A

Brigade Captain's Checklist

(To be implemented by the Captain or if absent by The Senior Deputy Captain)

- 1. Following consultation with Firecom regarding the fire situation and agreement to implement the Fire Protection Village Plan the Captain will dispatch a vehicle with a Public Address System to alert the community and trained Fire Fighters not already at the Fire Station.
- 2. Following the return of the PA vehicle and the arrival of additional Fire Fighters, the Captain will appoint:
 - A Communications Officer
 - Crew Leader Perimeter Protection
 - Crew Leader Mobile Response Unit
 - Crew Leader Mobile Reserve Unit
- 3. The Captain will immediately provide an appropriate checklist to the personnel appointed.
- 4. The Captain will brief all Fire Fighters at the Fire Station and organise crews according to persons available and allocate equipment including radios.
- 5. The Captain will ascertain:
 - That effective communications have been established with units and Firecom
 - That portable pumps are in place and operational
- 6. Standpipes and static lines are in place
- 7. Ensure Neighbourhood Safer Place area and Helicopter landing area are kept clear
- 8. Assess traffic conditions in the Village
- 9. Assess Fire situation and available support
- 10. The Captain or delegate will update situation reports to Firecom.
- 11. Establish and adjust priorities as required

Appendix B

Communications Officer's Checklist

- The Communications Officer will establish radio contact by means of VHF and UHF with all local units and Firecom
- 2. The Communications Officer will also attend the mobile telephone
- 3. The Communications Officer shall maintain a log of all communications including telephone messages
- 4. The Communications Officer must keep the Captain informed of all developments without delay
- 5. The Communications Officer shall relay messages for the Captain
- 6. The Communications Officer shall relocate to the Neighbourhood Safer Place with all relevant equipment when instructed to do so by the Captain

Appendix C

Crew Leader Perimeter Protection - Checklist

- 1. Arrange for all equipment and crew to be allocated and positioned
- 2. Connect standpipes and hose lines, charge but do not run
- 3. Install portable pumps on Potato Creek, test run them and have them ready for hoses to be connected
- 4. Check Personal Protection Equipment of crew
- 5. Provide situation reports to Captain
- 6. Do not use hydrants unless instructed
- 7. Confirm local radio communications

Appendix D

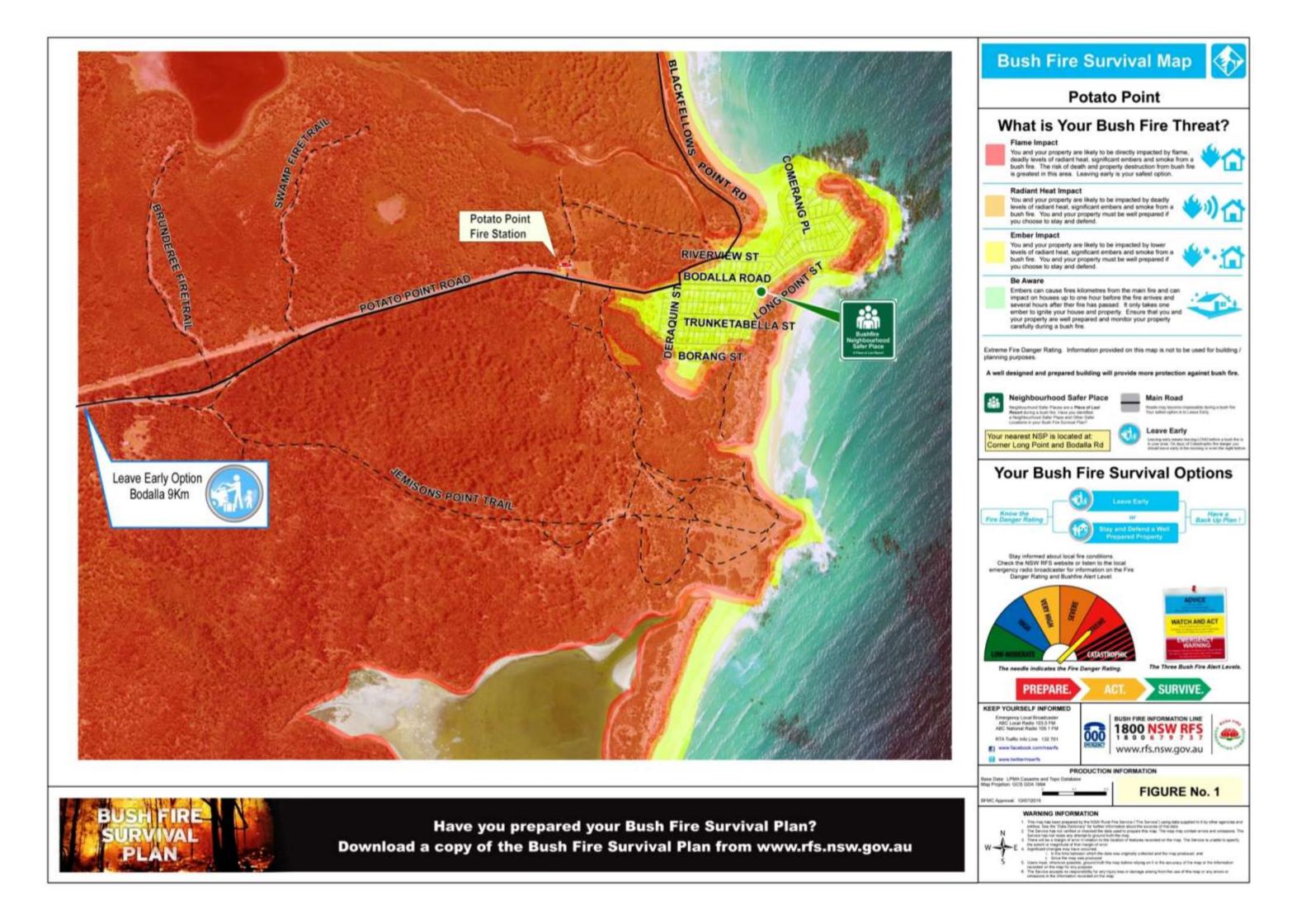
Crew Leader Mobile Response - Checklist

- 1. Check vehicle and pump to be fire ready
- 2. Check Personal Protection Equipment of crew
- 3. Check streets for obstructions and provide assistance where required
- 4. Ensure that fire hydrants are not blocked by vehicles
- 5. Provide situation reports to Captain
- 6. Await task allocation
- 7. Confirm local radio communications

Appendix E

Crew Leader Mobile Reserve - Checklist

- 1. Check vehicle and pump to ensure fire readiness
- 2. Check Personal Protection Equipment of crew
- 3. Assist Crew Leader Perimeter Protection with the deployment of crew and equipment
- 4. Provide situation reports to Captain
- 5. Await task allocation
- 6. Confirm local radio communications







Have You Prepared Your Bush Fire Survival Plan Download a copy at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

Bush Fire Preparation Map

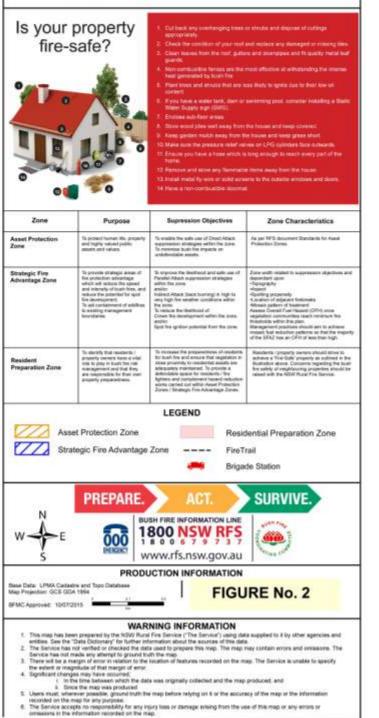


Potato Point

WORKS PROGRAM

np Ref No.	Strategy	Action	Responsible Agency	Target / Action Data (Year)	
1 Hazard Reduction		Hunitor and maintain mechanical works for Strategic Fire Advantage Zone (SFAZ) & Asset Protection Zone (APZ)	NPWS	on going	
2	Hazant Reduction	Monitor and maintain Strategic Fee Advantage Zone (SEAZ)	NPW5	on going	
3	Hazard Reduction	Mantain Fire Train	APW15	on going	
4	Hazard Reduction	Monitor and Maintain Asset Protection Zone (APZ)	Council	on going	
	Preparachrese	Preparation of bush Fire Survival Plans	Privalle	en gong	
	Hazard Reduction	Maintain resident preparation zone to APZ standard where possible	Private	en gang	
7	Hazard Reduction	Monitor NSP AP2	AFS	annually	

Be Aware



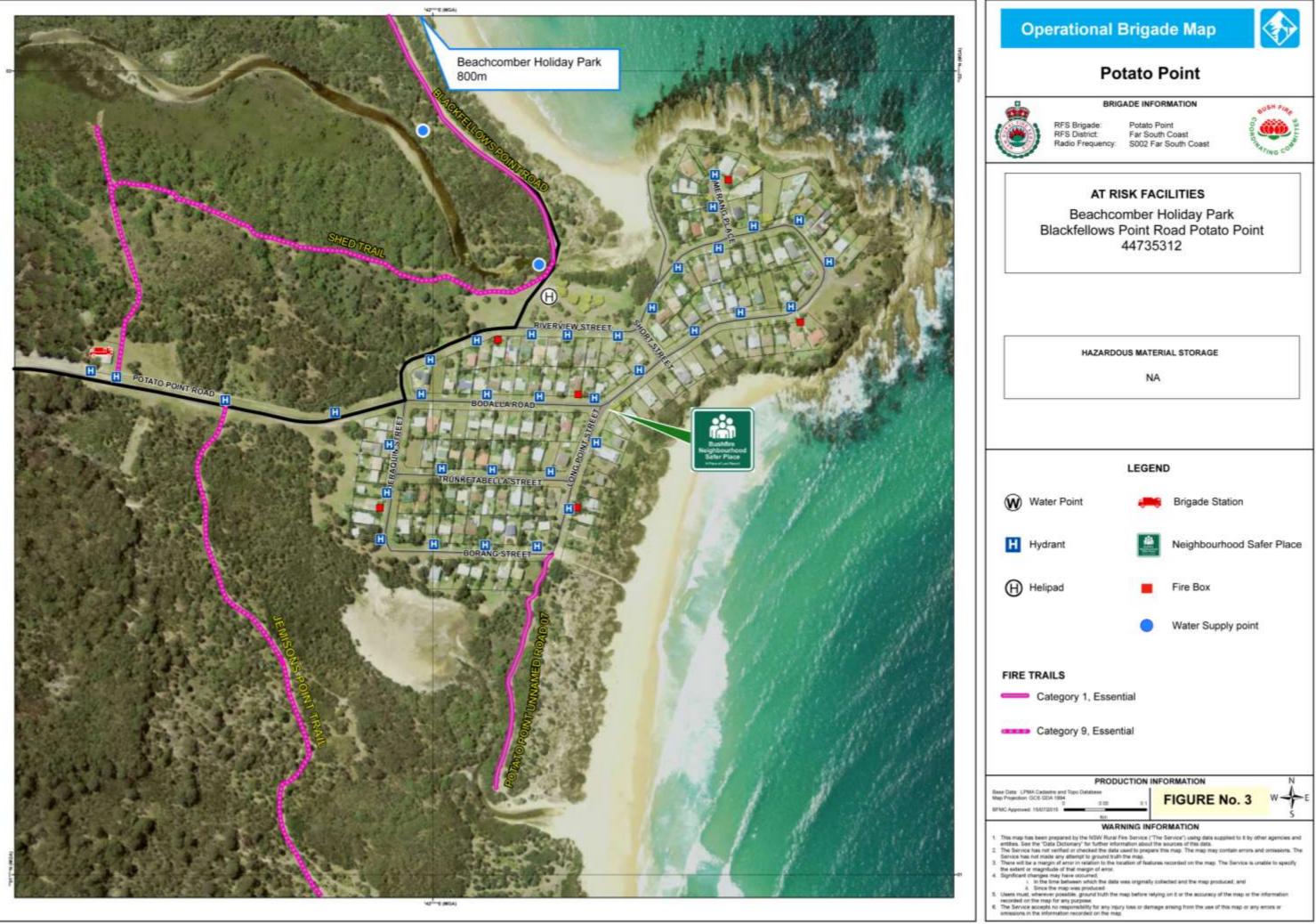


FIGURE 4

STATIC WATER SUPPLY POINTS



RFS Potato Point Boundary

Water Supply Point

ID COORDS		ORDS	Name	Name
1	415	035	Tuross Lake - Blackfellows Point	
2	375	043	Sunset Point	
3	358	018	Brian Kennedy - Dam	
4	418	055	Lake Tarourga North	Cat 9 Access only
5	401	990	Lake Brou Northwest	
6	376	017	Geoff Radcliffe - Hydrant	
7	397	014	Mains Water Tank - Hydrant	
8	403	020	Lake Brunderee	
9	421	017	Potato Point Troll Bridge	
10	419	019	Potato Point Creek	
11	395	050	Horse Island Bridge	