

Foster and Mirboo North Bushfire Assessments

At the May Council meeting, Bushfire Assessment Summaries and Planning Recommendations for Foster and Mirboo North were adopted.

The Assessments have been prepared to guide land use and development and to ensure bushfire risk is appropriately considered and addressed in structure plans and any future amendments for Foster and Mirboo North. The Assessments are a report only, and do not reflect a change to the South Gippsland Planning Scheme or overlays. If an amendment to the Planning Scheme was proposed, there would be an opportunity for the community to provide feedback via an engagement process.

The Assessments found that Foster has a moderate bushfire risk and is appropriate for moderate growth. Mirboo North, by contrast, was found to have a high bushfire risk, making it appropriate for limited growth only. A key recommendation from the report was that town framework plans for each town should be revised, and additional planning controls applied, to address bushfire risk.

The proposed changes to the Mirboo North Framework Plan include directing additional growth to the south-east of town, and urban growth to the south. The Assessment also recommends adding additional controls to the northern part of Mirboo North to ensure new buildings in this area are constructed with more robust materials that consider potential fire risk.

In Foster, the low density and rural living expansion areas are proposed for removal or replacement with urban growth areas. Additionally, it was suggested that for both townships, Bushfire Management Overlay schedules are removed as these are now outdated and do not appropriately consider the forest vegetation that is present in the area.

The Bushfire Assessment Summaries are part of an “Impact of Bushfire on Regional Growth” project, which was funded and delivered by the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA). The project reflects changes in State Government policy in response to the Royal Commission following the 2019 bushfires. The reports can be viewed online under the respective town names at:

<https://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/whatplansaffectmyarea>

Quote attributable to Clare Williams, Mayor South Gippsland Shire Council:

“The Foster and Mirboo North Bushfire Assessments recognise the various levels of bushfire risks in our regional towns. The Summaries have been developed as a tool to provide guidance for Council and residents on land use and development in these two communities that are susceptible to fire risk.”

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