

RFMP 2019–23

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) has developed a draft Regional Fire Management Plan (RFMP) for the five-year period 2019–23, detailing bushfire mitigation treatments which are proposed for land managed by the Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) and also relevant lands managed by Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS).

The draft RFMP has been developed by working closely with the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) as part of the delivery of version 4 of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan.

The revision of the previous draft RFMP was required after the 2020 Orroral bushfire burnt through roughly 80% of Namadgi National Park and the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, changing the bushfire risk profile across the ACT and surrounding areas of NSW.

The revision of the draft RFMP also addresses the implications of updates to the Fire Management Zones made by ESA in the SBMP v4.

The consultative community engagement phase of the project aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- Garner support and an understanding for bushfire risk management in the ACT across a wide range of stakeholders.
- Ensure the ACT community is aware of changes to the draft RFMP due to the 2020 Orroral fire.
- Ensure the ACT community is aware of recent updates to SBMP Fire Management Zones: the implications of the changes and how they will be addressed on EPSDD and TCCS land.
- Engage in dialogue with those members of the public who have interest or involvement with bushfire fuel management on EPSDD managed land.



Regional Fire Management Plan 2019-2023

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD



THE CONVERSATION

- We held a face-to-face consultation with key stakeholders on 22 March 2021.
- We then held two face to face public consultations: North Canberra on 24 March 2021 and South Canberra on 31 March 2021.
- The draft RFMP was then available for viewing and public consultation online, through the ACT YourSay website from 10 March 2021 to 7 May 2021.
- The public was also engaged through social media via the ACT PCS and ACT ESA Facebook pages and two radio interviews (ABC and 2CC).
- The public and stakeholder consultations built on the engagements on the draft RFMP that originally commenced in 2019.

WHO WE ENGAGED

Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders were identified through the previous 2019 RFMP consultation process. They represented agencies, companies, organisations and councils who have interest or involvement with fire management on EDSPP land in the ACT and also included regional contacts from NSW. They were:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community – ATSIEB	Horse agistment facilities, owners and managers
ACT Bushfire Council	ICON Water
ACT Community Councils	ACT Landcare
ACT F&R Community Fire Units (CFU) Consultative Committee	National Capital Authority
ACT Health	National Parks Association of the ACT
ACT Parkcare Coordinators Group	Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee
ACT Volunteer Brigades Association	Neighbourhood Watch ACT
ACTEW/AGL	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
Asthma Foundation	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
Commissioner of the Environment	NSW Rural Fire Service (NSWRFS) – neighbouring zones
Conservation Council ACT and member groups	Rural Landholders Association
Dhawura Ngunnawal Elders Council	Scientific Committee
Department of Defence	Security and Emergency Management Operations Group
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Suburban Land Agency
Evo Energy	Transport Canberra City Services
	United Firefighters Union

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These key stakeholders were contacted individually with a letter / email updating them on the status of the RFMP project, and the requirement for the revision. They were invited to attend a 'key stakeholder consultation' evening.

The general public

The ACT community and surrounding regions were invited to two public consultation sessions, and to read more detailed information and provide feedback through the ACT Government YourSay Conversations website. This public engagement was advertised through the YourSay website, local radio stations, ACT PCS and ACT ESA websites and Facebook pages.

Key insights from the community

Proposed changes to RFMP post-Orroral

1. There is strong support for excluding fuel treatments in the footprint of the Orroral fire for the duration of this plan 2019–23.
2. Support also exists for using best practice research and evidence when moving forward with treatments in the Orroral Fire footprint in the next five-year plan.

'Residual Risk' fire planning

3. The approach to residual risk fire planning was well received. It is very technical, however, and reporting on residual risk will also be more complex for the public to understand.
4. There was interest in residual risk modelling for ecological and catchment values, in addition to the work already done on risk to life and property.
5. Tenure-blind residual risk planning would be very helpful in understanding where risk is greatest, not just for EPSDD managed land.

Changes to ESA's Fire Management Zoning

6. Support exists for the allowance of flexible inner and outer asset protection zones where appropriate (being able to select a 60m Inner Asset Protection Zones (IAPZ) with no Outer Asset Protection Zone (OAPZ), compared to a 30m IAPZ and up to 200m OAPZ).

Cultural Burning

7. There is strong support for the inclusion of cultural burning in ACT fire management.
8. There was positive feedback on the development of Aboriginal Fire Management Zones (AFMZ), however with only one designated area (Tidbinbilla), it is hoped more can be included in future planning.
9. Monitoring and evaluation of cultural burns and AFMZs is important going forward.

Online Content

10. Access and readability of online maps was unclear for some members of the public. Being able to understand map legends and colour coding was key to being able to understand changes to ESA's Fire Management Zones, and to see and understand PCS's proposed fuel treatments.

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WHAT'S NEXT?

Overall, the feedback from key stakeholders and the community was positive. The approach to residual risk fire planning was well received, as was the decision to exclude any fuel treatment from the Orroral Fire footprint in the next five years.

Comments related to changes in the SBMP Fire Management Zones were forwarded to ESA for addressing.

Comments and feedback that were more complex, or which related to specific treatments or individual reserves, will be addressed in individual responses via email or letter. More generally, site specific considerations and issues will be accounted for in the fuel treatment planning phase (for example burn plans and works plans).

To find out more about the finalisation of the Regional Fire Management Plan 2019–23, follow ACT PCS online: ACT PCS Facebook page or website <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/ACT-parks-conservation>. To find out more about the finalisation of the SBMP v4, follow ESA online: ACT ESA Facebook page or website <https://esa.act.gov.au/>

Key Timings
March 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Key Stakeholder and Public Consultations
April - May 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ YourSay website open for comments and feedback
June - July 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Review of consultation feedback and comments
August 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Approval and publishing of final SBMP & RFMP

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

1,333

We reached 1,333 people via
YourSay

43

We spoke to 43
individuals

3

We delivered three
presentations to 40 people

23

We uploaded videos which
were viewed by 23 people.

30

We sent emails to more than
30 stakeholders

60,201

We reached a social media audience
of more than 60,000

73

We received 73 items of
written feedback