

MADRA working group

Mallacoota Bushfire Fuel Management

Recommendations 2023



The Mallacoota Bushfire Fuel Management working group was initially convened in 2019 as The Mallacoota Township Bushfire Fuel Management. In May 2020, after the Black Summer fires, MADRA (Mallacoota and Districts Recovery Association) was formed and we were formally accepted as a working group under MADRA.

The group consists of active representation from the local community, DEECA, FFM Vic, CFA and East Gippsland Shire. It has met regularly throughout the last two years.

Our aim is to develop an agreed long-term plan for sensitively reducing bushfire fuel for the protection of Mallacoota township. The plan is not set in concrete and will evolve over time.

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Working Group is to:

- Develop a collaborative, ongoing bushfire fuel management plan for the protection of the township of Mallacoota
- Develop a 3 year, rolling, action plan
- Oversee the implementation of the fuel management action plan
- Review the fuel management action plan annually
- Revisit the overall fuel management plan every five years
- Communicate the plan to land and fire management agencies and to the members of Mallacoota community

The purpose is:

- **not** to advise or comment on individual property plans
- **not** to implement actions during bushfire events

Membership

Membership of the Working Group will include representative/s of:

- Mallacoota community groups and individuals.
- Mallacoota Fire Brigade
- CFA Region
- Parks Victoria
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- East Gippsland Shire Council
- Additional members may be invited or seconded as required

Meetings

- Meetings will be held as required to develop and review the plan
- A meeting will be held to revisit the annual Action Plan in May each year

Administration

- The Working Group will appoint a suitable person to provide administrative support to the Working Group.
- Agendas and notes will be provided for each meeting

Communication

- Communication within the Working Group will be via email
- Communication with Mallacoota community members will be via:
 - Established community groups and networks
 - Small community meetings as required or appropriate
 - Community radio
 - Community noticeboard
 - The *Mallacoota Mouth*

Overview

In preparing our plans the aim was to balance risks to:

- Life and property
- Biodiversity
- Amenity

Suggested plans have been prepared from:

- General vegetation description
- Fuel hazard
- Slope
- Existing tracks and internal boundaries
- Values
- Risk assessment
- Broader community conversations

As noted, the group is formed from agencies and community volunteers. All recommendations provided in the following maps are the result of knowledge sharing, understanding appropriate legislation and many hours of discussion and compromise.

The following maps include:

- Fuel management recommendations for selected areas in Genoa and Gipsy Point.

Update on Recommendations submitted in June 2021

Shady Gully

Non burn Fuel treatment

- Fronting Mallacoota/Genoa Rd planned for 2023-25
- Skirting Shady Gully Caravan Park planned for 2023-25
- East of Shady Gully Creek planned for 2023-25

Western Front

Non-burn Fuel Treatment

- Opposite CFA station on Bastion Point Road Completed
- Behind the Commercial Sector In Progress

Fuel Reduction Burn

- Behind 65a Bastion Point Rd to be undertaken in the 2023/24 program

Mortimer Reserve

Non-burn Fuel treatment

- Adjacent to Bastion Point Road planned for 2023-25
- Opposite Rasmus Avenue planned for 2023-25

Behind Terra Nova Drive

Non-burn Fuel Treatment

- Behind Terra Nova Drive Completed

Fuel Reduction Burn

- Blocks 1-6 between Terra Nova/ Mallacoota Golf Club/Betka Rd planned for 2024-25

Typically burning will be determined by the level of risk, over all fuel hazard & weather conditions.

To view this information online go to:

https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/bushfire-fuel-and-risk-management/joint-fuel-management-program#interactive_map/non-burning-treatment

Recommendations 2023

Karbethong Area

Conversations and visits were conducted by members of the Fuel Management Group. Most of the critical areas are privately owned. Conversations between landowners, CFA vegetation managers and Trust for Nature (which has an involvement in a large area of interest) are ongoing.

Lakeside Drive

It is very clear that clearing works along Lakeside Drive have not been adequately tidied with prunings and felled timber merely being pushed back into the bush. A response from the Shire has agreed that this will not occur in the future.

Genoa

The township of Genoa is best protected by fuel management to the north-west. Again this land is privately owned. We recommend to the JFMP that CFA Vegetation Managers consult with land owners to provide assistance with fuel reduction burns. See Map.

Gipsy Point

Residents of Gipsy have requested that they manage some areas of high risk themselves. After specialist conversations with the Bushfire Fuel Management Working group they have taken on the processes of slashing, weeding and conducting small burns. There are also areas nominated for roadside protection and maintenance of power lines. See map.

Challenges

Those areas that have already been subjected to a non-burn fuel treatment have been generally well received. Future small, cool mosaic burns will also take place. These areas need ongoing management.

The case for greater study of the promotion of an Open Woodland.

Our intention is to establish and maintain a vegetation structure that is safer, beautiful and biodiverse. Current thinking suggests that maintaining an open forest will suit these requirements. This means maintaining the larger trees, removing the middle layer of spindly trees and large shrubby growth and encouraging an understory that is rich in native grasses and forbs. A managed ecosystem that is safe and relatively easy to maintain with a combination of periodic burns and slashing. However much of these ideas are speculative and more research needs to be done to establish what best suits our country and our community. We are hoping to undertake some of this research in the near future.

Safer: Reducing fire intensity through fuel reduction and assist safer/more reliable burning. Retaining the large, older trees creates shade and helps retain soil moisture.

Biodiverse: Removing the middle layer and opening up the forest floor to more light will encourage the growth of smaller plants. Opening the forest also increases weedy growth and removes habitat for smaller birds and animals.

Amenity: Research indicates that people find managed understorey attractive (Gill et al. 2015, p. 749), but interviewees expressed concerns about tree removal and losing 'wildness' (Bull 2022, p. 22). Reduced scorch height and canopy damage from burning

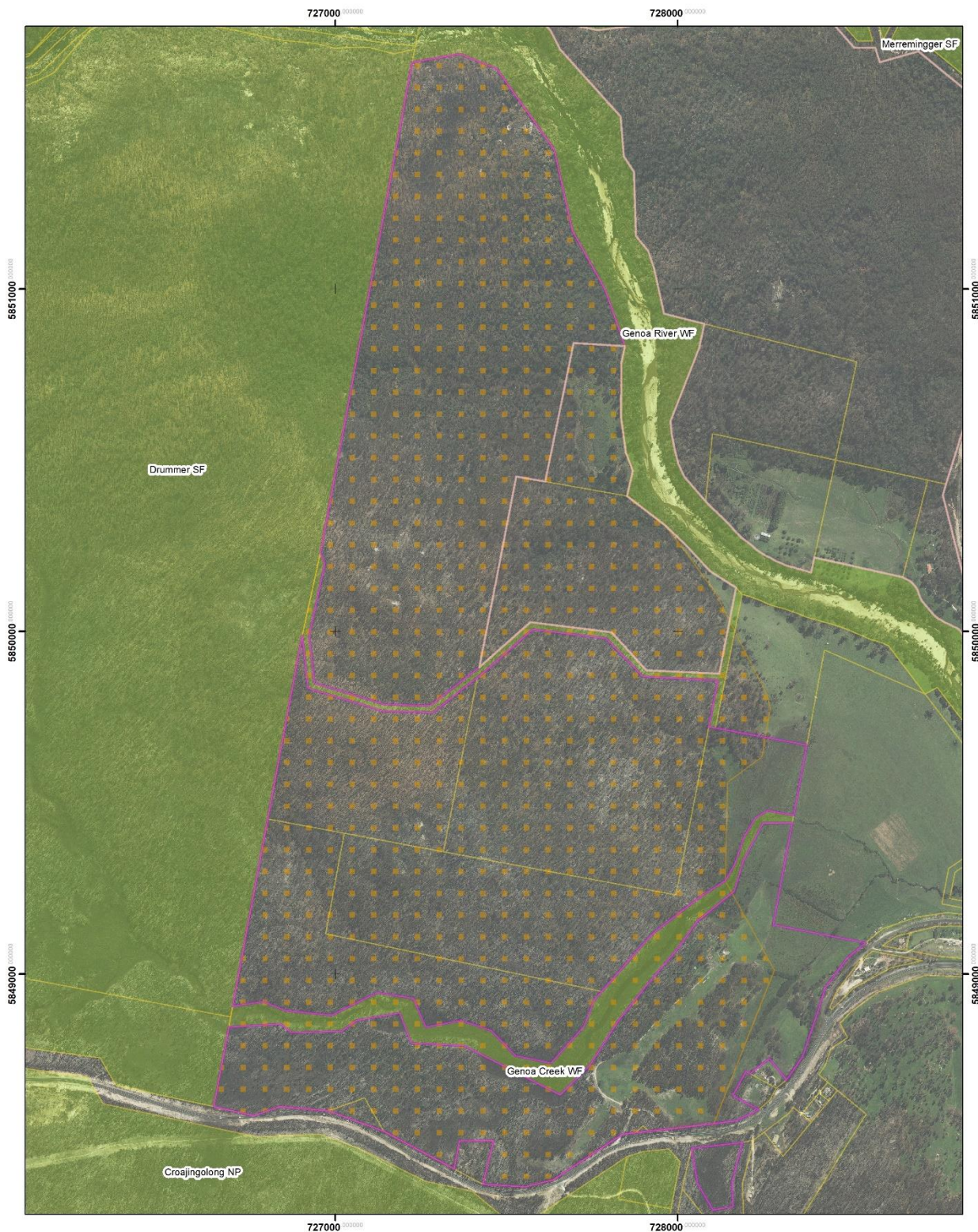
Indigenous values: Commonly cited as an approach that aligns with Indigenous values, return vegetation to pre-1788 state (Pascoe & Gammage 2021, pp. 44-5) but must be verified by local mob

Community agreement: Potentially aligns with spectrum of community views (more treatment vs sensitive treatment), although some uncertainty expressed by interviewees (Bull 2022)

Bull, H 2022, 'Protecting places post-fire: a case study of place, natural values and bushfire risk management in Mallacoota, Australia', Master of Planning and Management of Natural Hazards thesis, University of New England.

Gill, N, Dun, O, Brennan-Horley, C & Eriksen, C 2015, 'Landscape Preferences, Amenity, and Bushfire Risk in New South Wales, Australia', *Environmental Management*, vol. 56, no. 3, pp. 738-53.

Pascoe, B & Gammage, B 2021, *Country. Future Fire, Future Farming*, Kindle Edition edn, Thames & Hudson Australia Pty Ltd.



MADRA Fuel Management Working Group
FUEL MANAGEMENT PLAN - RECOMMENDATIONS 2022
Endorsed by Working Group 13 October 2022

GENOA

Parcel boundary	4 Park Road Genoa	Fuel management
Public land	4601 Princes Hwy Genoa	Joint fuel management

File: FMWG_Genoa_4_Endorsed by WG_221013

Image (2020) and data GDA2020 MGA Zone 56: Government of Victoria, Geoscience Australia

Map drawn for Fuel Management Working Group by obliqua pty ltd

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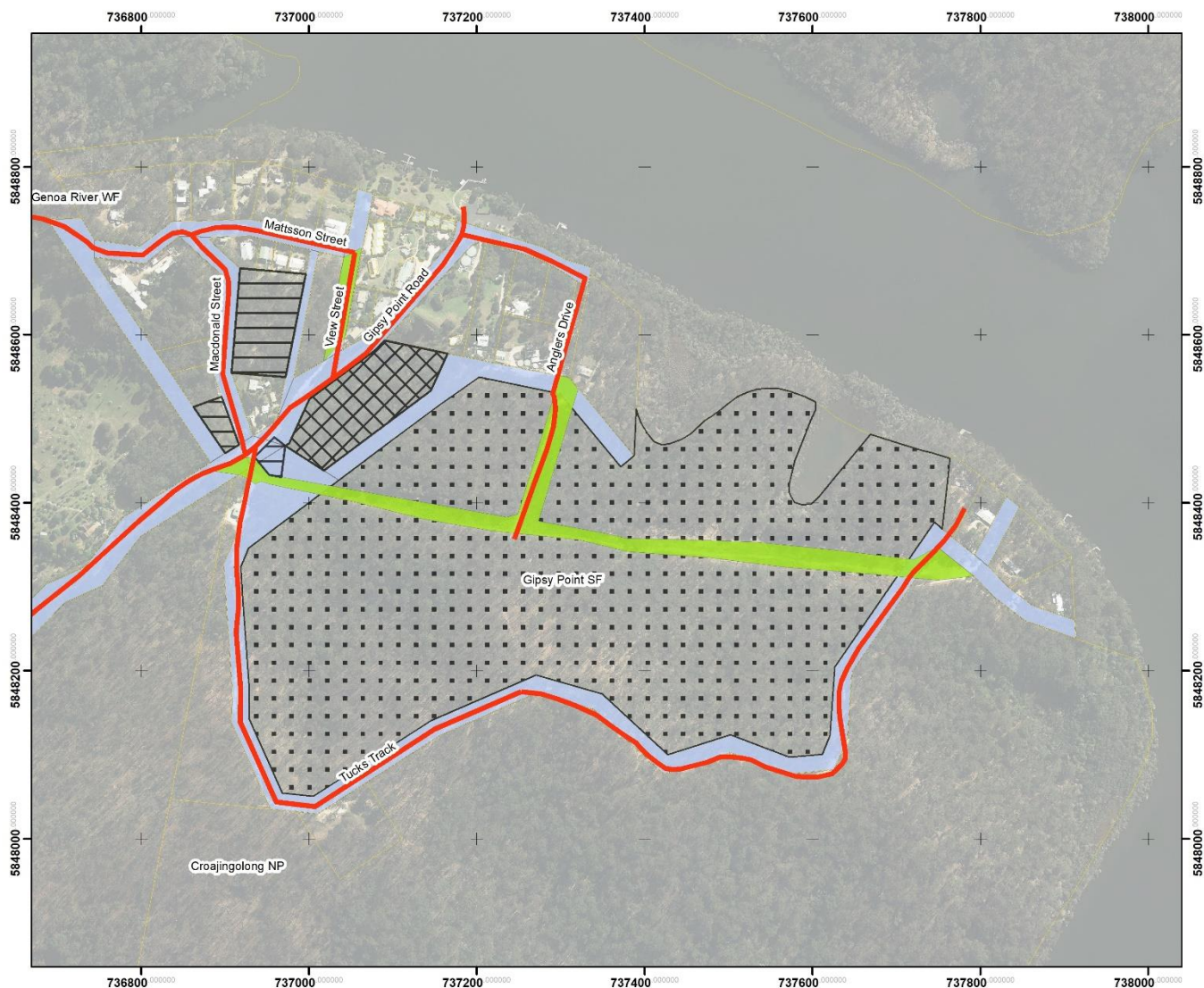
sustainable land and bushfire management

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GYPSY POINT

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Parcel | Fuel management |
| Road | Burn exclusion |
| Government Road (manager not specified) | Community management |
| | Slashing |
| | Small cool mosaic burns |



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Metres

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File: FMWG_GipsyPoint_9_Endorsed_by_WG_221013
Image (2020) and data GDA2020 MGA Zone 55: Government of Victoria, Geoscience Australia
Proposed works: Map FMWG_GipsyPoint_4
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