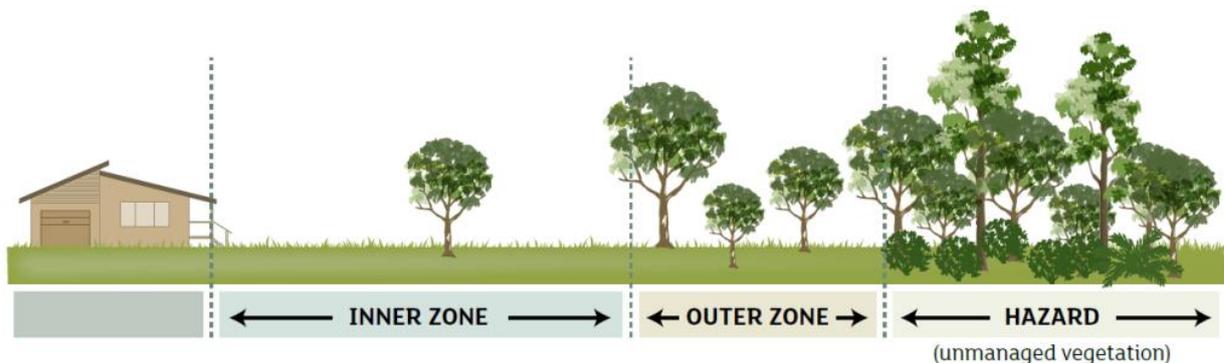


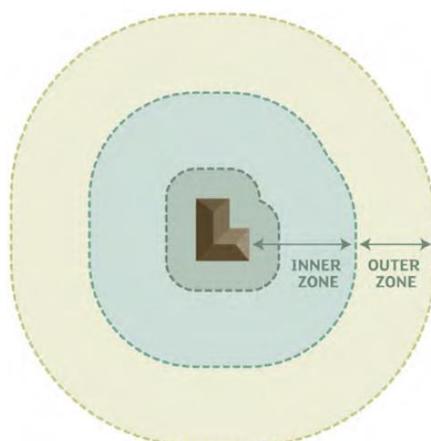
# DEFENDABLE SPACE (Bushfire Management Overlay)

## What is defensible space?

Defendable space is an area of land around a building where vegetation (fuel) is modified and managed to reduce the effects of flame contact and radiant heat associated with a bushfire. It usually comprises an inner zone and outer zone. Defendable space is one of the most effective ways of reducing the impact of bushfire on a building.



## Cross section of inner & outer zones



- Within 10 metres avoid flammable objects near vulnerable parts of the building.
- Inner zone – An area immediately surrounding a (proposed) building where fuel is managed to a minimum condition.
- Outer zone – An area around the building between the inner zone and the unmodified vegetation that substantially decreases the intensity of an approaching fire and restricts the pathway to canopy fuels.

## Why is Defendable Space important?

Defendable space provides a break between the building and the fuel available to the bushfire (e.g. vegetation, brush fencing, flammable material). Providing an area of defendable space can prevent direct flame contact on a building, reduce the effects of radiant heat on the building and to mitigate the effects of ember attack<sup>1</sup>.

## How do I know how much defendable space I need to provide?

In order to calculate how much defendable space is required you will need to complete a site assessment. You can refer to Practice Note 65 published by the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure for further information on the assessment process.

The area of defendable space required will depend on the **level of bushfire risk** and the likely **forms of bushfire attack**. The factors influencing the level of bushfire risk include:

- Environmental factors including: fuel, topography and weather conditions
- Site context: (e.g. urbanised or remote location)
- Other bushfire mitigation measures incorporated into the design (e.g. siting of the building and construction standard).

For more information on the drivers of bushfire behaviour and the forms of bushfire attack refer to: [http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/fm\\_files/attachments/plan\\_and\\_prepare/frk\\_2013/Section5\\_Preparing\\_your\\_property.pdf](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/fm_files/attachments/plan_and_prepare/frk_2013/Section5_Preparing_your_property.pdf)

## What are the standard planning permit conditions?

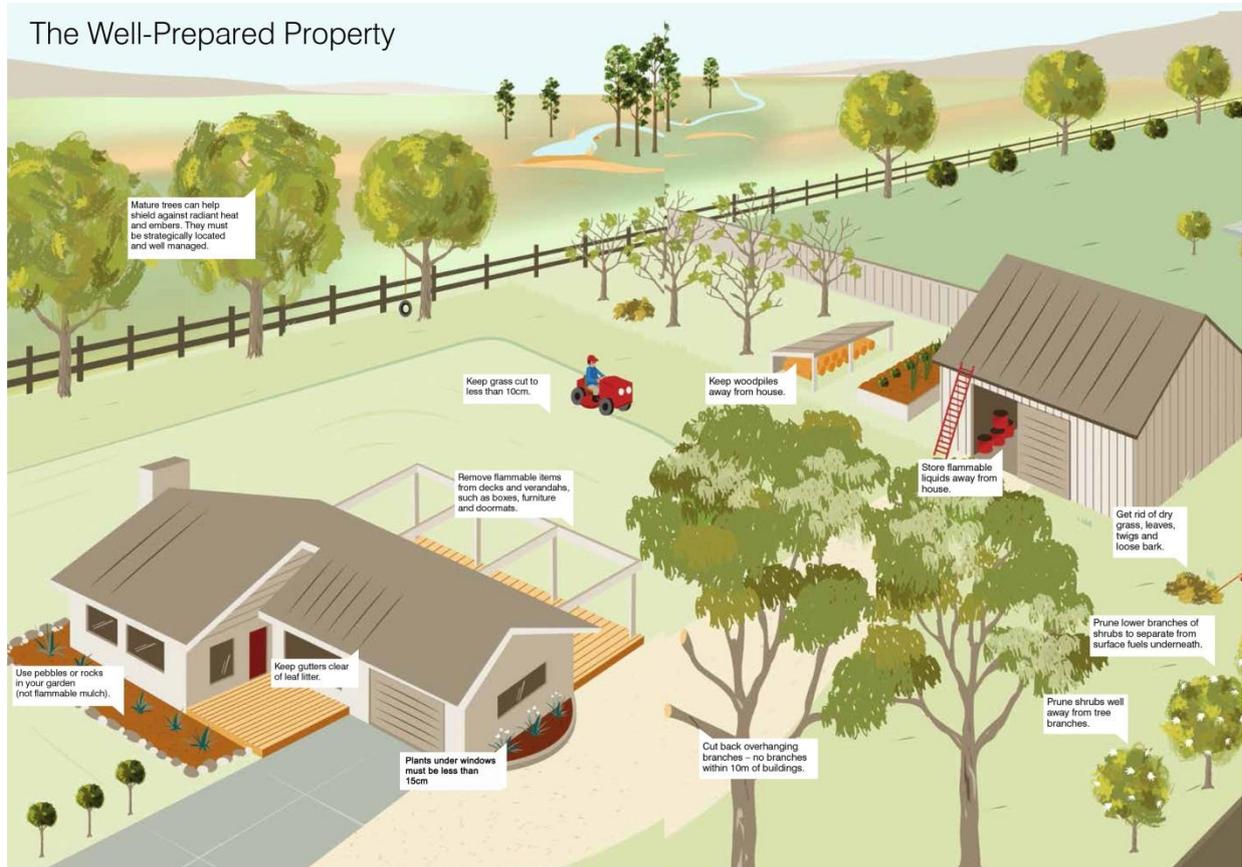
If you obtain a permit the standard conditions are the starting point for the level of vegetation management in the defendable space <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/standard-planning-permit-conditions/>. These requirements should be reflected in your Bushfire Management Plan.

## What does compliance with the conditions look like?

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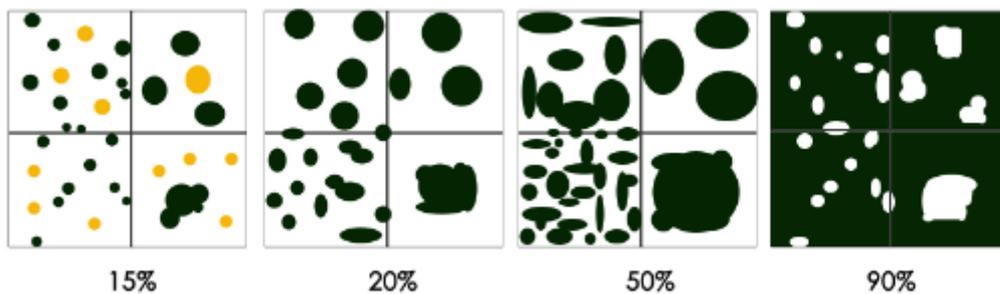
<sup>1</sup> You should also note that in the event of a bushfire, after the fire front has passed, the area of defendable space may be available as a refuge (refer to advice on preparing your property in Fire Ready Victoria).

The following illustrates an example of a property where an area of defensible space is modified and managed to prevent direct flame contact on a building, reduce the effects of radiant heat on the building and to mitigate the effects of ember attack<sup>2</sup>.



Source: Prepare. Act. Survive. – Fire Ready Kit available - [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)

**Tree canopy cover** - ranging from 15 per cent to 90 per cent at maturity.



<sup>2</sup> You should also note that in the event of a bushfire, after the fire front has passed, the area of defensible space may be available as a refuge (refer to advice on preparing your property in Fire Ready Victoria).

This diagram shows examples of leaves and vegetation debris which has accumulated to a depth of 1cm and 2cm respectively.



### Tailoring the defensible space requirements

If you want to tailor the requirements to suit your site you will need to explain in your BMS how you still meet the following objectives:

- Maintain integrity of building (avoid compromise to building structure)
- Reduce the carry of surface fire (horizontal separation)
- Reduce the carry of a canopy fire (horizontal separation)
- Reduce fuel ladders (vertical separation)

You can refer to CFA's publication 'Landscaping for Bushfire' (November 2011) which provides further guidance on garden design and plant selection. <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/landscaping-for-bushfire/>