



Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**

# Neighbourhood Safer Places (Bushfire Places of Last Resort) Plan

June 2024 Version 2.1



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## Authorisation

This Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan (NSPP) has been produced by and with the authority of the Rural City of Wangaratta to support the general requirements of the *Emergency Management Act 2013* and the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* Section 50F - 50O.

The NSPP supports the Wangaratta Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) via the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMP) and is endorsed by the Chair of the Committee:

This Plan:

**Document Title:** Rural City of Wangaratta Neighbourhood Safer Places (Bushfire Places of Last Resort) Plan

**Version Number:** 2.1

**Date of Release:** June 2024

Was endorsed by the Wangaratta Municipal Fire Management Committee on

**Signed:**  **Date:** 17-06-24

**COMMANDER Scott Shenfield, CFA D23**  
**Chair - Wangaratta Fire Management Planning Committee**

## Version Control

Version Number	Date of issue	Author/s	
1.0	19 January 2010		Plan adopted
2.0	15 March 2022	Steven Tucker	Complete re-write
2.1	6 June 2024	Steven Tucker	Addition of Springhurst NSP

## 1. Introduction and Background

In its Interim Report, the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recommended that neighbourhood safer places, or ‘NSPs’, be identified and established to provide persons in bushfire affected areas with a place of last resort during a bushfire.<sup>1</sup>

In response to this recommendation, the Victorian Government introduced the *Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Act 2009 (Vic)* (‘ESLA Act’) which amends the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958 (Vic)* (‘CFA Act’) and the *Emergency Management Act 1986 (Vic)* (‘EM Act’). These amendments require the Country Fire Authority (‘CFA’) to certify NSPs against the CFA’s Fire Rating Criteria, and Victoria’s Councils to identify, designate, establish and maintain suitable places as NSPs in their municipal districts.

NSPs are not community fire refuges or emergency relief centres. NSPs are places of last resort during the passage of a bushfire and are intended to be used by persons whose primary bushfire plans have failed. NSPs are places of relative safety only. They do not guarantee the survival of those who assemble there. Furthermore, there may be serious risks to safety encountered in travelling, and seeking access, to NSPs during bushfire events. Depending on the direction of a particular fire, it may not be a safer place to assemble than other places within the municipal district.

NSPs will be assessed by the CFA as providing some protection from immediate risk of direct fire attack, but not necessarily from other risks, such as flying embers.

This Plan details Council’s methodology in identifying, designating, establishing, maintaining and decommissioning NSPs. The Council must consider each of the factors set out in this Plan. It should also consider other factors which are specific to the Council’s circumstances, including the resources available to the Council.

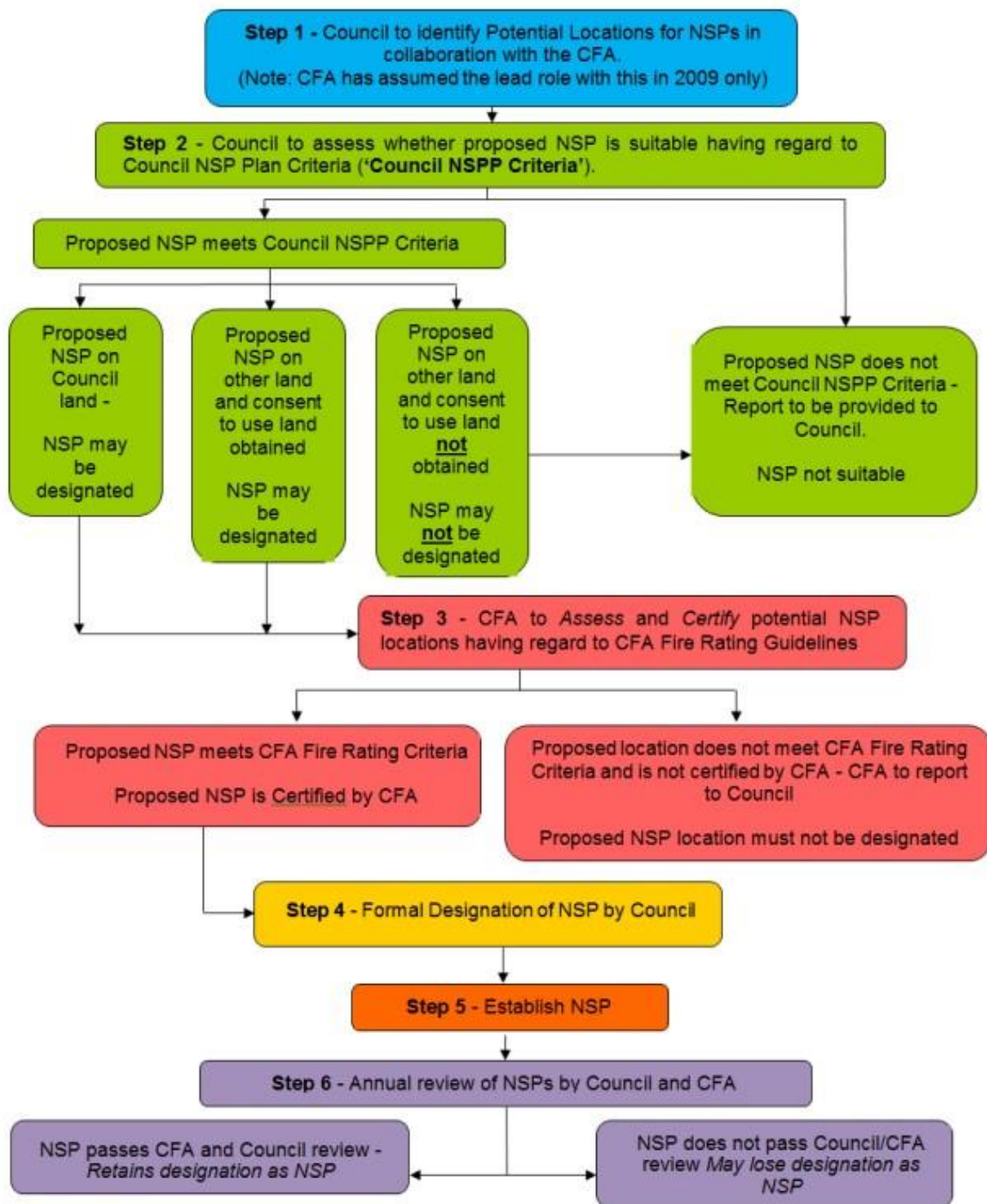
Once this Plan has been adopted, Council must make it, and any documents incorporated into it, available at the Council’s municipal offices for public inspection during normal office hours free of

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendation 8.5, 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Interim Report

charge under section 50F(4)(b) of the CFA Act. It must also be published on Council's website under section 50F(4)(a) of the CFA Act.

Figure 1: Overview of the process for establishing or maintaining NSPs



## 2. Steps for establishing NSPs

### 2.1 Identification of Potential NSP Locations

#### 2.1.1 Responsibility

Council is responsible for identifying potential places as NSPs within its municipal district. Section 50G of the CFA Act requires Council to identify potential NSP locations.

#### 2.1.2 Process

Councils identify potential additional places as NSPs by 30th June each year. This allows sufficient time for the following actions to be completed before the start of the upcoming fire season:

- CFA Certification - first assessment and certification of the potential NSP by the CFA;
- Council Designation - secondly, designation of the potential NSP location by the Council; and
- Establishment - thirdly, and subject to the outcome of the assessment and designation process, establishing the NSPs, including the erection of signage and other steps by Council.

The process of NSP identification is ongoing. Following each fire season, Council should assess whether any additional potentially suitable NSP locations can be identified within the municipal district, or if the current locations are still appropriate.

#### 2.1.3 Community Consultation

The community may be the 'driver' of an NSP in their community, however the CFA assessment and other factors may preclude the communities preferred site. Before Council chooses locations for assessment as an NSP, community meetings should take place to consult directly with communities regarding the need for an NSP in a given area.

Engaging the community via the consultation process will ensure the community understands the outcome of the assessment process to identify, designate, establish and maintain an NSP.

### 2.2 Factors that should be considered when identifying potential NSP locations

When identifying potential NSP locations, Council considers matters such as:

- the environment surrounding the potential NSP;



- what other uses are made of the potential NSP, and whether or not those uses could be inconsistent with its designation as an NSP;
- whether the land on which the potential NSP is located is Council-owned or non-Council owned land;
- whether there are clear means of access and egress to and from the potential NSP; and
- whether the potential NSP is in close proximity to population centres.

Council's identification of potential NSP locations is undertaken by the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer ('MFPO'), with input from other Council personnel (such as Community Development Officer's, Emergency Management Coordinator) as appropriate.

## 3. Council Assessment of NSPs following CFA Certification

### 3.1 Factors for consideration

Council assess potential NSPs in accordance with the factors outlined below to determine whether it is suitable to be designated as an NSP. Unless a potential NSP satisfies each of the criteria outlined below, it will not be designated by Council as an NSP.

Council's assessment of potential NSPs is conducted by the MFPO (see Appendix 1) with preliminary assessments to be provided to the MFMPC. The MFMPC will then conduct a risk assessment of the site using this plan.

#### 3.1.1 Consents and rights of access

There must be appropriate land access and tenure arrangements so that Council has the right to:

- Use the place and an NSP;
- access the site and surrounding areas for maintenance; and
- erect appropriate signage at the NSP.

If the potential NSP is on land owned or controlled by Council, appropriate rights of land access and tenure are unlikely to be an issue. However, Council will ensure that where Council land is leased or licensed to a third party, it must be possible to put in place appropriate arrangements on reasonably satisfactory and acceptable terms with the tenant or licensee permitting Council to use the land as a potential NSP. In taking these matters into account, Council considers what alternative uses may be made, whether temporarily or semi-permanently, of land under Council control or management. Such alternative uses may include, for example, farmers' markets, fetes and circuses.

If the potential NSP is on Crown land not owned or controlled by Council, then the consent of the Crown land manager is likely to be required. If the land has been leased or licensed to a third party, such as a caravan park operator, then the consent of the tenant or licensee to use the place as a potential NSP will also be required. In obtaining the consent of the relevant Crown land manager, it will be necessary to consider whether or not the Crown Grant or reservation authorises the place to be used as a potential NSP.

Where it is proposed that a place on privately owned land is to be used as an NSP, then the consent of the relevant landowner (and, where applicable, occupier) for the place to be designated and used as an NSP is required. If the landowner (or occupier) does not consent to the place being designated and used as an NSP on terms which are reasonably satisfactory and acceptable to Council, it must not be so designated and used.

Where a potential NSP is located on non-Council land, with the result that consent and rights of access need to be negotiated with the owner and (where necessary) occupier, Council officers responsible for negotiating such consent and rights of access will provide a draft form of consent to the owner/occupier for their consideration.

Any amendments to the form of consent which may be requested by the landowner or occupier would need to be thoroughly considered before they are agreed to by Council. If it is not possible or appropriate for Council to agree on amendments that may be requested to the consent document, then the proposed NSP should not be designated by Council.

### 3.1.2 Access and egress

Council must assess whether there is sufficient access to the potential NSP so as to allow:

- anticipated potential numbers to move to and from the location; and
- CFA and other emergency services to attend the place for asset and personal protection activities and operations.

Council must assess potential access and egress routes, bearing in mind the fact that NSPs are places of last resort.

As people may be seeking access to an NSP in a rushed or panicked state, a number of people could be seeking access in a relatively short time and visibility could be affected by smoke, easily navigable routes to and from an NSP are crucial.

In considering whether access and egress routes are adequate, consideration should be given to issues such as:

- the condition of the road surface;
- the proximity of the NSP to major roadways and population centres;
- the type and amount of vegetation along any access routes, and whether that vegetation could be affected by fire and pose a risk of harm to those seeking access to the potential NSP, or otherwise block access to the NSP;
- the capacity of access routes to accommodate potentially large numbers of vehicles, and to accommodate potential vehicle break-downs;
- parking at the place, taking into account that it may not be appropriate for cars to be parked within an open space NSP, or within the Buffer Zone (the distance from the nearest fire hazard) adjoining the NSP;
- any hazards that may exist for persons accessing the place by foot, including in the buffer zone;
- any relevant matter contained in Council's Road Management Plan prepared pursuant to the *Road Management Act 2004* (Vic); and
- any other matter considered relevant.

If appropriate and satisfactory access and egress routes are not available, then the proposed NSP should not be designated by Council.

### 3.1.3 Maintenance of potential NSP in accordance with CFA assessment criteria

Council must ensure that the potential NSP can be maintained in accordance with the criteria taken into account by the CFA in arriving at its fire rating assessment. NOTE: this may include works on surrounding properties.

If additional information is required from the CFA to understand the criteria they have considered in arriving at their fire rating assessment, Council should seek this information from the CFA. If necessary, the CFA may choose to undertake a further assessment to provide Council with additional information (e.g. ember attack).

### 3.1.4 Opening of the NSP – Open space

The Rural City of Wangaratta Municipal Area does not possess any 'open space' areas designated as NSP's.

### 3.1.5 Opening of the NSP – Buildings

There are five (5) Buildings identified at NSP's in the Rural City of Wangaratta Municipal Area. These are:

- Cheshunt Hall
- Eldorado Memorial Hall
- Glenrowan Recreation Reserve Community Centre
- Springhurst Community Hall, and
- Whitfield Recreation Reserve Sports Pavilion

There are arrangements in place for the opening of these buildings on Catastrophic FDR days or when fires are approaching (if safe to do so).

When alternative arrangements are to be made for the opening of a building as an NSP, Council is aware of its responsibilities and always considers the safety of its staff. Staff safety during the Fire Danger Period is the focus of the Rural City of Wangaratta Provision of Council Services on Fire Danger Rated Days Policy (2019).

Council considers:

- i. whether it will be possible or practicable to open the potential NSP or otherwise make it available for use on a 24 hour basis during specific times within the declared fire danger period;
- ii. the potential for damage to the place during times that it is open and available for use, but is not being used as an NSP;
- iii. the potential costs to Council associated with (i) and (ii) above; and

- iv. if buildings, NSPs need to be opened on Catastrophic Fire Danger days, when fire is approaching the NSP or when requested – are routes to the NSP suitable for travel on these days? Are there alternative opening options that may be local to the NSP?
- v. the possibility that a potential NSP could be used for unintended purposes.

### 3.1.6 Defendable Space

Council is not a fire agency – any determinations on ‘defendable space’ in association with an NSP should be made by CFA.

CFA have advised that there is no guarantee that fire fighting vehicles or personnel will attend an NSP, and that individuals who use NSPs are doing so at their own risk. There should be no expectation that fire or other emergency services personnel will attend an NSP during a bushfire.

Despite this, the potential NSP should be surrounded by sufficient open space to enable the CFA and other fire services to conduct asset protection and fire suppression operations around the place.

Any open space should be reasonably free of obstacles which could hinder fire suppression activities. Obstacles may include, amongst other things:

- fences;
- buildings and sheds;
- steep inclines in close proximity to the potential NSP;
- vegetation, particularly large trees;
- other land formations, including rocks, boulders or knolls which could substantially hinder fire suppression operations.

If necessary, advice should be sought from the CFA about the defendable space and any fire vehicle access requirements.

If vegetation removal is required to achieve defendable space, Council will consider whether or not approval to clear or disturb flora and/or fauna is required. Consideration of environmental legislation such as the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth) (‘EPBC Act’), Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic) (‘FFG Act’) or the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic) (‘PE Act’) will take place. If approval is required, then it must be obtained before the potential NSP location is designated. Ongoing maintenance arrangements will also be made with regard to the legislation outlined above.

If the proposed NSP:

1. does not have adequate defendable space around it; or
2. if approval to clear or disturb flora and/or fauna is required but cannot be obtained before the NSP is required to be established;
3. or cannot be obtained on reasonably satisfactory conditions or for any other reason;

then the location will not be designated as an NSP by Council.

### 3.1.7 Defendability of Buildings

Where NSPs are buildings, Council considers whether or not it is likely to be subject to risk from ember attack. To determine this, Council should liaise with CFA. Where required, a second assessment for ember attack will be requested to be undertaken by the CFA.

CFA is not required to assess the risk of ember attack to a building in undertaking the regular CFA (vegetation) fire rating assessment. If required, this assessment will have to be asked for directly on a case-by-case basis.

If there is an appreciable risk of the proposed NSP being compromised by ember attack which cannot be satisfactorily defended, then the building is unlikely to be suitable as an NSP and should not be designated by Council.

### 3.1.8 Signage

Council must assess whether it will be possible to have signage at the entry to, and in the vicinity of, the potential NSP which reflects the requirements and specifications set out in the Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) NSP Signage Guidelines.

Council must refer to those guidelines when considering whether or not appropriate signage can be erected. However as determined by the MFMPC and under guidance from the NSP Signage Guidelines, current signage will only be replaced at its 'end of life' and the new name 'Bushfire Place of Last Resort' for NSPs will only be applied when the legislation has changed. Currently, the CFA Act 1958 still refers to NSPs as Neighbourhood Safer Place, not Bushfire Places of Last Resort.

If signage must be placed on private land, then the consent of the landowner will be required.

### 3.1.9 Maintenance and maintainability

Council must assess whether ongoing maintenance of the proposed NSP and the surrounding area is practicable. This factor should be considered by the Council not only in relation to the suitability of a proposed NSP, but also as to the total number of proposed NSPs that can be reasonably maintained within the municipal district. This is needed to ensure that each location remains suitable for use as an NSP during each fire season.

Specifically, the place must be capable of being maintained so as to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council NSPP Criteria. It is Council policy that if it is not possible to maintain a potential NSP, then it must not be designated as such.

When assessing the maintainability of the potential NSP, both the NSP and the 'buffer zone' between surrounding properties or vegetation may require various maintenance activities to be undertaken on a periodic basis. The potential introduction of hazards into the buffer zone, such as structures, animals and vehicles, should be taken into account.

There may be cases where maintenance activities can only be undertaken by, or with the consent of, an adjoining landowner. This may, in turn, require written assurances from such landowners that the place, and areas surrounding it, will be maintained to a satisfactory level.

When assessing the maintainability of a potential NSP, Council must consider whether or not approval to clear or disturb flora and/or fauna could be required, whether under legislation such as the EPBC Act, FFG Act or the PE Act. If such approval is required, then it must be obtained before the potential NSP location is designated.

If the proposed NSP is not capable of being satisfactorily maintained, then it should not be designated by Council.

### **3.1.10 Separation and demarcation of an area**

There are currently no Wangaratta NSP's assigned to an open area.

Should future NSP's be located in open areas, there may be cases (such as recreational reserves) where it is necessary to clearly demarcate both, such as:

- the boundaries of the potential NSP; and
- the boundary of the buffer zone.

It may also be necessary to ensure that arrangements can be put in place to restrict access to the NSP to only those *people* seeking a place of last resort.

Subject to any specific advice from the CFA to the contrary, it must be possible to restrict access to and from both the potential NSP and, when necessary, the buffer zone, so as to ensure that structures, vehicles, animals and other objects, which could themselves present a fire hazard, are not allowed within the buffer zone. Consideration should therefore be given as to whether it is possible to erect barriers around, or otherwise restrict access to, the buffer zone.

If it is not possible to demarcate the area or restrict access to the potential NSP, or buffer zone, then it will not be designated as an NSP by Council.

### **3.1.11 Disabled access**

Council must consider whether there are clear means of access for disabled and mobility-impaired persons to the potential NSP, including vehicle access to drop-off people with disabilities?

### **3.1.12 Alternative uses of the potential NSP**

Council must consider what other uses may be made of the potential NSP which could impact upon its ability to properly function as an NSP. For example, if the place is commonly used for sporting/community events, or as a farmers market, then whether or not this could prevent, or seriously hinder, the use of the place as an NSP on days of increased fire danger needs to be assessed.

If the place is used for other uses which could compromise its ability to be used as an NSP, then it will not be designated by Council.

### **3.1.13 Communication with the community regarding potential NSPs**

Potential NSP locations will be discussed directly with the community during any community meetings as part of the NSP approval process. There should be good community awareness of the location of the place, together with the risks that relate to the use of the potential NSP, and the risks associated with travelling to the potential NSP in the event of a bushfire.

The NSP will be included in the Community Information Guide (CIG) for that locality, where one exists. Council also includes the location of NSPs on its website

<https://www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au/Residents/Preparing-for-an-emergency/Fire>

CFA also list NSP locations on their website <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/your-local-area-info-and-advice/neighbourhood-safer-places>

### **3.1.14 Public liability insurance**

As a matter of prudent risk management, Council should have regard to:

- any additional factors which are relevant to Council's maintenance of insurance coverage for legal claims relating to the identification, designation, establishment, maintenance and decommissioning of a place as an NSP, as well as travel to an NSP; and
- any statutory defences to claims.

## **3.2 Council assessment of potential NSPs**

A report prepared by the MFPO detailing whether or not the potential NSP meets the above criteria should be prepared and provided to the MFMPC. The MFMPC will advise the MEMPC of their recommendations.

The MFMPC must assess the risks of the potential NSP, taking into account the MFPO's report, and make a recommendation to Council as to whether or not to designate the potential NSP.

Council decide whether to adopt a given NSP through a formal determination.

## **3.3 Timing of assessments**

Any potential NSPs certified by the CFA should be assessed by Council no later than 30 June each year, so as to allow time for the places to be designated and established as NSPs by Council, and for any appropriate amendments to be made to the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) and Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP) prior to the commencement of the bushfire season.



This timing is obviously subject to the CFA assessing and certifying the potential NSP location in a timely manner.

## 4. CFA to Assess and Certify Potential NSP Locations

### 4.1 Assessing potential NSPs

Once considered under the Council's NSPP, the potential NSP will then be assessed by CFA. Under section 50G(5) of the CFA Act, CFA is responsible for assessing potential NSP locations against the CFA Fire Rating Guidelines<sup>2</sup>. This will be done by appropriately qualified and experienced CFA personnel.

Council is not responsible for the assessment and certification of potential NSPs by the CFA. The assessment system guidelines are located in Appendix 3.

### 4.2 Criteria

In assessing potential NSP locations which have been identified by Council; CFA must consider the criteria and other considerations as set out in the CFA's Fire Rating Guidelines as issued from time to time by the CFA.

The key matters to be considered by the CFA under the current CFA Fire Rating Criteria are:

#### 4.2.1 For Open Spaces

In open spaces:

- the appropriate separation distance between the outer edge of the potential NSP and the nearest fire hazard ('buffer zone')<sup>3</sup> should be at least 310 metres; or

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<sup>2</sup> The CFA Act refers to "Country Fire Authority Assessment Guidelines". For ease of reference in the context of this MNSP Plan, these guidelines are referred to as the CFA Fire Rating Guidelines.

<sup>3</sup> The CFA Guidelines refer to "separation distances". However, for ease of understanding, the term "Buffer Zone" is used throughout this MNSP Plan.

- an alternative buffer zone distance may be prescribed by the CFA, which will ensure that the maximum potential radiant heat impacting on the site is no more than 2kw/m<sup>2</sup>.

#### 4.2.2 For Buildings

For buildings:

- The buffer zone between the outer edge of the building and the nearest fire hazard should be at least 140 metres; or
- an alternative buffer zone distance may be prescribed by the CFA, which will ensure that the maximum potential radiant heat impacting on the building is no more than 10 kw/m<sup>2</sup>.

### 4.3 Timing

Following identification of a place which may be suitable as an NSP, the potential NSP is assessed by the CFA as soon as practicable.

### 4.4 Certification

Once the assessment of a potential NSP is completed by CFA, CFA will certify the potential NSP against the CFA Fire Rating Criteria. The CFA will provide a copy of the CFA certification in relation to a potential NSP to Council upon completion of certification, and a summary of the criteria and assumptions upon which the assessment is based.

Council should ensure that the boundaries of both the potential NSP as certified by the CFA, and any Buffer Zone surrounding it, are clearly defined.

*For reasons of community safety, it is a requirement of the CFA Act, and it is also Council policy, that only those places assessed and certified by the CFA may be considered for designation as NSPs by the Council. The Council must not designate a place as an NSP unless it has CFA certification.*

## **5. Council Designation of NSPs**

### **5.1 Council designation of NSPs**

Council must formally determine whether or not to designate a place as an NSP. Council should not designate a place as an NSP unless it is satisfied that the place is suitable, having regard to:

- the Council NSPP Criteria; and
- the report prepared by the MFMPCC in relation to the potential NSP.

An NSP may only be designated by a resolution of the Council.

### **5.2 Timing**

Following the preparation of an assessment of a potential NSP by the MFMPCC, Council should determine whether or not to designate a potential NSP location by no later than 31 July. This will enable any necessary establishment works to be undertaken.

### **5.3 Updates to CFA**

Following preparation of an assessment of the potential NSP, the MFPO must provide an updated list of all designated NSPs within the municipality to the CFA under section 50K of the CFA Act. This updated list must be provided by no later than 30 September in each year.

The updated list of all designated NSPs should also be provided to the CFA Manager Community Safety, North East (Victoria) Region.

## 6. Establishment and Maintenance of NSPs Following Designation

### 6.1 Establishing NSPs

Following designation, Council will establish all designated NSPs within the municipal district.

### 6.2 Considerations

To establish an NSP after its designation, Council must:

- erect appropriate signage (as detailed in the NSP Signage Guidelines 2015) at and near the NSP;
- undertake any necessary preparatory works, including the construction or establishment of any required infrastructure and the clearance of vegetation, so as to enable the area to be used as an NSP;
- publish the location of the NSP on the Council website;
- update Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan and Municipal Fire Prevention Plan to include the location of the NSP; and
- request CFA update the Community Information Guide (CIG) where one exists for that locality.

The MFPO must provide an up-to-date list of NSPs to CFA no later than 30 September on an annual basis under section 50K of the CFA Act.

Following designation, all designated NSPs within the municipality must be identified in:

- the MFMP, under section 55A(2) of the CFA Act; and
- the MEMP, under section 20(2) of the EM Act.

The location of all NSPs in the municipality are listed on RCoW's website at:

<https://www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au/Residents/Preparing-for-an-emergency/Fire> as well as the CFA website at: <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/your-local-area-info-and-advice/neighbourhood-safer-places>.

### 6.3 Timing

NSPs should be established no later than 30 October each year.

## 6.4 Maintenance of NSPs

NSPs within the municipality need to be maintained by Council. Maintenance activities must include vegetation management, hazardous tree removal and the maintenance of infrastructure required for the satisfactory functioning of the place as an NSP. If additional works have been required to establish the NSP, then those works should be subject to periodic review.

The fuel load in the vicinity of the NSP must not increase so as to affect the radiant heat assessment performed by the CFA.

Council must ensure that defensible spaces, the buffer zone and access and egress routes are appropriately maintained.

## 7. Annual Inspection of NSPs

### 7.1 Annual Review

Council must undertake an annual review of all designated NSPs within the municipality.

Council must also request the CFA to undertake an assessment against the CFA Fire Rating Criteria of each NSP within the municipality before 31 August annually.

These reviews are intended to ensure that each NSP remains suitable for use as an NSP during the up-coming fire season.

### 7.2 Considerations

NSPs should be assessed annually against the Council NSPP Criteria. The CFA will assess NSPs against the CFA Fire Rating Criteria.

If an NSP no longer meets:

- the CFA Fire Rating Criteria, then it must be decommissioned; and
- the Council NSPP Criteria, then Council must determine whether or not it wishes to address any of the identified non-compliances. If it does not, then the NSP must be decommissioned.

### 7.3 Timing

NSP's must be inspected prior to 31 August each year under section 50J of the *CFA Act 1958*.

## Appendix 1: Factors to Consider in Assessing Potential NSPs

Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council Comments	Satisfied? Yes / No
<b>Consents and rights of access</b> (see 3.1.1)	If the potential NSP is located on Council-owned land, can Council use the land as an NSP if required? Consider whether or not Council allows the land to be used for potentially inconsistent purposes, such as for farmers' markets, fetes, circuses etc.		
	If the potential NSP is on private land, or public land under the control of a Crown Land Manager (other than Council), can Council enter into arrangements which allow it to use the land as a potential NSP on reasonably satisfactory terms? Also consider whether Council has the right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• access the site and surrounding areas for maintenance; and</li> <li>• erect appropriate signage at the NSP.</li> </ul>		
<b>Access and egress</b> (see 3.1.2)	Do access routes to the potential NSP allow for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the anticipated potential number of people to move to and from the place; and</li> <li>• the CFA and other emergency services to attend the place for asset and personnel protection activities?</li> </ul>		



Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council Comments	Satisfied? Yes / No
	<p>Are access routes easily navigable, bearing in mind they could be affected by smoke? Consider the condition of the road surface, proximity to population centres and major roads, capacity of access routes to accommodate large numbers of vehicles, the availability of car parking at the place and any other relevant matters.</p>		
<p><b>Maintenance of NSP in accordance with CFA assessment criteria</b> (see 3.1.3)</p>	<p>Can Council maintain the potential NSP in accordance with the criteria taken into account by the CFA in arriving at its fire rating assessment?</p> <p><i>If the CFA have not provided sufficient information in relation to the criteria it has taken into account in arriving at its fire rating assessment, it may be necessary for Council to seek further information from the CFA.</i></p>		
<p><b>Opening of the NSP</b> (see sections 3.1.4 &amp; 3.1.5)</p>	<p>Will it be possible and practicable to make the potential NSP available for use on a 24 hour basis during the declared fire danger period? This is a particular issue where the potential NSP is a building.</p>		

Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council Comments	Satisfied? Yes / No
	Consider the potential for damage to the NSP which could result during times that it is open and available for use, but is not being used as an NSP.		
	What costs could be incurred by Council in making the potential NSP available on a 24 hour basis during the declared fire danger period? Are these costs reasonable, and capable of being borne by Council?		
	Could the potential NSP be used for an unintended purpose which could impact upon its use as an NSP (such as an emergency relief centre)?		
<b>Defendable space</b> (See 3.1.6)	Is the potential NSP surrounded by sufficient open space to enable the CFA to conduct asset protection and fire suppression operations? Is that open space reasonably free of obstacles (such as fences, buildings, steep gradients, vegetation and other land formations)?  <i>Council should seek CFA advice concerning the defendability of the potential NSP and the Buffer Zone, including in relation to fire vehicle access requirements.</i>		

Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council Comments	Satisfied? Yes / No
	Will approval be required under legislation such as the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i> , <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic)</i> and the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic)</i> ? Can such approval be obtained before the NSP is established?		
<b>Defendability of buildings</b> (See 3.1.7)	If the potential NSP is a building, has Council has sought expert advice from the CFA to determine whether the NSP is likely to be subject to risk from ember attack? If it is subject to such a risk, can that risk be safely managed?		
<b>Signage</b> (see 3.1.8)	Can appropriate signage be erected at the entry to the potential NSP, and in its vicinity?		
	If signage needs to be placed on private land, can Council obtained the consent of the relevant landowner to the erection of the signage?		
<b>Maintenance and maintainability</b> (see 3.1.9)	Is the potential NSP capable of being maintained to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council NSPP Criteria?		

Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council Comments	Satisfied? Yes / No
	Where relevant, consider whether adjoining landowners and occupiers will provide Council with an assurance that both the potential NSP and the Buffer Zone can be maintained to a satisfactory level.		
<b>Separation and demarcation of area</b> (see 3.1.10)	If the potential NSP is located in an open area, it is possible to demarcate the boundaries of both the potential NSP and the Buffer Zone? <i>Access to the potential NSP may need to be restricted to people only, and it may be necessary to erect barriers around the Buffer Zone.</i>		
<b>Disabled access</b> (see 3.1.11)	Are there are means of access for disabled and mobility-impaired persons to the potential NSP, including vehicle access to drop off people with disabilities?		
<b>Alternative uses of NSP</b> (see 3.1.12)	Can Council manage alternative uses which may be made of the potential NSP so as to ensure that those uses will not compromise the function of the place as a potential NSP?		

Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council Comments	Satisfied? Yes / No
<b>Community Communication</b> (see 3.1.13)	Will it be possible to ensure that there will be good community awareness of the location of the potential NSP, and the risks associated with using the potential NSP?		

## Appendix 2: List of NSPs in the Rural City of Wangaratta

Township	Location	Address
<b>Cheshunt</b>	Cheshunt Hall (Building)	Corner of King Valley Road & Upper King Valley Road, CHESHUNT
<b>Eldorado</b>	Eldorado Memorial Hall (Building)	Main Street (Opposite McKoy Street), ELDORADO
<b>Glenrowan</b>	Glenrowan Recreation Reserve Community Centre (Building)	Daniel Lane, GLENROWAN
<b>Springhurst</b>	Springhurst Community Hall (Building)	111 Anzac Road, SPRINGHURST
<b>Whitfield</b>	Whitfield Recreation Reserve Sports Pavilion (Building)	Mansfield – Whitfield Road, WHITFIELD

The above list was correct at time of printing.

Up to date lists of NSP's within the municipality can also be found at:

<https://www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au/Residents/Preparing-for-an-emergency/Fire>

## Appendix 3: NSP Online Business System

The secure NSP Online Business System is a combined web interface (Council) and an internal customer relationship management (CFA) system.

- Acts as a singular location for consistent Neighbourhood Safer Places information (excluding the Municipal Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan).
- A NSP communication tool – Sends automated notifications (Council, CFA, MAV, and other emergency services and government agencies).
- Applies prompts in order to achieve the timeframes set out in legislation (*CFA Act 1958*, Part IIIA, Section 50) for certain tasks and notifications; and completes the notifications CFA and Local Councils are legislated to provide within the end-to-end process.
- Ensures a consistent approach to how CFA provide assessment information to Councils state-wide.
- Provides real time data to enable prompt and accurate reporting to government departments and emergency services on various NSP topics as requested.

### System Roles and Responsibilities

#### Local Council

- Enter locations into the system automatically notifying CFA of sites that require CFA assessment or request reassessment.
- Notify CFA; Designation or non-designation of new sites, decommissioning of designated sites, and notifications as part of the Annual Review process on designated sites including request reassessments, decommission and confirmation of retaining designated NSPs.

#### CFA Regions

- Enter assessment details automatically notifying Councils of the assessment result.

#### MAV

- MAV confirm Councils have all steps completed in establishing the NSP and endorse consents.

## CFA GIS

- Confirm and update location details, align spatial data and notify emergency services of location details and spatial data of designated NSPs.

## CFA Headquarters (HQ)

- Provides overall system support, releases designated sites to the CFA website <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/your-local-area-info-and-advice/neighbourhood-safer-places> and notifies heads of emergency services and government agencies of the list of designated NSPs as per legislated requirements.

## System Roles and Responsibilities

- Prior to using the NSP Online Business System, Council must be registered on the system and provided with a unique log in code. Contact the CFA HQ Bushfire Shelter Options Coordinator or email [nsphq@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:nsphq@cfa.vic.gov.au).
- Link to NSP Online Business System web page:  
<http://www.saferplaces.cfa.vic.gov.au/cfa/authen/default.htm> Cut and paste URL into your web browser.

## Support Process

- For support and/or provision of system user guides, please contact a CFA HQ Bushfire Shelter Options Coordinator or email [nsphq@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:nsphq@cfa.vic.gov.au).
- In the body of the email, please ensure that you include your name, contact number and a description of the query.
- If it is a system issue, please provide the detail of what process you were actioning at the time and the text from any error message and/or screen shots.





Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**