

# Managing native vegetation to prepare for a bushfire



This fact sheet provides guidance for landholders on native vegetation management in rural areas to prepare for a bushfire. A bushfire emergency is one which endangers or threatens the safety or health of people or animals, destroys or damages property or causes essential services to fail or be significantly disrupted.

## What kind of native vegetation clearing can I do to prepare my property for a bushfire?

Clearing advice can be sought from either the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) as the primary bushfire hazard authority or from Local Land Services (LLS). As a landholder you have 6 possible pathways:

1. clearing under the Rural Boundary Clearing Code for NSW 2021 (RFS)
2. clearing under the 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Code of Practice (RFS)
3. managed bushfire hazard reduction work (RFS)

4. allowable activities under the land management framework (LLS)
5. clearing as directed by an electricity network operator (LLS)
6. ordinary clearing rules under the land management framework (LLS)

## RFS Rural Boundary Clearing Code for NSW 2021

The Rural Boundary Clearing Code and associated tool helps rural landholders in identified areas to prepare for fire or help prevent fires from spreading. It allows up to 25 metres to be cleared on a boundary of a holding that is within the Boundary Clearing Code Vegetation Map.

The Boundary Clearing Tool will help you identify if the Code applies to your landholding.

Scan the QR code or visit [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/boundary-clearing-tool](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/boundary-clearing-tool) to find out how the scheme works and access the tool.



## Clearing under the 10/50 Vegetation Code of Practice

The 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Code of Practice (the 10/50 Code) allows a landholder in a designated 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Entitlement Area to manage bushfire risk by clearing:

- certain vegetation within 10 metres of homes and farm sheds; and
- certain underlying vegetation such as shrubs (but not trees) on their property within 50 metres of a home or farm shed.

You must meet certain conditions before clearing can take place under this pathway. Key conditions include:

- ensuring the land is mapped as 10/50 vegetation clearing entitlement land (for example, bushfire prone land that is not a declared Aboriginal place as mapped by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (you can check this on the RFS website)
- obtaining permission from the landowner, if the landholder is not the owner
- if clearing to protect a home, the home is an approved dwelling on the land
- if clearing to protect a farm shed, the shed can lawfully be used as a shed on the land
- the clearing of vegetation including trees is not allowed within 10 metres of a lake, or a river that is two metres or more in width between the highest opposite banks.

There are more terms and conditions that relate to clearing under the 10/50 Code.

Scan the QR code or visit [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare) for more information and an online tool to check your eligibility.



You can also find information on carrying out managed bushfire hazard reduction work as well as on farm fire safety, grass fires, fire trails and safe burning.

## Managed bushfire hazard reduction work

Managed bushfire hazard reduction work includes establishing or maintaining fire breaks and fire trails on land and certain controlled approved back burning operations such as those conducted by the RFS.

There are eligibility rules that limit bushfire hazard reduction clearing to certain kinds of land. Once eligible, you must seek a bushfire hazard reduction certificate from the RFS.

A bushfire hazard reduction certificate issued by the RFS will inform you of exactly what work is authorised and where and set out any conditions that apply. The hazard reduction work must also comply with a bushfire risk management plan and bushfire code that apply to the land.

For information on obtaining these authorisations, contact the RFS on 1800 NSW RFS (1800 679 737).

## Allowable activities

‘Allowable activities’ enable some vegetation to be removed without the need for approval. They can be used to provide some protection to structures from fire, including rural infrastructure and private power lines.

To use allowable activities, the land must be a regulated rural area under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.





Allowable activities have 3 zones so be sure to check if your land is in the Coastal, Central or Western allowable activity zone as the rules are different. Please contact Local Land Services for advice on your individual circumstances.

Eligible landholders can undertake allowable activity clearing without requiring written approval, provided relevant conditions are complied with. Allowable activities for eligible landholders preparing for bushfires include:

- clearing to protect and maintain public supply of essential services including water, electricity, gas and telecommunications, including privately owned power lines on private land
- clearing to protect and maintain certain rural infrastructure such as fence lines, roads, sheds, dams and tracks
- clearing for a firebreak to a maximum distance of 100 metres, where the native vegetation predominantly comprises mallee species (Western Zone only).

Clearing using allowable activities may only take place to the minimum extent necessary.

Speak to a Local Land Services officer to find out if there is vulnerable or sensitive land on your property which could limit allowable activities.

Scan the QR code or visit [lls.nsw.gov.au/land-management-resources](https://lls.nsw.gov.au/land-management-resources) for more detail on allowable activities and other resources.



## Clearing as directed by an electricity network operator

Landholders may be issued with a written direction by an electricity network operator to carry out certain vegetation clearing for:

- bush fire prevention purposes, and
- taking action in relation to buildings on bush fire prone land.

If you are a landholder who has been issued with such a direction, we encourage you to contact Local Land Services for advice on how to comply.

## Ordinary clearing rules under the land management framework

Scan the QR code or visit [lls.nsw.gov.au/land-management-framework](https://lls.nsw.gov.au/land-management-framework) to find out more on clearing under the Land Management Framework in non-emergency situations.



**Note:** Any clearing referred to in this fact sheet requires the permission of the owner of the land before undertaking any activities. Information in this fact sheet refers to clearing vegetation for bushfire hazard reduction under the *Rural Fires Act 1997* and the clearing of vegetation on rural regulated areas under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.

Scan the QR code or visit [lls.nsw.gov.au/land-management-resources](https://lls.nsw.gov.au/land-management-resources) for information on obtaining other approvals and more resources.



**Note:** Information in this fact sheet refers to land classified as Category 2-regulated rural areas. If you are not sure of the classification of your land, you should contact Local Land Services. 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.



## Want to know more?

**We're here to help.**

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

You'll find other land management and native vegetation resources including fact sheets on our website.

Call us: 1300 795 299 and ask for an officer to advise you on land management

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

Visit us: drop into your nearest Local Land Services office.