

# Emergency Management Planning Reform

## Changes to fire prevention planning at state, regional and municipal levels

The *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018* (EMLA Act) was passed by Parliament in August 2018, and seeks to establish an integrated, comprehensive and coordinated framework for emergency management planning.

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### Summary

- The new integrated and coordinated planning framework in the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (the Act) will incorporate planning for fire prevention as part of overall planning for mitigation.
- The current obligations in the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* (CFA Act) to plan for fire prevention at regional and municipal levels will be replaced by new arrangements which require integrated planning for all hazards.
- The role of municipal fire prevention officers (MFPOs) under the CFA Act and *Metropolitan Fire Brigades Act 1958* (MFB Act) will remain under the new arrangements. In the country area of Victoria, this role will no longer include sitting on municipal fire prevention committees.
- The new arrangements take effect in phases at the state, regional and then municipal levels. The existing arrangements for fire prevention planning will continue in the meantime.

### Current fire prevention arrangements

- There are no specific statutory requirements to plan for fire prevention at the state level. Rather, this planning occurs administratively.
- The CFA Act establishes fire prevention committees at regional and municipal levels to coordinate fire prevention planning. It and the MFB Act also require each council to appoint a MFPO. These arrangements will continue with the establishment of Fire Rescue Victoria.
- The functions of the MFPO in the country area of Victoria include issuing permits to burn during the fire danger period, serving fire prevention notices, providing the CFA a list of neighbourhood safer places and fire refuges in the municipality annually, and sitting on municipal fire prevention committees. MFPOs in the metropolitan district are responsible for issuing fire prevention notices.



## New arrangements for emergency management planning

- The EMLA Act repeals the current arrangements for regional and municipal fire prevention committees in the CFA Act and the obligation to prepare specific fire prevention plans. Fire prevention planning will instead be incorporated within the new integrated, comprehensive planning arrangements in the Act.
- The Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) is responsible for preparing the State Emergency Management Plan for mitigation, response and recovery across all hazards. Similarly, regional and municipal emergency management planning committees (REMPCs and MEMPCs) will be responsible for emergency management planning for mitigation, response and recovery across all hazards.
- The preparer of each plan (being the REMPC, MEMPC or EMC) can decide how to best address fire mitigation, which may include preparation of a sub-plan.

## MFPO

- The role of the MFPO will continue under the new planning arrangements.
- The MFPO's existing functions remain the same, except for their role on the municipal fire prevention committees in the country area of Victoria. That function becomes redundant when the new municipal arrangements take effect on 1 December 2020.

## Phased implementation and effect on fire prevention arrangements

- Existing fire prevention arrangements in the CFA Act and MFPO role continue unchanged for now.
- The existing arrangements for regional fire prevention committees in the CFA Act will be abolished when the new regional arrangements take effect, which is proposed to occur in September 2020.
- The existing arrangements for municipal fire prevention committees in the CFA Act are abolished when the new municipal arrangements take effect, which will occur on 1 December 2020.

The new integrated and coordinated planning framework in the EM Act will incorporate planning for fire prevention as part of overall planning for mitigation.