

# Managing Farm Forestry and bushfire

This fact sheet provides guidance for current Private Native Forestry (PNF) Plan holders and contractors on undertaking activities within PNF Plans to prepare for bushfires and once a bushfire emergency has passed.



## What does my PNF Plan allow me to do to prepare for bushfire?

- Hazard reduction activities and fire management in forests are permitted within PNF Plans, subject to any relevant approvals from the Rural Fires Services being obtained.
- All forest operation activities, including prescribed burning, must adhere to the conditions of the PNF Codes of Practice, including documenting these activities within your Forest Management Plan.
- The PNF Codes of Practice also allow for road and track construction and maintenance works, which can be used to manage both planned fires and bushfires.
- Before undertaking fire management within your PNF Plan area, contact your local Rural Fire Service to check what is required.

## Firebreak and fire containment lines

During a bushfire emergency you may establish fire breaks under the direction of the NSW Rural Fire Service to control a fire. However, the quickest way to contain fire within a forest is often to maintain or improve existing tracks. Planning their location prior to construction and planning for the regular upkeep of roads and tracks is critical to ensure fire containment and safe access for firefighting operations.

Where emergency works have occurred there is no need to update your Forest Management Plan (FMP), but any other

forest management activities should be documented in accordance with the PNF Codes of Practice.

Your current PNF Plan allows for the construction and maintenance of roads and tracks, and the use of some allowable activities such as clearing for fence lines, which can all be used to contain a fire.

For further information on construction and maintenance of roads and tracks, please refer to Section 9 of the PNF Codes of Practice (PNF Codes) or call your nearest Farm Forestry Officer for advice. Where construction and maintenance works occur within your PNF approval area, these should be documented in your FMP.

## Can I remove a tree or other living native vegetation that may be presenting a safety risk?

Your current PNF Plan allows for the management of vegetation in accordance with the PNF Code of Practice. Landholders with a PNF Plan can also use some allowable activities to clear native vegetation, including trees, considered reasonably necessary to remove or reduce an imminent risk of serious personal injury or damage to property. Such clearing should be undertaken to the minimum extent necessary.

Note: in order to remove vegetation under this allowable Activity, the risk must be imminent and clearing should only be undertaken to the minimum extent necessary. If your proposed works under an allowable activity are beyond the minimum extent necessary, please contact Local Land Services to discuss options under the Land Management Code.

## Can I remove standing 'dead' vegetation?

A tree may be removed if it is reasonably necessary to remove or reduce an imminent risk of serious personal injury or damage to property. In non-emergency situations and where there is no risk to people or property, the usual land management rules apply.

If a dead tree does not pose an imminent risk and is on vulnerable regulated land (for example, on a steep slope or in a riparian zone), approval may be required to remove it and you should seek advice from your nearest Local Land Services office.

Following a bushfire, you should not clear 'dead' trees until you are sure the trees will not naturally regenerate. This can take months depending on weather conditions. Most native vegetation is well adapted to survive fire, especially mature Eucalypt species.

## Can I clear groundcover?

Your approved PNF Plan allows you to manage groundcover and understorey plants to encourage forest growth, but does not permit the permanent removal of groundcover or understorey plants. Where native groundcover has been burnt, landholders are required to give it an opportunity to regrow, as groundcover provides surface stability to encourage regeneration and prevent soil erosion following fire.

If your intent is to permanently remove groundcover or understorey plants you may need to consider cancelling your PNF approval and seeking consent under the usual land management rules. Contact your nearest Local Land Services office for advice on your specific circumstances.



## What if I need to clear non-burnt vegetation to get to an area impacted by the fire?

Further to the road and track provisions in the PNF Codes of Practice, you can clear a track on your property to the minimum extent necessary without approval in accordance with the allowable activities. Maximum track widths of 15 metres in the Coastal Zone, 30 metres in the Central Zone and 40 metres in the Western Zone apply. Some further restrictions apply on small landholdings (under 10 hectares) and where your land has steep slopes or riparian zones.

For information on the zones and allowable activities, see the Allowable Activities for Landholders fact sheet at [www.lls.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au)



## Are there any parts of the Private Native Forestry Code that I should treat with extra care after a bushfire?

Yes.

**Basal area (Section 5 of the PNF Codes):** Following a fire you should consider your ability to retain the required basal area during a harvesting operation, because it may be difficult to tell which trees will survive.

**Forest regeneration (Section 5.3/5.4 of the PNF Codes):** A key outcome of harvesting is to achieve successful regeneration of the forest. You may need to pay extra attention to the retained trees to ensure that there are sufficient seed-bearing trees to enable successful regeneration.

**Protection of habitat and biodiversity (Section 8.2 of the PNF Codes):** Within the Northern and Southern NSW PNF Codes, dead trees that meet the definition of a dead standing tree may count as a habitat tree, being that no more than two dead standing trees can contribute towards the number of hollow bearing trees retained per two hectares. Following fire, the number of hollow bearing trees may have been impacted. This means that you may be required to retain additional recruitment trees to supplement the number of hollow bearing trees in accordance with the PNF Codes.



**Construction and maintenance of forest infrastructure (Section 9 of the PNF Codes):** Following a fire, the lack of vegetation and existence of ash beds may present an erosion risk. Stable discharge areas from exposed slopes, tracks and roads, may be difficult to find and other sediment control structures (such as sediment fencing, straw bales or rock armour) may be needed to avoid erosion and/or pollution from sediment movement into drainage features and streams.

## We're here to help

**Find us online:** [lls.nsw.gov.au](https://lls.nsw.gov.au)

**Call us:** 1300 795 299 and ask for an officer to advise you on Private Native Forestry

**Email us:** [pnf.info@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pnf.info@lls.nsw.gov.au)

**See us:** drop into your nearest Local Land Services office

## Can I get more information or help?

For support or advice to help you implement a PNF Code of practice following a bushfire please contact Farm Forestry Local Land Services at [pnf.info@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pnf.info@lls.nsw.gov.au)

Local Land Services offers local support to landholders in the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery stages of a bushfire emergency.

We are on hand to offer advice and up-to-date information. Call Local Land Services on 1300 795 299 or contact your nearest Local Land Services office.

**Note:** Information in this fact sheet refers to land classified as regulated rural areas under part 5A of the LLS Act and PNF approvals under Part 5B of the LLS Act.

If you are not sure of the classification of your land you should contact Local Land Services on 1300 795 299 or call into your nearest Local Land Services office.

Native vegetation is any plants native to NSW including trees, understorey plants, groundcover and plants occurring in a wetland. A plant is native to NSW if it was established in NSW before European settlement.