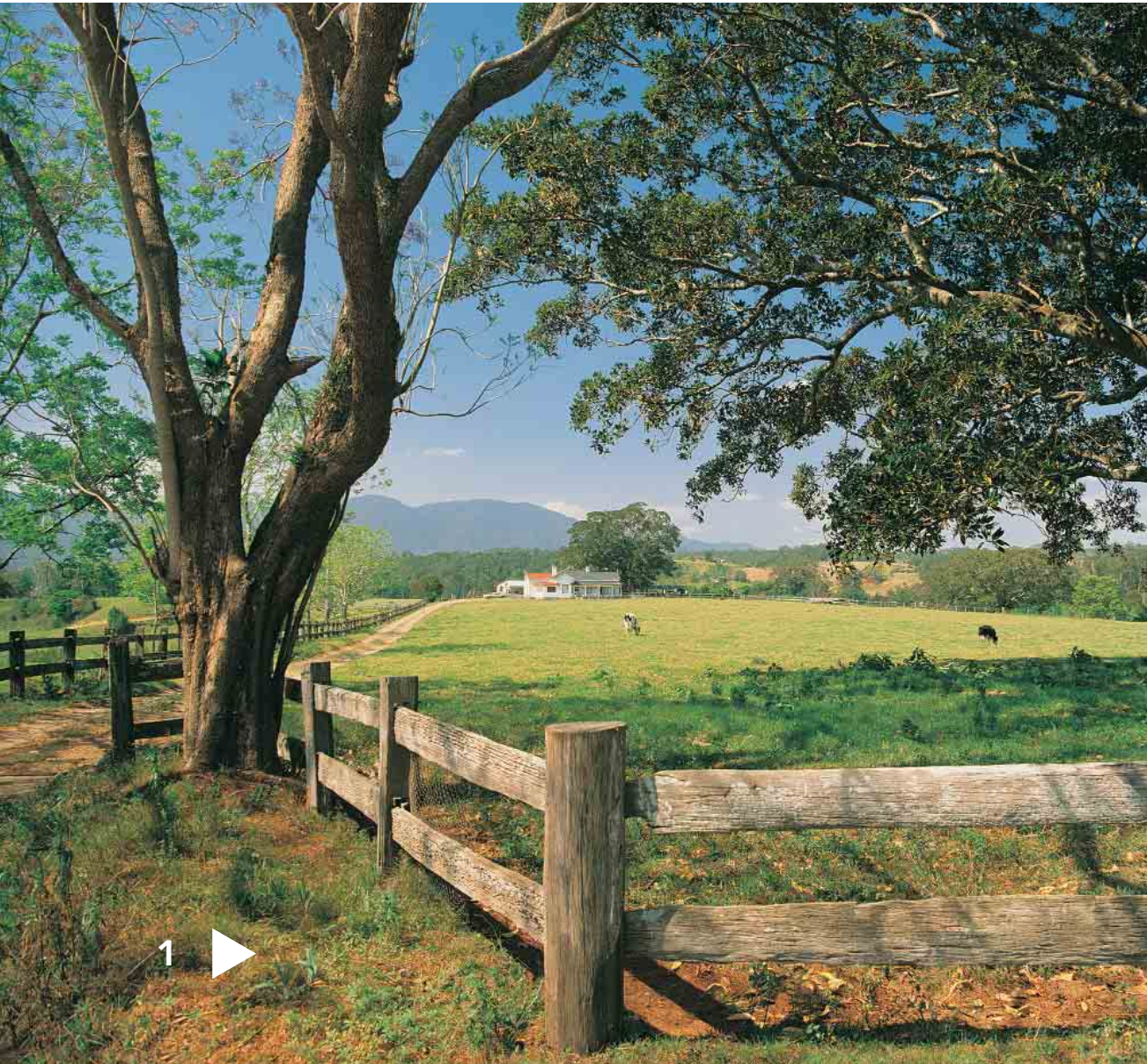




# Municipal Fire Prevention Planning Guidelines







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# Chairman's Introduction

Reducing the likelihood and consequence of fire and creating a safer community, is essential to the long term prosperity of Victoria.

The CFA is investing in Victoria's future by developing integrated fire management solutions that not only deliver a rapid and effective response to fire and other emergencies but offer pro-active fire prevention and mitigation programs.

However, the CFA recognises that effectively reducing community vulnerability to fire requires more than an inter-agency effort alone.

It requires the facilitation of more self reliant and self aware people who have the knowledge, motivation and capacity to manage the risks in their own communities as an active partner with fire management agencies.

These guidelines provide a simple, non prescriptive planning approach from which fire prevention and mitigation actions at municipal level can be developed and implemented, and which builds on the work already carried out by fire prevention committees across the state.

Although these guidelines have been developed following extensive testing in five Victorian municipalities, the CFA recognises that planning is a dynamic process that will need to be streamlined following initial implementation and feedback of Municipal Fire Prevention Plans.

Planning to improve the safety of Victorians is important to the CFA and I am confident that, with the support of local government, emergency services, other agencies and the broader community, we can create a safer community.

**Len Foster**  
Chairman, CFA



# 1. Creating a Safer Community

## Preventing fire through community risk management

The ultimate objective of fire prevention planning is to create a safer community.

Through a community risk management program, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) is investing heavily in new approaches and additional techniques for the prevention of fires.

Each municipality located within the country area of Victoria has a statutory responsibility under the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* (CFA Act 1958) to prepare and maintain a Municipal Fire Prevention Plan in accordance with the advice and recommendations of the Municipal Fire Prevention Committee (MFPC). Each Municipal Fire Prevention Plan must:

- Identify areas, buildings and land use in the municipal district which are at particular risk in case of fire;
- Specify how each risk is going to be treated; and
- Specify who is responsible for treating those risks.

*A Municipal Fire Prevention Plan must identify actions that create a safer community.*

*It is important for the community to share in the process of developing the plan.*

Municipal fire prevention planning should encourage partnerships between local government, other government and non-government agencies, the private sector and community groups.

Municipal Fire Prevention Plans will be audited by CFA to ensure they meet legislative requirements.

MFPCs are well placed to provide leadership to their communities in developing fire prevention and suppression strategies through their advice and recommendations to council in the preparation of its Municipal Fire Prevention Plan.



## 1. Creating a Safer Community

Municipalities across Victoria are diverse, both physically and socially. These guidelines are not a prescription to manage fire risks but describe:

- A planning process that can be tailored to individual municipalities and take account of their specific fire risks;
- The process for identifying priority risk environments as the basis for long, medium and short term strategy development;
- How municipalities can be involved in the plan development to ensure that responsibility is shared between fire and land management agencies, local interest groups and the wider community;
- How the level of detail within the plan can be related to the complexity of the fire risk;
- How the perceptions of the community about fire risks can be related to a technical evaluation to achieve strategies that are achievable, realistic and, most importantly, create a safer community; and
- How the level of active participation by the community in planning fire prevention and the consequent capacity for self reliance, either individually or as a group, will largely determine its capacity to survive a major emergency.





## 1. Creating a Safer Community

### Why manage fire risks?

Risk is inherent in everything that we do, whether it is driving to work, walking the dog, dealing with clients or deciding not to take any action at all.

Similarly, when it comes to fire, organisations and individuals manage the risk daily, sometimes consciously and sometimes without realising it.

Rarely have risk-based fire management solutions been developed in a strategic and systematic manner.

A safer community can be achieved only by identifying and managing the full range of fire risks which exist in a municipality.

These guidelines offer a systematic approach to managing the fire risks inherent in all communities, including those in domestic housing and industry, as well as wildfire.

### *The risk management approach*

Managing fire risk is about identifying and being prepared for what might happen.

It is about taking action to avoid or reduce the exposure of the community to fire, rather than reacting after a fire has occurred.

All stakeholders should be prepared to review and question the standard methods used for preventing fires, and determine whether new approaches should be examined.

In many situations, deciding to not try anything at all may mean taking the greatest risk.

### *The elements of risk*

The concept of risk has two elements; the likelihood of something happening and the consequences if it happens.

To effectively manage fire risk, municipalities, MFPCs and the community need to develop range of approaches to cope with different situations.

These approaches may include:

- Risk avoidance mechanisms (such as changing planning schemes);
- Modifying the risk (by measures such as using Building Regulations);
- Spreading the risk (such as education techniques which go beyond information-provision and directly affect personal behaviour); and
- Managing the environment (such as fuel reduction).



## 1. Creating a Safer Community

In some cases, the cost of measures to avoid or reduce risks to an acceptable level can be high without providing sufficient benefits.

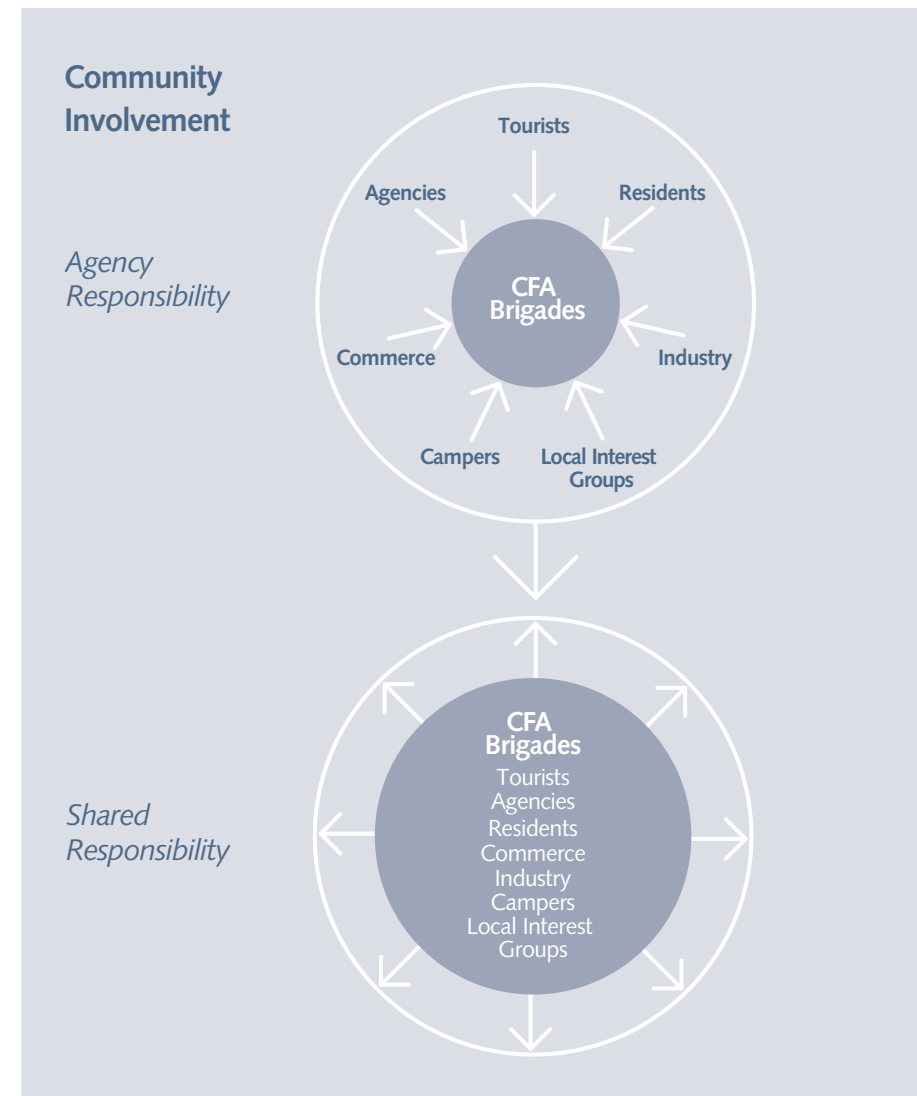
In other cases, the nature of the risk may warrant costly preventative measures because the acceptable level of fire risk is nil or extremely low.

To effectively manage fire risks, a balance must be struck between costs and benefits.

The decision must recognise that, for all practical purposes, a risk-free environment is impossible to achieve and factors which cannot be managed, such as lifestyle choices, may increase a person's vulnerability to fire.

For fire management activities to be really successful, the community needs to take some measure of responsibility.

Increased community involvement leads to a sharing of the responsibility for fire risk management and the development of fire safety solutions that the community accepts and implements.





## 1. Creating a Safer Community

### *Risk management applied*

Diagram (i) illustrates the process for developing a Fire Prevention Plan in your community.

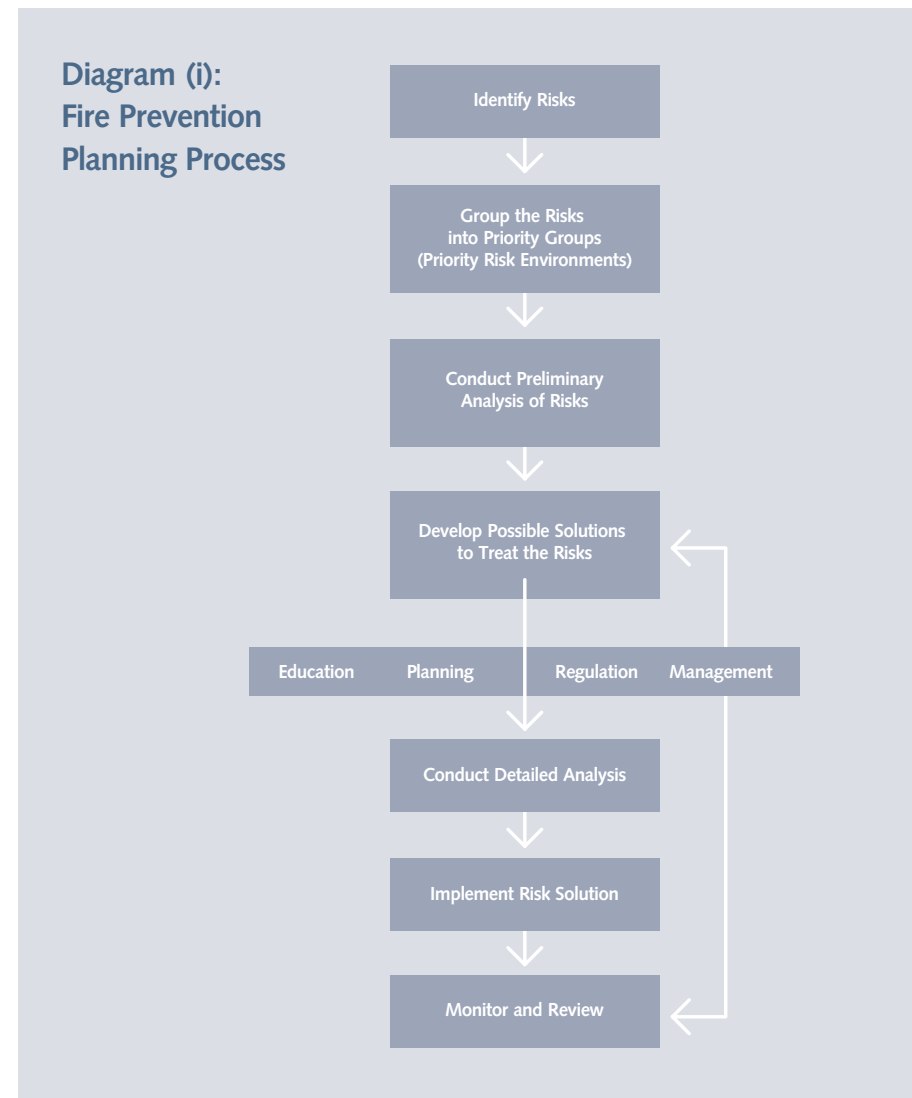
### **The purpose of these guidelines**

These guidelines provide a process by which a Municipal Fire Prevention Plan can be prepared for use throughout the year. The final result should be the inclusion of programs, which will service the people for whom they were developed. In communities across Victoria, the risk environments which are to be managed vary significantly.

In many areas, the community may not have a clear understanding of the consequences and impact of fire.

By contrast, there are vast areas where people have always had a good knowledge of fire prevention and where a consensus about what is needed to protect people and their assets already exists.

These guidelines have been prepared to assist both those who are well acquainted with uncontrolled fire as well as those who may need further assistance in meeting new challenges.







## 1. Creating a Safer Community

There are some communities where the processes suggested in these guidelines can be combined because well established risk management programs are already in place.

Even so, it is suggested that the Municipality consider checking that all the risks facing the community have strategies in place.

All municipalities should be encouraged to consider the widest possible range of solutions, and to use these guidelines to ensure that their Municipal Fire Prevention Plan is complete.





## 2. Developing a Fire Prevention Plan

### What is expected of a Fire Prevention Plan?

The CFA expects the outcomes of the planning process will be:

- A wider and ongoing involvement by individuals, community and interest groups in fire prevention;
- Fire prevention solutions that address the needs of communities across the municipality;
- Innovative fire prevention solutions that will be broadly accepted and implemented by the community;
- A fire prevention planning partnership between fire management agencies, the municipalities, community groups and the community;
- Financial and human resources for fire prevention that are better directed towards managing priority risks;
- Increased community knowledge about fire safety;
- Development and resourcing of management plans at local level in high risk areas; and
- A Fire Prevention Plan that will create a safer community and meet the technical fire prevention specifications of the CFA.





## 2. Developing a Fire Prevention Plan

### Preview of the plan

The purpose of this section is to provide an example of how the Fire Prevention Plan could look. Examples are included and they are reviewed in latter sections of the guidelines.

Parts of the examples will be highlighted to illustrate the relationship between the stage of the process, which is being considered at that time, and the planning document.

An example of the planning document begins with an examination of Residences, one of a number of Priority Risk Environments which can be used to build the plan.

In Diagram (ii), one approach and one program are identified to illustrate the principles of dealing with a Priority Risk Environment.

However, there may be more than one approach and program for any given Priority Risk Environment.

For each program, the organisation, department and position responsible for managing a particular risk and others involved are identified and timelines given.

### Diagram (ii): Example of a Plan

<i>Priority Risk Environment:</i>	Residential.
<i>Objective:</i>	To ensure that residents are informed about fire in the home and are equipped to deal with it.
<i>Approach:</i>	Educational.
<i>Program:</i>	Prepare a home fire safety kit and distribute to all residences in the municipality.
<i>Responsibility:</i>	MFPO.
<i>Others involved:</i>	CFA Manager Community Safety, Brigades, local newspapers, real estate agents and municipality.
<i>Target date:</i>	2004.





# 3. Complexity

## Keep it simple

The development of a Fire Prevention Plan in some municipalities may not change dramatically while it may require significant changes in others.

For example, municipalities in outer metropolitan Melbourne are likely to have a diverse range of risk environments and communities with little understanding of fire risks.

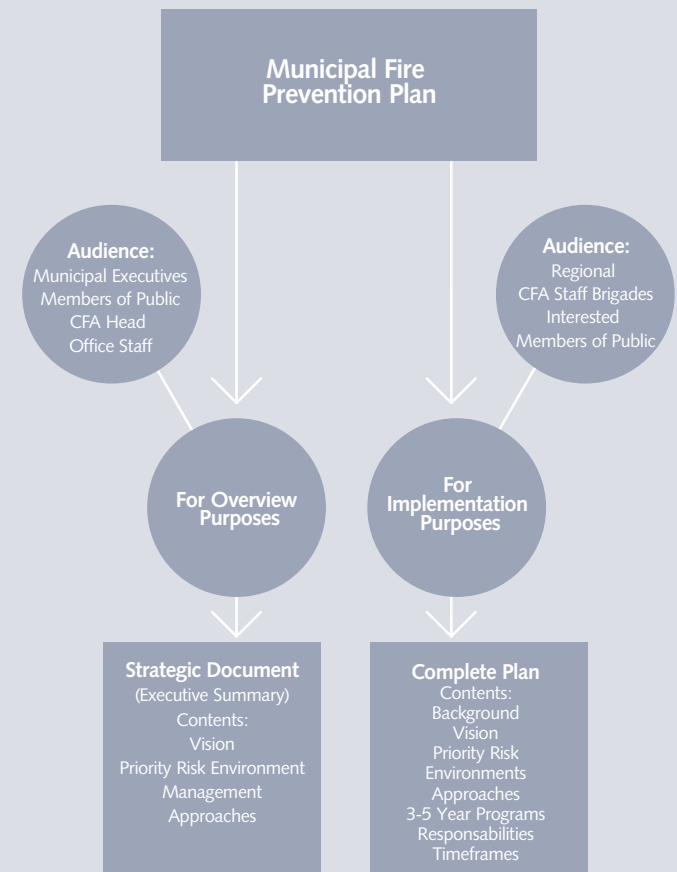
On the other hand, municipalities based in regional and rural Victoria may have fewer risk environments and are more likely to have an understanding of fire risks.

Thus, the complexity of the plan will be determined by:

- The number of priority risks identified;
- The fire management solutions for the identified risks; and
- Community understanding of fire risks in their area.

These guidelines have been developed to ensure comprehensive municipal fire prevention plans can be developed for all risk environments.

## Different products for different purposes





### 3. Complexity

#### Help is available

The Municipality has the overall responsibility to prepare and maintain a Municipal Fire Prevention Plan in accordance with the requirements of the CFA Act 1958. The Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO) as the Executive Officer of the MFPC may develop the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan on behalf of the municipality.

The CFA Manager Community Safety in your area can provide assistance with the planning process.

#### Facilitating the process

In some communities, fire management is a contentious topic. There may be conflicting views on how a risk should be managed. It is important that proposals are received and considered in an unbiased atmosphere.

In such situations, an independent facilitator may assist groups to formulate acceptable programs. The benefits of a facilitator include:

- They are neutral;
- They keep people focused on the issues;
- Everybody can put their view forward; and
- They can bring understanding to people who disagree.

If a facilitator is used, it is important that the person selected has a strong background in community facilitation and fire management.

#### Complexity of Fire Risks

- There are a diverse fire risk environments in different municipalities.
- These guidelines can be used to develop prevention strategies in all situations, whether the risk environments are complex or simple to identify.
- An independent facilitator may help to develop proposals where there are diverse community views about fire prevention.

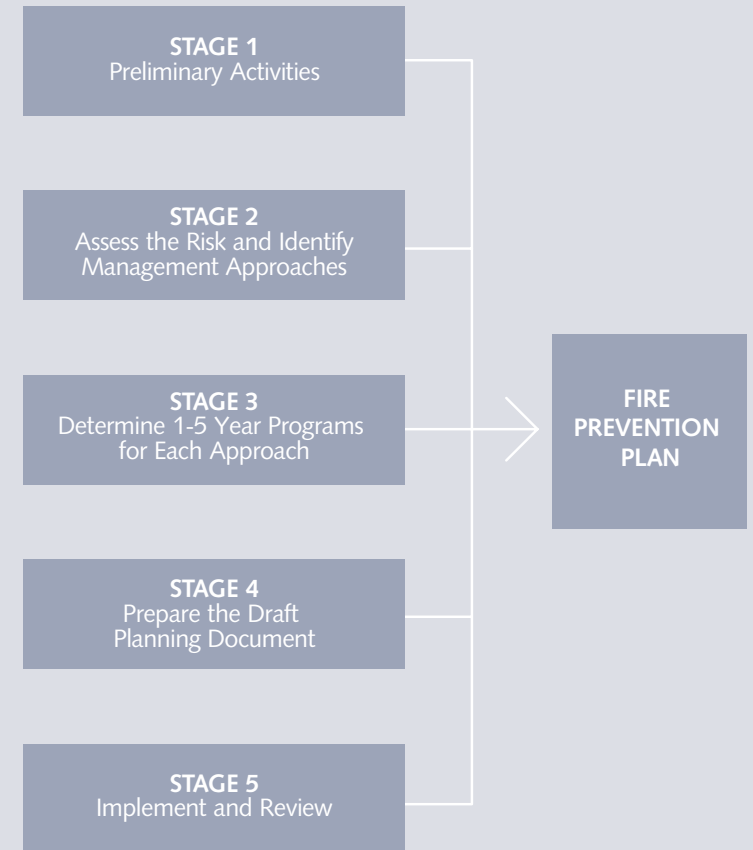


## 4. The Process

A five step process is proposed to assist in the development of the plan which can be tailored to meet the specific need of the municipality.

For instance, some steps may be combined or eliminated based on the complexity of the fire risks in the municipality.

**Diagram (iii):  
Planning Development Overview**







## 4. The Process

### Stage 1: Preliminary activities

In the first stage, key participants are identified, goals are clarified, administrative matters are agreed and preliminary information is collected.

At the same time the community is informed that a plan is being prepared and that opportunities will exist for participation.

#### *Gain commitment and select people*

Preparation and maintenance of the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan is the responsibility of the municipality. Each Municipal Fire Prevention Plan must be prepared in accordance with the advice and recommendations of the MFPC. However the municipality may require assistance from individuals and organisations not represented on the MFPC.

Consideration should be given to forming a steering committee or similar group who will assist with guiding the preparation of the plan.

To ensure the plan is developed within the broad objectives of the municipality, it is important to gain commitment from council executive and/or elected representatives.

### STAGE 1: Preliminary Activities

Gain Commitment and Select People

Agree to Administrative Details

Establish Vision and Goals

Collect Information

Consult With & Inform the Community



## 4. The Process

### *Agree to administrative details*

Prepare an outline detailing how the plan will be developed, including the steps involved, responsibilities and timeframes required to develop the plan and make funding arrangements.

### *Establish vision and goals*

The broad goals for the management of the fire risk should focus on the protection of life and property, as required by the CFA Act 1958.

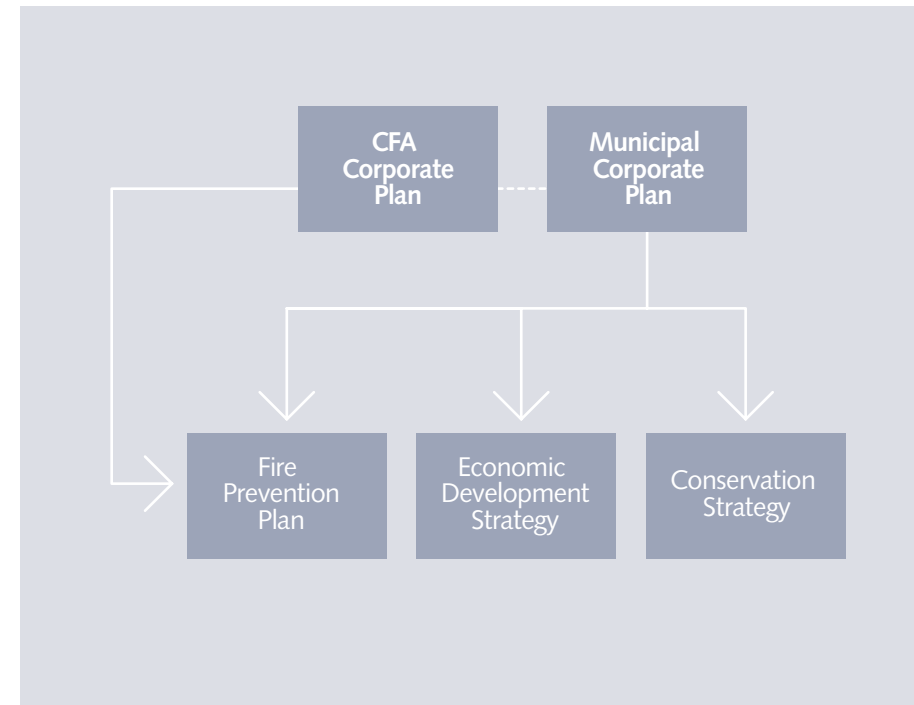
*EXAMPLE: The Shire will be a safer place in which to live, work and visit.*

*Through their active involvement and shaping of these plans, communities will share the responsibility for minimising the risk of fire and will be prepared for fire.*

Because municipalities also have other objectives, it is important that the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan sits comfortably and is integrated with the Shire's overall direction.

In fact, the municipality should be encouraged to integrate the fire plan with its corporate objectives so that the Municipal Corporate Plan has a statement about ensuring the safety of people who live work and visit there.

The Municipal Fire Prevention Plan should become an integrated document, which the municipality can implement with confidence and enthusiasm.





## 4. The Process

### *Collect information*

#### *(i) Municipal fire risk profile*

To ensure that the Fire Prevention Plan is developed from a solid data base, a profile of the municipality should be prepared.

Information can be collected from a wide range of sources relevant to each municipality. The following list, while not exhaustive, may provide a start.

- Municipal departments;
- Local fire brigades;
- Agencies such as Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria;
- Government departments such as the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and the Department of Infrastructure:
- Service, transportation and land management agencies;
- Electricity, water and gas distribution agencies; and
- Transport bodies such as rail companies and VicRoads which hold information about their assets and the fire policies with which they carry out their day-to-day operations.

#### **CHECKLIST:**

*Do you have the facts?*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire history            | <input type="checkbox"/> Risk maps           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Topographic maps        | <input type="checkbox"/> Demographics        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other relevant policies | <input type="checkbox"/> Brigade plans       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transport routes        | <input type="checkbox"/> Land status         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Statistics              | <input type="checkbox"/> Communities at risk |





## 4. The Process

### *(ii) Links with other policies and strategies*

Municipal councils deliver a wide range of services and their policies may impinge on other service providers, including organisations involved in fire prevention.

Council and other government policies need to be considered during the plan development process to identify areas of possible conflict.

State and Federal policies impact on municipalities and regional issues may also affect the way the strategy is prepared to minimise inconsistencies at municipal borders.

### *Consult with and inform the community*

Community involvement in planning to minimise the risk of fire is a vitally important part of creating a comprehensive strategy for several reasons:

- The community will have ownership of the strategies and is more likely to participate in implementing the outcomes which are likely to affect them;
- Planning with the community will encourage and motivate them to accept responsibility for fire management rather than absolving the community by planning for them; and

### **CHECKLIST:**

*Have you checked other policies and strategies?*

- Emergency management plan
- Roadside strategy
- Planning scheme policies and provisions
- Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988
- Municipal conservation strategy
- Building regulations
- Guidelines (VicRoads, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Planning etc)



## 4. The Process

- A balance between the community's view of risk and the agencies' view of risk can be addressed leading to strategies that are more likely to match community values as well as meeting the technical specifications of the authorities/agencies.

There is no one correct way to consult with the community and the community itself will determine the nature of the consultative process.

An open meeting publicised through the media and inviting attendance is one method. Notices sent to residents and requesting answers to specific questions about proposals may elicit input from many sectors of the community.

It is a good idea to make a verbal invitation to become involved, followed up in writing.

It may be appropriate to send out regular briefing notes or information bulletins to a mailing list of key stakeholders.

This list would include relevant officers of the municipality, local councillors, public agencies, the presidents of local organisations, service bodies, local media, teachers and other educators, and community groups.

### CHECKLIST:

#### *Stage 1*

- Are key people committed?
- Do they understand what happens and when?
- Do you know what you are trying to achieve?
- Do you have the facts?
- Is your community prepared to assist?



## 4. The Process

### Stage 2: Assess the risks and identify management approaches

Stage 2 involves consideration of strategic long term issues. At a later stage in the planning process these will be developed into specific programs.

In Stage 2, Priority Risk Environments are identified. For each risk environment a long term objective should be agreed to, and management approaches determined.

At this stage, broad non-specific and long term issues are considered. At a later stage in the process, these will be turned into specific programs.

### STAGE 2: Assess the risk and identify management approaches

Identify priority risk environments

Perceived risks and technical risks

Specify objectives

Identify management approaches



## 4. The Process

### *Identify Priority Risk Environments*

Priority Risk Environments are areas in a municipality where people or property are vulnerable to fire, and where risk can be avoided, removed, spread or managed.

In this stage, the important risks facing the municipality are identified. Each municipality may undertake this identification process in a different way.

Options include questionnaires, meetings and discussions with brigades, community groups, discussion groups and targeted meetings.

One tested method is to conduct a workshop with the MFPC to identify the scope of the risks and the breadth of issues involved prior to identifying those risks that are a priority in the municipality.

From these alternative methods or from a combination of them, the Priority Risk Environments can be selected.

### **Product Review**

<i>Priority Risk Environment:</i>	Residential.
<i>Objective:</i>	To ensure that residents are informed about fire in the home and are equipped to deal with it.
<i>Approach:</i>	Educational.
<i>Program:</i>	Prepare a home fire safety kit and distribute to all residences in the municipality.
<i>Responsibility:</i>	MFPO.
<i>Others involved:</i>	CFA Manager Community Safety, Brigades, local newspapers, real estate agents and municipality.
<i>Target date:</i>	2004.



## 4. The Process

There are countless ways to classify the environments to be managed. It is important to identify the area in a way which makes sense in each locality.

It is quite possible that a large number of risk environments will be identified and it may be necessary to categorise them into groups possessing similar characteristics so that the number of Priority Risk Environments becomes manageable.

Fire history and past losses may be the main indicators of current risk but potential risk may depend more on such factors as anticipated land use changes, population growth, the types of industry that may develop and dangerous goods transportation.

At this stage, it is probably not necessary to prioritise the list of Priority Risk Environments because this will become significant at a later stage when proposals to fund specific actions are proposed (on an annual basis).

### Typical Priority Risk Environments

<i>Residential:</i>	House, flat, caravan, apartments
<i>Public accommodation:</i>	Boarding house, hotel, hostel, prison
<i>Public assembly:</i>	School, hall, theatre, stadium, cafe, restaurant
<i>Commercial:</i>	Shop, office
<i>Industrial:</i>	Factory (heavy, light, special), warehouse, silo, chemical, depot, petrol depot
<i>Transport:</i>	Road, rail, bridge, tunnel, port, marine, airport
<i>Agriculture and Farming:</i>	Plantation, crop, pasture, poultry, feedlot, sawmill
<i>Natural Environment:</i>	Natural environment includes both private and both public land. Environment might be slightly modified. Includes native grasslands and bush
<i>Infrastructure:</i>	Pipelines, electricity lines, public transport depots & stations, telephone exchanges
<i>Health care:</i>	Special accommodation homes, nursing homes and hospitals





## 4. The Process

### *Responses to risk*

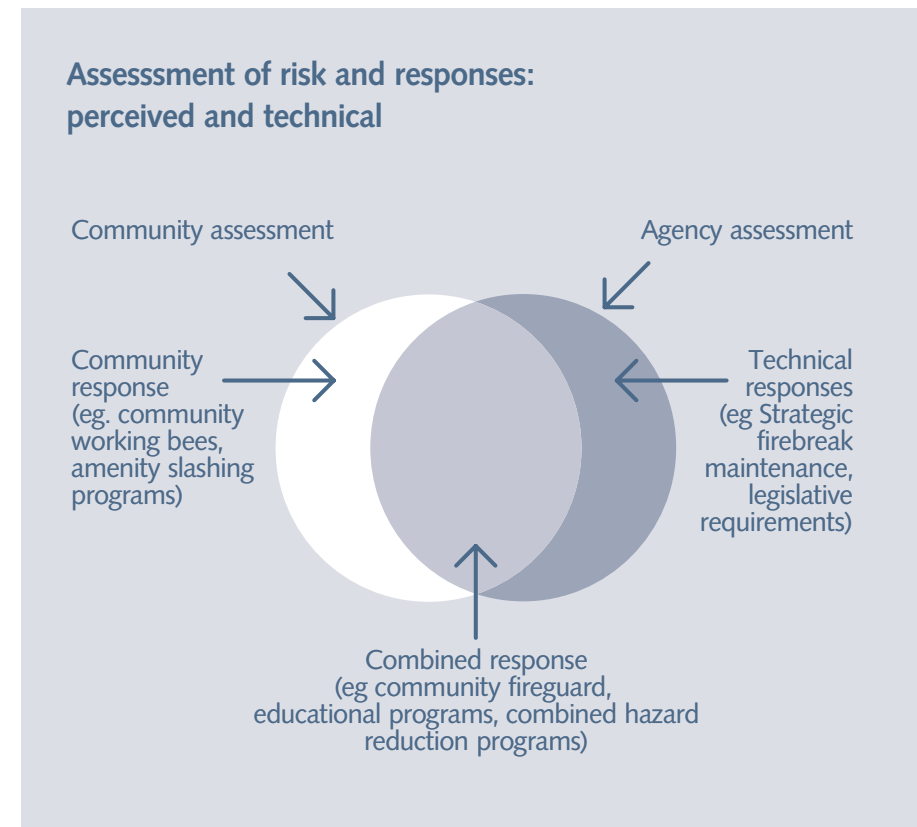
Risk assessment is influenced by technical elements and by the beliefs and values held by the community.

Experienced fire personnel will use their technical knowledge to consider the likelihood of fires starting and the implications of fire spread, options and opportunities for containment based on practical experience.

On the other hand, people in the community may be more affected by those things for which they have some personal attachment such as their homes, schools and favourite patch of bushland.

The most effective responses to risk are those that are shared by the community and agencies.

Table A may assist in assessing the level of the risk based on the likelihood and consequences of an emergency event.





## 4. The Process

Table A: Level of risk

LIKELIHOOD	CONSEQUENCES				
	<i>insignificant</i>	<i>minor</i>	<i>moderate</i>	<i>major</i>	<i>catastrophic</i>
<i>Almost certain</i>	significant	significant	high	high	high
<i>Likely</i>	moderate	significant	significant	high	high
<i>Moderate</i>	low	moderate	significant	high	high
<i>Unlikely</i>	low	low	moderate	significant	high
<i>Rare</i>	low	low	moderate	significant	significant

**high:** high risk, detailed research and management planning required

**significant:** significant risk, detailed attention needed

**moderate:** moderate risk, management responsibility must be specified

**low:** low risk, manage by routine procedures



## 4. The Process

### *Specify objectives*

Specify a longer term objective for each Priority Risk Environment. Each will be a statement of intent about the way the risk is to be managed and should identify the outcomes sought.

Because this is a strategic exercise and a number of the possible solutions will take many years to achieve, it is appropriate to look at the long term future (say 10-15 years) so that there is sufficient time to address the risk.

### **Product Review**

<i>Priority Risk Environment:</i>	Residential.
<i>Objective:</i>	To ensure that residents are informed about fire in the home and are equipped to deal with it.
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<i>Others involved:</i>	CFA Manager Community Safety, Brigades, local newspapers, real estate agents and municipality.
<i>Target date:</i>	2004.



## 4. The Process

### *Identify management approaches*

The municipality or its nominated group or committee then determines the approaches it wishes to use to manage each Priority Risk Environment with the objective indicating the type of approaches, which may be applicable.

In the example in Figure A, education is one approach which could be used. However, Table B is presented to encourage broad thinking about ways that the risk could be tackled and to enable the best approach to be taken in a particular situation.

Although different municipalities may identify the same Priority Risk Environment and a similar objective, the selected approaches may differ widely because communities differ in values, attitude, resources and priorities.

Table B, on the following page identifies a number of approaches that could be used within each Priority Risk Environment. Not every approach will be relevant in each situation. Associated with each approach there are several suggested solutions which may be considered.

### **Figure A: Product Review**

<i>Priority Risk Environment:</i>	Residential.
<i>Objective:</i>	To ensure that residents are informed about fire in the home and are equipped to deal with it.
<i>Approach:</i>	Educational.
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<i>Target date:</i>	2004.



## 4. The Process

Table B:

APPROACHES	SOLUTIONS
<i>Regulation</i>	Building regulations, planning scheme zones and overlays, permit conditions, inspections.
<i>Planning</i>	Early evacuation plans, early warning systems, telephone trees, simulations, fire drills.
<i>Education</i>	Media, training, information kits, brigade visits, curriculum development, teaching aids and targeted education programs.
<i>Management</i>	Hazard reduction burning, firebreaks, work programs, facility provision, hydrant checks.
<i>Community involvement</i>	Community fireguard, organisational involvement, sponsorships, volunteers.
<i>Technical</i>	Provision of facilities, new techniques, updated equipment, new uses for old equipment.

*Hint: Table B could be reproduced in large format and presented to a committee as a memory jogger to help identify possible approaches and solutions to manage risk.*

### CHECKLIST:

#### Stage 2

- Have all the major risks been identified?
- Do you know what you want to achieve for each?
- Will you tackle the risks in a variety of ways?
- Have objectives and a management approach been developed?





## 4. The Process

### Stage 3: Determine 1-5 year programs for each approach

In this stage, programs for each approach for every Priority Risk Environment are identified, responsibilities allocated, group or individual involvement identified and starting dates are set.

#### STAGE 3: Determine 1-5 year programs for each approach

Determine programs

Identify responsibilities

Identify others responsible

Set target dates



## 4. The Process

This stage is moving from generalised solutions identified in Stage 2 to specific programs by which the risks are to be managed.

This can be done in committees or focus groups formed specifically to deal with each Priority Risk Environment. While the time horizon in Stage 2 was 10-15 years, the target date for this stage is somewhere in the immediate future (1-5 years).

The purpose of this stage is to identify programs with clear outcomes.

Each year the municipality should conduct an annual review of the plan. In doing so it should review its progress towards the long term goal of providing a safer environment for the community and recommended specific actions.

Because of the diversity within many municipalities, decisions may be made to carry out one program in one area and another elsewhere.

It is recommended that each program be costed and approved annually by those responsible for implementation. Decisions should then be made to continue with the program, abandon it or seek alternative ways of managing the Priority Risk Environment.

This strategic approach will ensure that important programs are not abandoned without a conscious decision and that deliberation on alternative approaches takes place.

### Product Review

<i>Priority Risk Environment:</i>	Residential.
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<i>Target date:</i>	2004.



## 4. The Process

### *The Municipal Works Program*

There are likely to be ongoing and annual works carried out such as roadside maintenance and other works to aid fire suppression efforts.

In addition MFPCs will identify details such as water supplies, buffer zones, firebreaks and structural fire risks.

It is important that any annual works are included as a 1-5 year program and any details along with maps attached as an appendix to the plan.

### **QUALITY CHECKLIST:**

*For each program, consider these questions:*

- Will the proposal adequately address the targeted risks?
- What are the alternatives?
- Is the proposal the most cost-effective?
- What are the diverse impacts of the proposal?
- Does the proposal have other (non-fire) benefits?
- Are all the interested/affected parties adequately briefed?





## 4. The Process

### *Identify Responsibilities*

There should be one group or individual who is responsible for each program. In most cases they cannot be expected to carry out the program alone but they should clearly take the lead. Listing those responsible as CFA, for example is problematic, as within a large organisation such as CFA, this vague assignment of responsibility could mean a brigade, Region, Area or Headquarters. This could lead to confusion as to who is responsible, inaction and poor accountability.

If individuals or organisations are identified for responsibility or involvement and have not been able to attend the relevant meetings, the process and importance of the exercise should be explained to them.

They should then be given a chance to respond before the plan proceeds to the next stage. If they decline, and if the program is seen to be of major significance, further negotiation or an alternative approach may be necessary to address the risk.

### **Product Review**

<i>Priority Risk Environment:</i>	Residential.
<i>Objective:</i>	To ensure that residents are informed about fire in the home and are equipped to deal with it.
<i>Approach:</i>	Educational.
<i>Program:</i>	Prepare a home fire safety kit and distribute to all residences in the municipality.
<i>Responsibility:</i>	MFPO.
<i>Others involved:</i>	CFA Manager Community Safety, Brigades, local newspapers, real estate agents and municipality.
<i>Target date:</i>	2004.



## 4. The Process

Examples of types of people who could be represented on Focus Groups to determine 1-5 year programs:

### **Category of priority risk environment**

#### *Focus group representation*

- Part A: Risk associated with human habitation*  
Urban residents, Rural residents, Urban/rural fringe residents, Brigade, Local schools, Businesses, Municipal officers.
- Part B: Risk in the rural/natural environment*  
Rural business, Environmental management agencies, Residents groups, CFA, Brigades, Municipal officers.
- Part C: Risk associated with industry and transport*  
Brigades, Businesses, Residents groups, Regulatory authorities, VicRoads, Rail companies.





## 4. The Process

### *Identify others responsible*

The person responsible for the program is likely to require help and assistance from others and the major participants should be identified.

In the preliminary stages, some of the people or organisations involved may not be present when they are identified. As a result, they should be contacted to ensure their willingness to be involved before proceeding with the plan.

### **Product Review**

*Priority Risk*

*Environment:* Residential.

*Objective:*

To ensure that residents are informed about fire in the home and are equipped to deal with it.

*Approach:*

Educational.

*Program:*

Prepare a home fire safety kit and distribute to all residences in the municipality.

*Responsibility:*

MFPO.

*Others involved:*

CFA Manager Community Safety, Brigades, local newspapers, real estate agents and municipality.

*Target date:*

2004.



## 4. The Process

### *Set target dates*

The target date refers to the time when the program is started, not when it is completed. In reality, some programs may be started earlier in some areas of the municipality than in others.

#### **CHECKLIST:**

##### *Stage 3*

- Are your programs specific, realistic and achievable?
- Have you identified one person/organisation to coordinate each program?
- Who else will be involved?
- Can you anticipate when each program will start?
- What are the funding implications?
- Who will contribute?

#### **Product Review**

<i>Priority Risk Environment:</i>	Residential.
<i>Objective:</i>	To ensure that residents are informed about fire in the home and are equipped to deal with it.
<i>Approach:</i>	Educational.
<i>Program:</i>	Prepare a home fire safety kit and distribute to all residences in the municipality.
<i>Responsibility:</i>	MFPO.
<i>Others involved:</i>	CFA Manager Community Safety, Brigades, local newspapers, real estate agents and municipality.
<i>Target date:</i>	2004.



## 4. The Process

### Stage 4: Prepare the draft plan

In Stage 4 the elements of the plan are drawn together, exhibited for public comment, modified as appropriate, approved and released for public information.

#### STAGE 4: Prepare the draft plan

Compile the plan

Exhibit draft plan

Prepare final plan

Submit to council

Release plan



## 4. The Process

### *Compile the Fire Prevention Plan*

The plan integrates all of the contributions made by committees, agencies and the community through various forums.

As overlap and duplication are likely, there is a need to provide a consistent approach. Firm editing and rigorous quality control of selected programs is required by the steering committee or other group tasked with compiling the plan on behalf of the municipality.

The MFPO should encourage the integration of similar programs and the simplification of proposed programs so that they are practical and achievable.

The document is likely to require an introduction. It may be appropriate to give a brief profile of the municipality outlining its character and features.

The process of preparing the plan, the legislative basis and administration of fire prevention can be briefly described. A table of contents could be a useful addition.

The municipality may prefer the Mayor or the Chief Executive Officer to write a preface.





## 4. The Process

### *Exhibit draft plan document*

Once a draft plan is prepared, it is placed on public exhibition at the municipal offices for at least one month to enable community groups to consider it at their monthly meetings.

Copies should be provided to all brigades and relevant departments and public authorities. Those who made major contributions should be given the courtesy of their own copy.

It may be appropriate to produce a summary of the strategic parts of the policy (the results including Stage 2, but not the detail of Stage 3) for wider distribution.

### *Prepare final Fire Prevention Plan*

Once comments are received, the document is modified as appropriate and prepared in a final form. Hopefully, because of the extensive public consultation which has preceded this stage, there will be little need for modification.







## 4. The Process

### *Submit to council*

When the Fire Prevention Plan is in a final form, it should be formally endorsed by the MFPC to affirm that it is in accordance with the advice and recommendations of that committee.

The local council should adopt the MFPP following MFPC endorsement.

The formal process of acceptance is important and has practical as well as possible legal implications as it implies:

1. Commitment from these bodies;
2. Ownership by the municipal council;
3. The meeting of expectations; and
4. A degree of satisfaction with due care and diligence requirements.

### *Release the Fire Prevention Plan*

Copies of the plan should be lodged in local libraries, municipal offices and the Country Fire Authority.

#### **CHECKLIST:**

##### *Preparing the final presentation/document*

- Are your programs specific, realistic and achievable?
- How is it to be used?
- What do you want to say?
- How much will it cost to copy and distribute?
- Will a summary brochure be helpful to the community?
- Sponsorship?



## 4. The Process

### Stage 5: Implement and review

#### *Implementing the strategy*

The plan will contain programs that are scheduled for completion over the next three to five years.

The municipality must prioritise the programs annually so that the most important receive attention. Priorities may be influenced by a number of factors but if the plan is to remain meaningful, the prioritisation process must receive ongoing attention.

As well as setting priorities based on need, adequate funding must be available to ensure the programs can be implemented.

Ensuring proper implementation is the responsibility of the municipality.

The MFPO should monitor the implementation of the plan, liaising closely with those responsible for each program and providing regular reports to the MFPC.

#### *Monitor and review*

The success of the Fire Prevention Plan will largely be determined by the level of program implementation and the effect on community readiness and safety performance.

Performance against strategy should be measured regularly and a reporting process established to inform council and the CFA of progress.

As a result of assessing performance, modifications may need to be made to ensure that it meets its stated objectives.

It is expected that the plan will be reviewed at least annually to protect the integrity of its content.



# Conclusion

The Municipal Fire Prevention Plan is a major mechanism by which the people and assets of a municipality can be safeguarded from uncontrolled fire.

The process used in its development will greatly affect the way that it is implemented.

These guidelines are intended to assist in gaining a recognition that the community as a whole is responsible for ensuring that it can protect itself from fire.

The Municipal Fire Prevention Plan embraces a risk management approach to achieve this by identifying the risk, analysing it and devising long-term strategies by which the risk is managed.

The Municipal Fire Prevention Plan is now complete. It has been developed with strong community involvement and identifies actions for all of the priority risk environments so that the task of managing the risk of fire is shared by others as well as those with a prime responsibility.

Each year, the Fire Prevention Plan should be reviewed as actions are proposed and costed with a view to taking steps to achieve the strategic directions identified.

Hopefully, these will be integrated with other strategic directions in emergency management identified within the Municipality.

By taking this risk management approach in a strategic framework, these incremental steps will, over time, lead to significant improvements in achieving a safer community.

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