



MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

# **MUNICIPAL COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES PLAN**

*PLACES OF LAST RESORT DURING A BUSHFIRE*

**BALLARAT CITY COUNCIL**

Version 1.16- September 2024

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## 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 has 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**'). The effect of these amendments will be to 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 is a neighbourhood safer places plan for the purposes of the legislation, and contains guidelines which have been developed by the Municipal Association of Victoria ('**MAV**') to assist the Council in:

- identifying;
- designating;
- establishing;
- maintaining; and
- decommissioning

places as NSPs within its municipal district.

This Plan also identifies other matters that should be considered in identifying, designating, establishing and maintaining NSPs within the municipality.

This Plan contains a step-by-step methodology for the Council to follow 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.

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

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 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.

## **Structure of this Plan**

This Plan has been divided into distinct sections.

**Section 1** contains a flow chart which summarises the process for Council to adopt in identifying, designating, establishing and maintaining NSPs within their municipal district.

**Section 2** contains a more detailed summary of the steps summarised in the flow chart found in Section 1.

**Section 3** contains a summary of the factors for Council to consider in assessing potential NSP locations, prior to designation.

**Section 4** contains assessments undertaken by Ballarat City Council in relation to the identified sites. These assessments have been undertaken pursuant to Section 50F(1)(a) of the CFA Act relating to assessing the suitability of the identified Neighbourhood Safer Places sites within the municipality.

**Section 5** details Council's processes for the future identification of additional Neighbourhood Safer Places and methodologies for the ongoing inspection, maintenance and potential decommissioning of already designated NSPs.

**Section 6** encompasses the formal Council designation of the Neighbourhood Safer Places as identified and assessed as well as the formal adoption of the Plan.

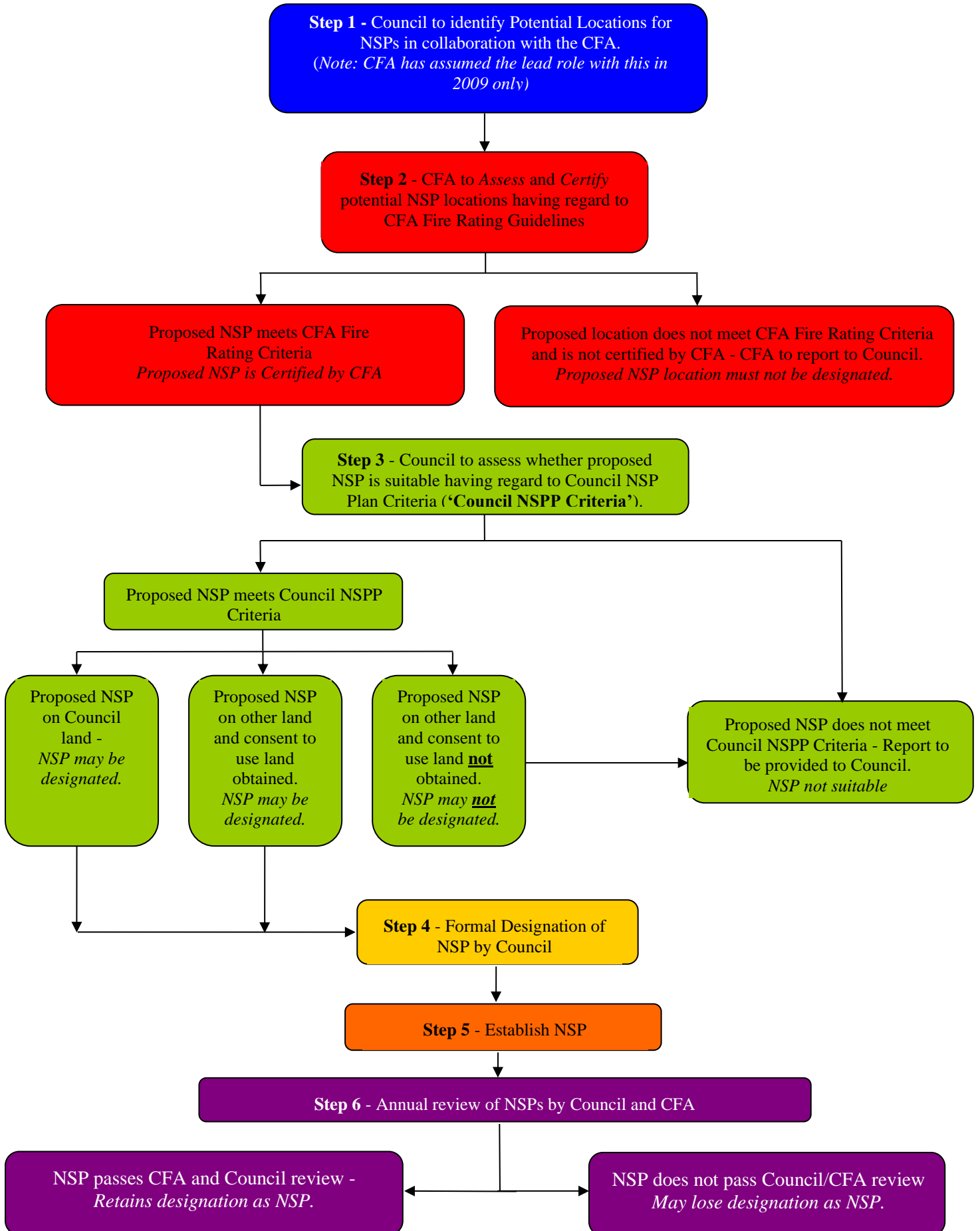
**Appendix A** includes the template for the Neighbourhood Safer Place signage (as well as a transcription of the text component of the signage) and the signage guidelines issued by the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner.

**Appendix B** includes a timeline of Council actions required through the year to inspect and assess Neighbourhood Safer Places and related actions.

# Section 1

*Flow chart Showing Process for Identifying, Designating, Establishing and Maintaining NSPs.*

# Overview of the process for establishing and maintaining NSPs



## Section 2

*Detailed summary of steps for establishing NSPs.*

# OVERVIEW OF THE STEPS ASSOCIATED WITH NSPs

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## 1 Identification of Potential NSP Locations

### 1.1 Who is responsible for identifying places as potential NSPs?

For the 2009-2010 fire season, the Country Fire Authority ('CFA') assumed lead responsibility for identifying potential locations for NSPs. This was done in consultation with Councils. The initial focus was upon the identification of proposed NSPs within those municipalities with CFA Township Protection Plan ('TPP') areas in place. However, identification efforts have now expanded beyond these localities.

From 2010-onwards, Council will be responsible for identifying potential places as NSPs within its municipal district. Section 50G of the CFA Act requires Council to identify potential NSP locations.

### 1.2 When do potential NSPs need to be identified?

The CFA, in conjunction with Council, engaged in the process of identifying potential NSPs in preparation for the 2009-2010 fire season and beyond.

From 2010-onwards, Councils should identify potential additional places as NSPs by 31 May in each year. This allows sufficient time for:

- (a) **(CFA Certification)** first, assessment and certification of the potential NSP by the CFA;
- (b) **(Council Designation)** secondly, designation of the potential NSP location by the Council; and
- (c) **(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.

### 1.3 What factors should be considered when identifying potential NSP locations?

When identifying potential NSP locations, Council should consider matters such as:

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



- (f) for those Councils whose municipal district falls within both a CFA region and the Metropolitan Fire District (“**MFD**”), or borders the MFD but is within the CFA region:
  - (i) the risks involved in people staying in the area being considered for an NSP, versus leaving the area and travelling to a nearby urban area; and
  - (ii) the adequacy of egress routes out of the area being considered for an NSP (including number of egress routes, whether major or minor roadway, type and amount of vegetation along key egress routes; capacity of egress routes to accommodate potentially large numbers of vehicles and to accommodate potential vehicle breakdowns).

Council’s identification of potential NSP locations should be undertaken by the Municipal Emergency Management Officer (“**MEMO**”) and the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (“**MFPO**”), with input from other Council personnel (such as Infrastructure Services Managers, or equivalent) as appropriate.

#### **1.4 Who should undertake the identification of potential NSPs?**

Under the CFA Act, all Councils whose municipal district is located wholly or partly in the ‘country area’ of Victoria are required to identify and designate NSPs.

Council should ensure that the following actions are completed prior to making any determinations regarding the assessment, designation and certification of NSPs:

- (a) A risk assessment considering the matters outlined in section 1.3 (above) must be undertaken by Council’s Municipal Emergency Management Officer (“**MEMO**”) and Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (“**MFPO**”) (which may be initiated through the Municipal Fire Prevention Committee or the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee as a sub-committee of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (“**MEMPC**”)), using appropriate available information such as Integrated Fire Management Planning data and/or Victorian Fire Risk Register data and any applicable Township Protection Plans;
- (b) The MEMPC must review the results of the risk assessment, as summarised in the MEMO’s and MFPO’s report prepared under section 1.4(a) (above) and submit a written report to Council with a recommendation as to whether CFA assessment and Council designation of the potential NSP is warranted in the area under consideration.
- (c) Council should formally review the MEMPC report. Council should only decide that NSP assessment and designation is not warranted in the area under consideration where Council is satisfied that:

- (i) The risk assessment undertaken by the MEMO and MFPO has addressed the matters raised in sections 1.3 of this MNSPP;  
and
- (ii) The MEMPC has recommended that assessment and designation of the NSP is not warranted.

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## CFA to Assess and Certify Potential NSP Locations

### 1.5 Who is responsible for assessing potential NSPs against guidelines issued by the CFA ('CFA Fire Rating Guidelines')?

Under section 50G(5) of the CFA Act, the 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.

### 1.6 What criteria must the CFA take into account in assessing potential NSP locations?

In assessing potential NSP locations which have been identified by the CFA (for the 2009-2010 fire season), or by Councils (from 2010-onwards), the 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:

- (a) For Open Spaces →
  - (i) 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
  - (ii) 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 2 kw/m<sup>2</sup>.
  
- (b) For Buildings →
  - (i) The Buffer Zone between the outer edge of the building and the nearest fire hazard should be at least 140 metres; or
  - (ii) 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>.

### 1.7 When does the CFA assess a potential NSP?

Following identification of a place which may be suitable as an NSP, the potential NSP is assessed by the CFA as soon as practicable. This is likely to occur shortly after identification.

### 1.8 When does the CFA certify potential NSP locations?

Once the assessment of a potential NSP is completed by the CFA, the CFA will certify the potential NSP if the place meets the CFA Fire Rating Criteria. The CFA

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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.

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.*

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## 2 Council Assessment of NSPs Following CFA Certification

### 2.1 What factors should be applied by Councils in assessing the suitability of a place as a potential NSP location?

Following certification of a place as an NSP by the CFA, and once Council has received the CFA assessment and any criteria and CFA assumptions which underpin the assessment, Council must assess the place 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 should not be designated by Council as an NSP.

Council's assessment of CFA-certified potential NSPs should be conducted by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee ('**MEMPC**'), with preliminary assessments to be provided to the MEMPC by the Municipal Emergency Management Officer ('**MEMO**') and the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer ('**MFPO**').

The factors to determine the suitability of the place as an NSP are as follows: ('**Council NSPP Criteria**')

(a) ***Consents and rights of access***

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

- use the place as an NSP.
- access the site and surrounding areas for maintenance; and
- erect appropriate signage at the NSP, including the OESC signage and additional NSP information signage.

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 need to 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 should consider 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 the 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 should provide a draft form of consent to the owner/occupier for their consideration. The form of consent will be required to be approved either by Council (through a formal resolution), or by the CEO acting under delegation.

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.

(b) ***Access and Egress***

Council must assess whether there is sufficient access to the potential NSP which will allow:

- anticipated potential numbers of people to move to and from the place; and
- the CFA and other emergency services to attend the place for asset and personnel 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:

- (i) the condition of the road surface.
- (ii) the proximity of the NSP to major roadways and population centres.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) the capacity of access routes to accommodate potentially large numbers of vehicles, and to accommodate potential vehicle breakdowns.

- (v) parking at the place, considering that it may not be appropriate for cars to be parked within an open space NSP, or within the Buffer Zone adjoining the NSP.
- (vi) any hazards that may exist for persons accessing the place by foot, including in the buffer zone.
- (vii) any relevant matter contained in Council's Road Management Plan prepared pursuant to the *Road Management Act 2004* (Vic); and

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

(c) ***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 considered by the CFA in arriving at its fire rating assessment.

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.

(d) ***Opening of the NSP***

Council must consider.

- (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 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) the possibility that a potential NSP could be used for unintended purposes, such as an emergency relief centre.

(e) ***Defendable space and fire suppression activities***

CFA have advised that there is no guarantee that fire units will attend an NSP, and that individuals who use NSPs are doing so at their own risk. There should be **no expectation** that fire units 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 near 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 their defensible space and fire vehicle access requirements.

When assessing the defensible space factor, Council must consider whether or not approval to clear or disturb flora and/or fauna could be required, whether under 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**'). If such approval is required, then it must be obtained before the potential NSP location is designated.

If the proposed NSP does not have adequate defensible space around it, or if approval to clear or disturb flora and/or fauna is required but cannot be obtained before the NSP is required to be established, or cannot be obtained on reasonably satisfactory conditions, it should not be designated as an NSP by Council.

(f) ***Defendability of Buildings***

If the potential NSP is a building, Council must consider whether or not it is likely to be subject to risk from ember attack.

As the CFA is not required to assess the risk of ember attack to a building in undertaking the CFA fire rating assessment when certifying NSPs, the Council should consider this issue. In considering this issue, Council may need to seek expert advice from appropriately qualified CFA personnel.

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.

(g) ***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 Signage Guidelines for Neighbourhood Safer Places, and
- the template attached as Appendix A.

Council must refer to those guidelines when considering whether appropriate signage can be erected.

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

(h) ***Maintenance and maintainability***

Council must assess whether ongoing maintenance of the proposed NSP, and the surrounding area, is both possible and practical, having regard to the resources reasonably available to the Council. 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 the place 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 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 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.

(i) ***Disabled access***

Council must consider whether or not there are clear means of access for disabled and mobility-impaired persons to the potential NSP.

In considering this issue, regard should be had such matters as whether or not it would be necessary for cars or other vehicles to enter the NSP area to allow persons with disabilities to be dropped off within the place.

(j) ***Alternative Uses of 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.

Where a potential NSP which is used for an operational purpose at many times has been assessed by the CFA as meeting the criteria in the CFA Fire Rating Guidelines, and has been certified by the CFA, then the CFA has advised that those operational activities will be able to continue (to the extent practicable in the circumstances) while the place is being used as an NSP.

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

(k) ***Communication with the community***

Council must be able to communicate the location of the potential NSP to the community.

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.

(l) ***Public liability insurance***

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

- (i) 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
- (ii) any statutory defences to claims.

**2.2 Who is responsible for undertaking the Council assessment of potential NSPs?**

A report prepared by the MEMO and MFPO detailing whether or not the potential NSP meets the above criteria should be prepared and provided to:

- (a) the MEMPC, where it is practicable for the MEMPC to be involved in the Council assessment process; and
- (b) the Council.

The MEMPC must assess the potential NSP, taking into account the MEMO's report, and make a recommendation to Council as to whether or not to delegate the potential NSP.

### **2.3 When are potential NSP locations required to be assessed by Council?**

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 MEMP and MFPP 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.

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## **3 Council Designation of NSPs**

### **3.1 Who is responsible for 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

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

### **3.2 When should Council consider the designation of a potential NSP?**

Following preparation of an assessment of a potential NSP by the MEMPC, 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.

### **3.3 What must the MFPO do once a potential NSP is designated by Council?**

Once the Council has designated a place as an 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.

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## **4 Establishment and Maintenance of NSPs Following Designation**

### **4.1 Who is responsible for establishing NSPs?**

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

### **4.2 What must be done when establishing NSPs?**

To establish a NSP after its designation, Council must:

- erect appropriate signage 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; and
- update Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan and Municipal Fire Prevention Plan to include the location of the NSP.

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

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

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

#### **4.3 When must NSPs be established?**

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

#### **4.4 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 fire rating of the NSP.

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

Council must inspect the NSP, Buffer Zone and access and egress routes on a periodic basis, and in any event not less than once every month during the declared fire danger period, to ensure that the NSP continues to be capable of functioning as an NSP. If Council identifies issues that may impact upon the functioning of the place as an NSP, then Council must:

- (a) address the issue;
- (b) take reasonable steps to have the issue addressed, such as requesting the owner of the land on which the NSP or Buffer Zone is located to address the issue; or
- (c) consider decommissioning the NSP and revoking the designation of the place as an NSP.

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## **5 Annual Inspections of NSPs**

### **5.1 Who is responsible for the annual review of NSPs?**

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 on an annual basis.

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

### **5.2 What must be considered when undertaking inspections?**

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:

- (a) the CFA Fire Rating Criteria, then it must be decommissioned; and
- (b) 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.

### **5.3 When must NSP locations be inspected?**

NSPs must be inspected prior to 31 August each year under section 50J of the CFA Act.

# Section 3

*Summary of factors for Council to consider in assessing potential NSP locations prior to designation*

## 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> <i>See section 3.2(a)</i>	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> <i>See section 3.2(b)</i>	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>		
	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.		
<b>Maintenance of NSP in accordance with CFA assessment criteria</b> <i>See section 3.2(c)</i>	Can Council maintain the potential NSP in accordance with the criteria taken into account by the CFA in arriving at its fire rating assessment?  <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>		
<b>Opening of the NSP</b> <i>See section 3.2(d)</i>	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.  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>Council NSPP Criteria</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>	<b>Council comments</b>	<b>Satisfied? Yes/No</b>
<b>Defendable space and fire suppression activities</b> <i>See section 3.2(e)</i>	<p>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)?</p> <p><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></p>		
	<p>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?</p>		
<b>Defendability of buildings</b> <i>See section 3.2(f)</i>	<p>If the potential NSP is a building, has Council 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?</p>		
<b>Signage</b> <i>See section 3.2(g)</i>	<p>Can appropriate signage be erected at the entry to the potential NSP, and in its vicinity?</p> <p>If signage needs to be placed on private land, can Council obtain the consent of the relevant landowner to the erection of the signage?</p>		
<b>Maintenance and maintainability</b> <i>See section 3.2(h)</i>	<p>Is the potential NSP capable of being maintained to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council NSPP Criteria?</p> <p>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.</p>		
<b>Disabled access</b> <i>See section 3.2(j)</i>	<p>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?</p>		
<b>Alternative uses of potential NSP</b> <i>See section 3.2(k)</i>	<p>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?</p>		
<b>Community Communication</b> <i>See section 3.2(l)</i>	<p>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?</p>		

# SECTION FOUR

## *COUNCIL ASSESSMENTS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES CERTIFIED BY THE COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY*

In accordance with Section 50G(5) of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958, the CFA has completed assessments for, and certified in writing, the suitability of the following Neighbourhood Safer Places within the municipal area of the City of Ballarat for the 2024-2025 period;

- (1) The Central Business District of Ballarat, specifically an area encompassed within the road boundaries of Dawson, Lydiard, Mair and Dana Streets.
- (2) Canadian Lakes Boulevard, Canadian in the vicinity of the intersection of Canadian Lakes Boulevard and Carnaby Way and the intersection of Canadian Lakes Boulevard and Provincial Way.
- (3) The car park at the rear of the Midvale Shopping Centre located at the corner of Geelong Road and Whitehorse Road, Mount Clear.
- (4) The Central Business District of Buninyong, specifically an area centred around the intersection of the Midland Highway and the Ballarat-Buninyong Road and bounded approximately by the road boundaries of Winter, Eyre, Inglis and Scott Streets.
- (5) The Invermay Recreation Reserve at the corner of Swinglers Road and Muscatel Road, Invermay.

The following assessments of each of the five sites are consistent with the requirements of Section 50F(1)(a) of the CFA Act 1958 as amended.

These, and any future assessments for new Neighbourhood Safer Places, will also be reviewed by the City of Ballarat's Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) as established pursuant to Section 21(3) of the Emergency Management Act 1986.

# COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACE ASSESSMENT

## SITE ONE - CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT OF BALLARAT



<b>Council NSPP Criteria</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>	<b>Council comments</b>	<b>Satisfied? Yes/No</b>
<b>Consents and rights of access</b> <i>See section 3.2(a)</i>	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.	Council is the Responsible Authority pursuant to the provisions of the Road Management Act 2004 for the road reserve which includes both road surfaces, footpaths and the Sturt Street gardens reserve. Doveton Street forms part of the Midland Highway and is a Vic Roads responsibility, but only forms a thoroughfare through the NSP space.	Yes
	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>	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
<b>Access and egress</b> <i>See section 3.2(b)</i>	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>	There is adequate road access from all four directions. As the commercial centre of Ballarat numerous access roads pass through the applicable area. Sturt Street specifically is a wide four lane boulevard and the area can accommodate substantial numbers of people in the road and garden reserves.	Yes
	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.	All of the surrounding streets are high-use roads with appropriate intensive maintenance regimes in place. The size of the road reserves allows for movement through and within of substantial numbers of vehicles and reasonable parking opportunities.	Yes
<b>Maintenance of NSP in accordance with CFA assessment</b> <i>See section 3.2(c)</i>	Can Council maintain the potential NSP in accordance with the criteria taken into account by the CFA in arriving at its fire rating assessment?  <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>	Council is able to meet the specific requirements for the maintenance of the area.	Yes
<b>Opening of the NSP</b> <i>See section 3.2(d)</i>	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.  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.	The area is not enclosed and is therefore accessible at all times. Should an event occur during business hours formal traffic management procedures would need to be addressed.	Yes

<b>Council NSPP Criteria</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>	<b>Council comments</b>	<b>Satisfied? Yes/No</b>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>As this site is an open, public area, there would be no additional costs incurred.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>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)?</p>	<p>As an open area the CBD is not suitable as a relief centre or staging area. There are no specific intended alternate uses for the site in an emergency scenario.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Defendable space</b> <i>See section 3.2(e)</i></p>	<p>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)?</p> <p><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></p>	<p>The applicable site is surrounded by buildings, but the wide road reserves provide effective access to CFA units with the Ballarat City Brigade located in close proximity.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>Will approval be required under legislation such as the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)</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?</p>	<p>An environmental assessment has been conducted of the site and no issues pertaining to native vegetation have been identified. There has been no change in the environmental profile of the site since the NSP was originally declared.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Defendability of buildings</b> <i>See section 3.2(f)</i></p>	<p>If the potential NSP is a building, has Council 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?</p>	<p>This factor is not applicable as the NSP is an open space and not a building.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p><b>Signage</b> <i>See section 3.2(g)</i></p>	<p>Can appropriate signage be erected at the entry to the potential NSP, and in its vicinity?</p>	<p>There are appropriate locations within the garden reserve and footpaths in Sturt Street for signage and appropriate signs are currently erected on the footpaths on either side of Sturt Street between Dawson and Lyons Street and Lydiard and Armstrong Streets.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>If signage needs to be placed on private land, can Council obtain the consent of the relevant landowner to the erection of the signage?</p>	<p>Not applicable as the area is Council-controlled land.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p><b>Maintenance and maintainability</b> <i>See section 3.2(h)</i></p>	<p>Is the potential NSP capable of being maintained to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council NSPP Criteria?</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>The open areas are currently being maintained to a level consistent with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria. Surrounding buildings have been and remain subject to Essential Services regulations for design.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Disabled access</b> <i>See section 3.2(j)</i></p>	<p>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?</p>	<p>Disabled parking bays are located within the designated area and footpaths and crossings meet design requirements.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<b>Council NSPP Criteria</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>	<b>Council comments</b>	<b>Satisfied? Yes/No</b>
<b>Alternative uses of potential NSP</b> <i>See section 3.2(k)</i>	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?	In the event of a significant fire occurring, Council can institute formal traffic management arrangements to keep the area accessible for its application as an NSP.	Yes
<b>Community Communication</b> <i>See section 3.2(l)</i>	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?	A number of communication channels will be utilised during each fire season, including, but not limited to, advertising and editorial in local newspapers, radio, television, Council publications and Council's website. These communications will provide information to the public on the locations of Neighbourhood Safer Places as well as their function and when they should be used. Formal communication shall be managed by the Country Fire Authority.	Yes



**(i) Intersection of Sturt and Armstrong Streets representing the approximate centre point of the CBD Neighbourhood Safer Place.**



- (ii) Easterly view down Sturt Street towards Lydiard Street encompassing potential assembly areas in the garden reserve.

## COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACE ASSESSMENT

### SITE TWO - CANADIAN LAKES BOULEVARD





Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
<p><b>Consents and rights of access</b></p> <p>See section 3.2(a)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Council is the Responsible Authority pursuant to the provisions of the Road Management Act 2004 for the road reserve which includes both road surfaces and footpaths. Council-managed public spaces are located either side of the Boulevard including sections of crown land over which Council is Committee of Management.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
		The formal NSP space does not incorporate any freehold land.	
	<p>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:</p> <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>	Not applicable.	Not applicable
<p><b>Access and egress</b> <i>See section 3.2(b)</i></p>	<p>Do access routes to the potential NSP allow for:</p> <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>	A well-maintained road provides access to and egress from the site. The grassed public reserve on the southern side of the boulevard provides for adequate parking without impeding traffic flow into the site including emergency vehicles. Whilst there is a single roadway into and out of the site, the provision of an NSP within Canadian Lakes provides a better option for residents than potentially being stuck in traffic in Geelong Road whilst attempting to access any feasible alternate site.	Yes
	<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>	The road reserve is well maintained with adequate capacity and surrounding parking. Street lighting is in place. The nearby presence of a roundabout at the corner of Geelong Road and Canadian Boulevard acts as a traffic calmer but should not impede access to the site for vehicles.	Yes
<p><b>Maintenance of NSP in accordance with CFA assessment</b> <i>See section 3.2(c)</i></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>	Grassland in the open reserves is managed on an ongoing basis and forms part of Council's regular open space maintenance. Tree management of the site in the longer term has been identified by the CFA as an issue and ongoing monitoring as part of the annual statutory review of NSPs will be essential. The 2024 review did not identify any substantive change in the trees on the site and no extensive works are required at this time.	Yes

<b>Council NSPP Criteria</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>	<b>Council comments</b>	<b>Satisfied? Yes/No</b>
<p><b>Opening of the NSP</b> <i>See section 3.2(d)</i></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> <p>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.</p>	<p>The site encompasses a road reserve plus open space and therefore is available on a twenty-four-hour basis.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>There are no additional costs involved in keeping the space accessible continuously.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>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)?</p>	<p>There are no likely alternative usages for the site in a fire scenario. It is not suitable as a staging area or for any alternate requirement.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Defendable space and fire suppression activities</b> <i>See section 3.2(e)</i></p>	<p>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)?</p> <p><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></p>	<p>The site meets the requirements both for the scale of the buffer zone and provides adequate space on the extensive open reserves for formal fire activities. The eastern slope of the lake on Provincial Way has a significant gradient but this also assists in fire protection. A concrete path along the edge of the lake provides for reasonable access to the site from the road reserve for people with mobility difficulties.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>An environmental assessment has been conducted at the site and no native vegetation issues were observed. The current slashing and mowing program can be maintained without environmental impact. An update during the 2024 review did not raise any issues.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Defendability of buildings</b> <i>See section 3.2(f)</i></p>	<p>If the potential NSP is a building, has Council 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?</p>	<p>This NSP is not a building so this risk factor is not applicable.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p><b>Signage</b> <i>See section 3.2(g)</i></p>	<p>Can appropriate signage be erected at the entry to the potential NSP, and in its vicinity?</p>	<p>Signage has been erected at the westerly corner of Canadian Lakes Boulevard and Provincial Way and in the vicinity of the intersection of Provincial Way and Broderick Court.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>If signage needs to be placed on private land, can Council obtain the consent of the relevant landowner to the erection of the signage?</p>	<p>This requirement is not applicable as the land is Council-managed.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

<b>Council NSPP Criteria</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>	<b>Council comments</b>	<b>Satisfied? Yes/No</b>
<p><b>Maintenance and maintainability</b> <i>See section 3.2(h)</i></p>	<p>Is the potential NSP capable of being maintained to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council NSPP Criteria?  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.</p>	<p>The primary maintenance considerations at this site relate to ongoing slashing and mowing as well as ongoing assessment of trees in the vicinity, maintenance that can be undertaken appropriately within budgetary constraints and available resources.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Disabled access</b> <i>See section 3.2(j)</i></p>	<p>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?</p>	<p>There are no formal disabled parking bays, but both the road surface and paved walkways are accessible to people with mobility issues.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Alternative uses of potential NSP</b> <i>See section 3.2(k)</i></p>	<p>Can Council manage alternative uses which may be made of the potential NSP to ensure that those uses will not compromise the function of the place as a potential NSP?</p>	<p>Canadian Lakes Boulevard is used primarily as a mean of access and egress from the housing estate and alternate usage is not applicable. The reserves and parkland are used for leisure activities and in the occurrence of a fire such uses would be curtailed.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Community Communication</b> <i>See section 3.2(l)</i></p>	<p>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?</p>	<p>Several communication channels will be utilised, including, but not limited to, advertising and editorial in local newspapers, radio, television, Council publications and Council's website. These communications will provide information to the public on the locations of Neighbourhood Safer Places as well as their function and when they should be used. The CFA shall be responsible for the dissemination of messages during the fire season.</p>	<p>Yes</p>



**(i) Concrete walkway leading from Canadian Lakes Boulevard to sloping grassed area and lakeside.**



**(ii) Grassed area to the south-west of Canadian Lakes Boulevard suitable for parking.**

# SITE THREE - MIDVALE SHOPPING CENTRE, REAR CAR PARK



Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
<b>Consents and rights of access</b>	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.	Whilst the shopping centre and environs are private property, the rear car park at Midvale is a Council-owned and managed site. At times of	Yes

<b>Council NSPP Criteria</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>	<b>Council comments</b>	<b>Satisfied? Yes/No</b>
<p><i>See section 3.2(a)</i></p>		<p>high car volumes at the site it should still be accessible for this intended purpose.</p>	
	<p>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 arrangements which allow it to use the land as a potential NSP on reasonably satisfactory terms? Also consider whether Council has the right to:</p> <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>	<p>Not applicable to this site.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p><b>Access and egress</b> <i>See section 3.2(b)</i></p>	<p>Do access routes to the potential NSP allow for:</p> <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>	<p>There are three entrances to the car park from Geelong Road, Whitehorse Road and Waverley Lane. It is considered that these options are sufficient to allow ingress to potential users of the site and emergency services.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<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>Road surfaces are well maintained in the vicinity and there is adequate provision for lighting. During peak traffic periods in the morning and afternoon Geelong Road does have some capacity constraints. At other times the site is readily accessible, and traffic moves relatively freely.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Maintenance of NSP in accordance with CFA assessment</b> <i>See section 3.2(c)</i></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>The site has relatively minimal foliage and no specific open space maintenance issues have been identified in the CFA assessment. Council shall be able to meet maintenance criteria.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Opening of the NSP</b> <i>See section 3.2(d)</i></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> <p>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.</p>	<p>All entrances to the car park are accessible on a twenty-four-hour basis. As the site operates as a shopping centre through most of the day, parking options will vary according to the time of day when an incident occurs.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>There are no additional costs that would be incurred by Council in ensuring continual access to the site.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>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)?</p>	<p>The site has no alternative emergency uses at this time that would impact upon its functionality as a Neighbourhood Safer Place.</p>	<p>Yes</p>



<b>Council NSPP Criteria</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>	<b>Council comments</b>	<b>Satisfied? Yes/No</b>
<b>Defendable space</b> <i>See section 3.2(e)</i>	<p>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)?</p> <p><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></p> <p>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?</p>	<p>The car park has fencing and private dwellings to the west and north with commercial buildings to the east and immediate south. These provide good protection from radiant heat and would not impede fire fighting activities.</p> <p>An environmental assessment has been made of the site. It was considered that the existing eucalypts to the east of the site do not pose a substantive fire risk and that removal, if required, could be undertaken under permit.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
<b>Defendability of buildings</b> <i>See section 3.2(f)</i>	<p>If the potential NSP is a building, has Council 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?</p>	<p>This site is not a building so this risk factor does not need to be assessed.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<b>Signage</b> <i>See section 3.2(g)</i>	<p>Can appropriate signage be erected at the entry to the potential NSP, and in its vicinity?</p> <p>If signage needs to be placed on private land, can Council obtain the consent of the relevant landowner to the erection of the signage?</p>	<p>Signage has been erected in the car park area to illustrate the location of this NSP.</p> <p>Not applicable to this site.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
<b>Maintenance and maintainability</b> <i>See section 3.2(h)</i>	<p>Is the potential NSP capable of being maintained to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council NSPP Criteria?</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Ongoing assessment of the site and surrounds will need to be undertaken. However, it is deemed that there would be no significant issues associated with formal maintenance of this site.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<b>Disabled access</b> <i>See section 3.2(j)</i>	<p>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?</p>	<p>The site has well maintained footpaths, road surfaces and crossovers. Specific disabled parking bays are available and accessible at the site.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<b>Alternative uses of potential NSP</b> <i>See section 3.2(k)</i>	<p>Can Council manage alternative uses which may be made of the potential NSP to ensure that those uses will not compromise the function of the place as a potential NSP?</p>	<p>The principal use of the site is as a car park for a shopping complex. The timing of any fire event will impact to a moderate degree on the number of vehicles and people who can access the site. Traffic management considerations will be taken into account in any future planning for the site.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<b>Community Communication</b>	<p>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?</p>	<p>Several communication channels will be utilised, including, but not limited to, advertising and editorial in local newspapers, radio, television,</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<b>Council NSPP Criteria</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>	<b>Council comments</b>	<b>Satisfied? Yes/No</b>
<i>See section 3.2(l)</i>		Council publications and Council's website. These communications will provide information to the public on the locations of Neighbourhood Safer Places as well as their function and when they should be used. The CFA will coordinate the provision of fire season communication.	



**(i) Northerly facing view of rear car park at Midvale Shopping Centre.**



**(ii) Southerly facing view of rear car park at Midvale Shopping Centre.**

## **COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACE ASSESSMENT**

# SITE FOUR - CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT OF BUNINYONG



Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
<p><b>Consents and rights of access</b></p> <p>See section 3.2(a)</p>	<p>If the potential NSP is located on Council-owned land, can Council use the land as an NSP if required? Consider whether Council allows the land to be used for potentially inconsistent purposes, such as for farmers' markets, fetes, circuses etc.</p>	<p>Council is the Responsible Authority pursuant to the provisions of the Road Management Act 2004 for the service roads in the centre of Buninyong with Vic Roads as manager for the major arterial roads. The area is readily accessible from multiple directions and whilst traffic flows are significant at times such usage</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
	<p>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:</p> <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>	<p>would not impede its usage as a place of last resort.</p> <p>There are no access issues applicable to the open area and the vicinity can be adequately maintained. Appropriate sites for signage exist and may be erected with the co-operation and consent of VicRoads where applicable.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Access and egress</b> <i>See section 3.2(b)</i></p>	<p>Do access routes to the potential NSP allow for:</p> <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> <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>The two roads that cross through the CBD are the Midland Highway (the primary route between Ballarat and Geelong) and the Ballarat-Geelong Road. Both roads are well established and maintained and provide a relative ease of ingress and egress from the area. Ongoing and planned works for the Ballarat-Geelong Road will assist in maintaining good traffic flows through the area into the future.</p> <p>The CBD of Buninyong features prominent lighting at night. The Midland Highway is a wide and well-established road with no extensive intruding tree cover. It has a high traffic capacity and would be capable of carrying many vehicles and unlikely to be obscured by smoke. The Ballarat-Geelong Road does have some capacity constraints, centred on the intersection of that road and Whitehorse Road in Mount Clear, as well as some of the area between the University of Ballarat and Canadian Lakes Boulevard.</p> <p>These constraints primarily arise around school pick up and drop off times. Tree covers through the Mount Clear and Mount Helen areas may also add to smoke issues. However, the placement of a number of NSP sites along this route including this one, one at Midvale and another at Canadian Lakes should ensure there is an accessible site if required in these regions. Ongoing road works and foliage clearance in the</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
		vicinity of the road will also aid travel and access.	
<b>Maintenance of NSP in accordance with CFA assessment criteria</b> <i>See section 3.2(c)</i>	Can Council maintain the potential NSP in accordance with the criteria considered by the CFA in arriving at its fire rating assessment?  <i>If the CFA have not provided sufficient information in relation to the criteria it has considered in arriving at its fire rating assessment, it may be necessary for Council to seek further information from the CFA.</i>	Council can meet the specific requirements for the maintenance of this area.	Yes
<b>Opening of the NSP</b> <i>See section 3.2(d)</i>	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.  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.	The area is not enclosed and would therefore be accessible at all times. Should an event occur during business hours, formal traffic management procedures would need to be addressed.	Yes
	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?	As this site is an open, public area, there would be no additional costs incurred.	Yes
	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)?	The CBD is an open area and would therefore not be suitable as a relief centre.	Yes
<b>Defendable space</b> <i>See section 3.2(e)</i>	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>	The applicable site is surrounded by buildings, but the road reserves provide effective access to CFA units. The Buninyong CFA Station is located within the boundaries of the NSP.	Yes
	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?	An environmental assessment has been conducted of the site and no issues pertaining to native vegetation have been identified.	Yes
<b>Defendability of buildings</b> <i>See section 3.2(f)</i>	If the potential NSP is a building, has Council 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?	This factor is not applicable as the NSP is an open space and not a building.	Not applicable.
<b>Signage</b> <i>See section 3.2(g)</i>	Can appropriate signage be erected at the entry to the potential NSP, and in its vicinity?	There are appropriate locations within the Buninyong CBD where signage may be erected that is visible to both passing traffic and pedestrians. A minimum of two signs meeting	Yes

<b>Council NSPP Criteria</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>	<b>Council comments</b>	<b>Satisfied? Yes/No</b>
		the Emergency Services Commissioner's guidelines shall be erected at this location.	
<b>Maintenance and maintainability</b> <i>See section 3.2(h)</i>	Is the potential NSP capable of being maintained to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council NSPP Criteria?  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.	The open areas are currently being maintained to a level consistent with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria. Surrounding buildings have been and remain subject to Essential Services regulations for design.	Yes
<b>Disabled access</b> <i>See section 3.2(j)</i>	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?	Disabled parking bays are located within the designated area and footpaths and crossings meet current design requirements.	Yes
<b>Alternative uses of potential NSP</b> <i>See section 3.2(k)</i>	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?	In the event of a significant fire occurring, Council and / or emergency services can institute formal traffic management arrangements to keep the area accessible for its application as an NSP.	Yes
<b>Community Communication</b> <i>See section 3.2(l)</i>	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?	A number of communication channels will be utilised, including, but not limited to, advertising and editorial in local newspapers, radio, television, Council publications and Council's website. These communications will provide information to the public on the locations of Neighbourhood Safer Places as well as their function and when they should be used. The CFA will coordinate advertising and educational messages in the lead up to and during the fire season.	Yes







(i) View of Buninyong CBD facing west.



(ii) Easterly facing view of Buninyong CBD.

# COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACE ASSESSMENT

## SITE FIVE – INVERMAY RECREATION RESERVE, INVERMAY



Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
<p><b>Consents and rights of access</b> See section 3.2(a)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The site is on Council-owned land with a management committee in place. A variety of sporting and other activities take place at the site, but in the event of a fire no activities would predominate over its use as an NSP.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Council NSPP Criteria	Issues to consider	Council comments	Satisfied? Yes/No
	<p>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:</p> <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>	Not applicable.	Yes
<p><b>Access and egress</b> <i>See section 3.2(b)</i></p>	<p>Do access routes to the potential NSP allow for:</p> <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> <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>There is adequate access to the site via Swinglers and Muscatel Roads.</p> <p>The access roads are well maintained in accordance with Council's Road Management Plan. Effective tree management in the vicinity should ensure road blockages and excessive smoke haze do not present access issues.</p>	Yes
<p><b>Maintenance of NSP in accordance with CFA assessment criteria</b> <i>See section 3.2(c)</i></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>	Council is able to meet the specific requirements for the maintenance of this area.	Yes
<p><b>Opening of the NSP</b> <i>See section 3.2(d)</i></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> <p>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.</p> <p>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?</p> <p>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)?</p>	<p>The area is not enclosed and would therefore be accessible at all times.</p> <p>As this site is an open, public area, there would be no additional costs incurred.</p> <p>The Recreation Reserve is an open area and would therefore not be suitable as a relief centre. Whilst buildings are present on the site, they are not included in Council's recovery planning documents as suitable relief centres.</p>	Yes

<b>Council NSPP Criteria</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>	<b>Council comments</b>	<b>Satisfied? Yes/No</b>
<b>Defendable space</b> <i>See section 3.2(e)</i>	<p>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)?</p> <p><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></p> <p>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?</p>	<p>Extensive open space is located around the Reserve with a large buffer zone in which fire operations could be conducted.</p> <p>An environmental assessment has been conducted of the site and no issues pertaining to native vegetation have been identified.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
<b>Defendability of buildings</b> <i>See section 3.2(f)</i>	<p>If the potential NSP is a building, has Council 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?</p>	<p>This factor is not applicable as the NSP is an open space and not a building.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<b>Signage</b> <i>See section 3.2(g)</i>	<p>Can appropriate signage be erected at the entry to the potential NSP, and in its vicinity?</p> <p>If signage needs to be placed on private land, can Council obtain the consent of the relevant landowner to the erection of the signage?</p>	<p>Effective signage can be erected on the grassed embankments near the main entrance drive and in the large car park at the Recreation Reserve.</p> <p>Not applicable as site is Council owned.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
<b>Maintenance and maintainability</b> <i>See section 3.2(h)</i>	<p>Is the potential NSP capable of being maintained to ensure continuing compliance with the CFA Fire Rating Criteria and the Council NSPP Criteria?</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>As both the Reserve and the majority of the surrounding buffer area is Council owned or controlled land, maintenance can be readily affected to maintain the appropriate use of the site as an NSP.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<b>Disabled access</b> <i>See section 3.2(j)</i>	<p>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?</p>	<p>Disabled access to the site is sufficient with the main entrance to the Reserve being a ramped area. Provision for the parking of adapted vehicles at the site is suitable.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<b>Alternative uses of potential NSP</b> <i>See section 3.2(k)</i>	<p>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?</p>	<p>There are no anticipated alternate uses for this site in the event of a fire scenario.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<b>Community Communication</b> <i>See section 3.2(l)</i>	<p>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?</p>	<p>Several communication channels will be utilised, including, but not limited to, advertising and editorial in local newspapers, radio, television, Council publications and Council's website. These communications will provide information to the public on the locations of Neighbourhood Safer Places as well as their</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<b>Council NSPP Criteria</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>	<b>Council comments</b>	<b>Satisfied? Yes/No</b>
		function and when they should be used. Such advertising shall be emphasised in the lead up to each fire season and will be coordinated by the Country Fire Authority.	



**(i) Car parking area and major buildings at the Invermay Recreation Reserve.**





(ii) Westerly facing view of car park and reserve.

# SECTION FIVE

## *CITY OF BALLARAT PROCESSES FOR THE IDENTIFICATION, INSPECTION, MAINTENANCE AND DECOMMISSIONING OF DESIGNATED NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES*

### **5.1 – FUTURE IDENTIFICATION OF FURTHER NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES**

The current list of Neighbourhood Safer Places has been established with the cooperation of the Country Fire Authority.

From 2010 onwards Council shall be required to identify any future suitable sites that can be used as NSPs prior to **31 May** of each year. This requirement is encompassed within Section 50G of the CFA Act.

In identifying future NSPs Council will consider any future guidelines issued by the CFA and the consideration of the suitability of any additional sites will be made by the individuals occupying the roles of Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO) and Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO).

Any future sites identified shall then be referred to the CFA for formal assessment and certification prior to Council assessment against this Plan and formal designation if deemed appropriate. That assessment and certification should be completed in time to allow Council to complete its own assessments prior to **30 June** of each year.

The designation process for any new sites will then be completed by **31 July** of each year and the CFA notified of any decisions made prior to **30 September** of that same year. It will be the responsibility of the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer to provide that formal notification to the CFA and to make amendments to the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan under existing delegations to reflect any changes in designated Neighbourhood Safer Places.

The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee will also include notification of changes in revisions to the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

This Municipal Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan will also be amended on an annual basis to reflect any changes in the list of designated sites as well as any alterations in legislation and regulation that may impact upon the suitability of existing sites.

## 5.2 – ANNUAL INSPECTION PROTOCOLS

A formal review of each site will be made on an annual basis prior to the fire season in order to confirm that there are no reasons why each site should not remain as a designated Neighbourhood Safer Place. These assessments will be undertaken by the CFA against their Assessment Guidelines as issued from time to time on their website and published in the Victorian Government Gazette.

In addition, a review will be conducted by Council staff with fire management and/or emergency management responsibilities.

In accordance with Section 50J of the CFA Act this work will be undertaken prior to **31 August** of each year. The outcomes of that review process shall be incorporated into any future amendments to this Plan.

## 5.3 – MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITY

### 5.3.1 – Signage

Section 50H of the CFA Act includes the requirement that Council erect appropriate signage. A template for that signage and the guidelines on signage published by the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner are attached to this document.

Initially, signs are being prepared by the Municipal Association of Victoria and shall include additional information about the purpose and use of Neighbourhood Safer Places.

Up to three such signs shall be erected at each designated location depending upon the layout and geographical area of each location.

Council's maintenance responsibilities include ensuring such signage remains in place, is unobscured and legible. Regular inspections in connection with open space maintenance of the sites will be undertaken to ensure the signs are adequately maintained.

### 5.3.2 – Site Maintenance

Section 50I of the CFA Act assigns the responsibility for the maintenance of NSP sites to municipal councils including when the site is not Council-controlled land.

That maintenance will be undertaken in accordance with CFA guidelines and the factors that Council shall address through a regular inspection protocol shall include.

- (1) Preparation of sites if required for their intended use.
- (2) Open space maintenance including slashing and mowing where required to keep fuel loads at acceptable levels.
- (3) Road and path maintenance to ensure vehicle and pedestrian access and egress to each site is maintained.

- (4) Review of development in the area to ensure the buffer zones are not compromised.

Key maintenance shall be undertaken prior to **30 October** of each year to ensure readiness for the fire season.

## **5.4 – DECOMMISSIONING OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES**

Any designated Neighbourhood Safer Place may be decommissioned by the Chief Executive Officer of Council under delegated authority in the following circumstances.

- (1) If the annual assessment by the Country Authority deems that an NSP is no longer suitable for its intended purpose,
- (2) If Council's review process establishes that the NSP is no longer suitable for its intended purposes, or
- (3) The NSP is on non-Council land and the authority to use the land has been withdrawn by the landowner/manager.

The process of decommission will include the completion of an Instrument of Decommission by the Chief Executive Officer of Council and appropriate amendments to reflect the change to this Plan, the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan and the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

## **5.5 – DISTRIBUTION OF THIS PLAN**

This Plan shall be posted on Council's website and made available in hard copy form from the municipal offices. This is consistent with the requirements of Section 50F(4)(a) and Section 50F(4)(b) of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958.

# SECTION SIX

## *DESIGNATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND FORMAL ADOPTION OF THE MUNICIPAL NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES PLAN*

### **INSTRUMENT OF DESIGNATION**

The Country Fire Authority has undertaken certification processes consistent with the requirements of Section 50G(5) of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 for the following sites for the 2024-2025 period;

- (1) The Central Business District of Ballarat
- (2) Canadian Lakes Boulevard, Canadian in the vicinity of the intersections of Canadian Lakes Boulevard and Carnaby Way and Canadian Lakes Boulevard and Provincial Way
- (3) Car park at the rear of Midvale Shopping Centre at the corner of Geelong Road and Whitehorse Road, Mount Clear
- (4) The Central Business District of Buninyong
- (5) Invermay Recreation Reserve

Council has completed an assessment process on each of these sites and deems them to be suitable for use as Neighbourhood Safer Places.

The assessments have been conducted in a manner consistent with the principles contained within this Municipal Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan.

An annual review for 2024-2025 has also been conducted by Council staff in relation to the sites in the Central Business District of Ballarat, Canadian Lakes Boulevard and Midvale Shopping Centre in accordance with the requirements of Section 50J of the CFA Act.

I therefore formally designate all the aforementioned sites as Neighbourhood Safer Places for the City of Ballarat pursuant to Section 50G of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 and in accordance with the delegation provided by the Council at its Ordinary Meeting of 9 December 2009.

Signed, sealed and delivered this 19 Day of September, 2024 for and on behalf of **Ballarat City Council** (ABN 37 601 599 422) by;

*Evan King*

.....  
Evan King – Chief Executive Officer

*Sarah Brackenridge*

.....  
Witness Signature

Sarah Brackenridge

.....  
Witness Name

**ADOPTION OF PLAN**

This Municipal Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan was adopted by Ballarat City Council on this 21<sup>st</sup> Day of December 2009.

**The COMMON SEAL of  
BALLARAT CITY COUNCIL** )  
was hereunto affixed )  
in the presence of: )



Mayor/Councillor

*John A. J. [Signature]*

Councillor

*[Signature]*

Chief Executive Officer

*[Signature]*

# APPENDIX A

*TEMPLATE FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACE SIGNAGE AND SIGNAGE GUIDELINES ISSUED BY THE OFFICER OF THE EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMISSIONER*





## **NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES SIGNAGE – TEXT COMPONENT**

### WARNING

This Designated Neighbourhood Safer Place is a Place of Last Resort during the passage of a bushfire. Whilst it may offer some protection from bushfire, the safety or survival of those who assemble here is not guaranteed.

Before deciding to head towards, or enter, this NSP in the event of bushfire, be aware that:

- Many houses may offer better protection than this NSP
- Travelling to this NSP when there is bushfire can be extremely dangerous. There is no guarantee that you will be safe doing so
  - This NSP may not prevent death or injury from fire, embers or radiant heat when you get here
  - You should only use this NSP when your primary bushfire plan has failed or cannot be implemented
    - This NSP only has limited capacity
  - There is no guarantee that CFA or other emergency services will be present at this NSP during a bushfire
  - No facilities are provided for people with special needs, including those requiring medical attention
    - This NSP may be uncomfortable and no amenities such as food and drinks will be provided
      - There is no provision for animals

VicEmergency Hotline – 1800 226 226

**Country Fire Authority Act 1958**

**Section 50H**

**Signage Guidelines for Neighbourhood Safer Places**

1. Under section 50H of the **Country Fire Authority Act 1958**, municipal councils are required to:
  - (1) ensure that appropriate signs are provided at each designated neighbourhood safer place in its municipal district; and in meeting that obligation; and
  - (2) have regard to signage guidelines issued from time to time on the Internet site of the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner (OESC).
2. The OESC has, in consultation with the Country Fire Authority and the Municipal Association of Victoria, developed a standard sign for designated neighbourhood safer places.
3. The specifications for the standard sign are set out in Schedule 1.
4. Nothing in these guidelines prevents a municipal council from providing additional information on the sign post displaying the standard sign. For example, such information may relate to the capacity or use of the place.
5. These guidelines come into effect on the date below and continue to apply until otherwise replaced or varied.



Bruce Esplin  
**Emergency Services Commissioner**

Dated: *9 December 2009*

# APPENDIX B

## *CRITICAL DATES IN THE ANNUAL REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES*

**31 MAY** – Identification of any new suitable sites to be considered as Neighbourhood Safer Places to be submitted to the Country Fire Authority for certification.

**30 JUNE** – Certification to be completed along with formal Council assessments of sites proposed for designation.

**31 JULY** – Final designation date for any new NSPs that have passed the CFA certification and Council assessment process.

**31 AUGUST** – Last date for completion of annual Council assessments of existing Neighbourhood Safer Places.

**30 SEPTEMBER** – Final date for the CFA notified of any new NSPs that have received Council designation.

**30 OCTOBER** – Key maintenance at each Neighbourhood Safer Place (new and existing) to be completed in preparation for the fire season.