

**19-23 Horswood Road,
Narre Warren North**

**Review of bushfire
related matters**

August 2022

FINAL

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Cover photo – Existing entrance to the property.

Document history and date

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Final Version	14/08/2022	Desktop Assessment	M Potter & FRC Project Team	G Taylor & FRC Peer Review Team	G Taylor

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1 Introduction

Fire Risk Consultants (FRC) have been engaged by Pared Victoria Limited, trading as Lysterfield Lake College, to undertake a review of the bushfire matters relating to land at 19-23 Horswood Road, Narre Warren North.

The property is adjacent to Lysterfield Lake Park and is partially within the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO).

HWL Ebsworth Lawyers have provided a brief to FRC which outlines that the proposed school development is the subject of a VCAT matter due to Casey City Council's decision to refuse a Planning Permit application.

This report is the analysis and outcome of the following activities:

1. Undertake a site inspection of the property and the surrounding landscape.
2. Conduct an in-depth review of the supplied material.
3. Undertake a peer review of the Bushfire Planning Report V2.1 (including Bushfire Management Statement prepared by Euca Planning Pty Ltd dated 1 November 2019, revised 2 December 2019) and the Lysterfield Lake College Bushfire and Emergency Management Plan prepared by My Emergency Management.
4. Consider and formulate our own opinions in relation to the bushfire impact of the proposal with consideration of bushfire risk, protection, evacuation and emergency access as it relates to the proposed school development.
5. Consider and formulate our own opinions, within the limits of our expertise, with respect to the appropriateness of the proposal from a bushfire risk mitigation perspective.
6. Prepare a report which sets out the conclusions which we have reached, and clearly state the basis upon which we have arrived at that conclusion.

2 Proposed development

The proposed development involves a new Prep to Year 12 School at the subject site. The site is approximately 950 metres to the west of Belgrave Hallam Road and abuts the Lysterfield Lake Park. The proposed development application included a Bushfire Planning Report that addressed the requirements of Clauses 13.02, 44.06 and 53.02 of the Casey Planning Scheme. The application also included a Bushfire and Emergency Management Plan prepared by My Emergency Management.

The development involves the construction of a range of school buildings including classrooms, a gymnasium, administration offices and outdoor areas including playgrounds and an oval area. The school will be accessed from Horswood Road which is the main access route to the Lysterfield Lake Park main parking area.

The property is partially affected by a BMO. The vegetation that has determined the location of the BMO is located within the Lysterfield Lake Park to the west of the subject property.

It is noted that CFA provided conditional consent to the Planning Permit application. The proposed conditions are consistent with these types of developments.

3 Review of Bushfire Planning Report

To support the initial application for the Lysterfield Lake College, Euca Planning Pty Ltd was engaged and prepared a report dated 1 November 2019. This was reissued on 2 December 2019 (Euca Report). The Casey Planning Scheme outlines the following requirements when assessing the risk from bushfire. We have assessed the Euca Report to determine if these elements are present:

Table 1 - Bushfire matters within the Planning Scheme

Planning Scheme reference	Requirement	Present
Clause 13.02-1S – Bushfire Planning	Bushfire hazard identification and assessment	✓
	Settlement Planning	✓
Clause 44.06 – Bushfire Management Overlay	Bushfire Hazard Site Assessment (44.06-3)	✓
	Bushfire Hazard Landscape Assessment (44.06-3)	✓
	Bushfire Management Statement (44.06-3)	✓
Clause 53.02 – Bushfire Planning	Bushfire protection objectives (53.02-4)	✓
CFA requirement	Bushfire Management Plan	✓

FRC Determination: The key requirements outlined within the relevant Planning Scheme policies are present and readily available within the Euca Report.

3.1 Clause 13.02 – 1S – Bushfire Planning

This clause requires the strategic assessment of bushfire risk and outlines the focus areas through a detailed description of how to assess the bushfire hazard and assess the risk. The Euca Report has addressed this clause and provides a response to each of the strategies detailed within the policy.

Key points made within the strategy response:

Table 2 - Clause 13.02 references within the Euca Report

Euca Report statement	FRC comment
<p>The buildings have been sited to achieve maximum separation from the bushfire hazard.</p>	<p>This is clearly evident in the plans that have been supplied to FRC. The areas closer to Lysterfield Lake Park consist of open space including school driveways and ovals.</p>
<p>The land is located in a lower risk location being east of Lysterfield Lake with a minimal fire run potential, and south of the access road.</p>	<p>Following a site inspection completed on 12th September 2022, FRC agree with the assessment of landscape risk and due to the location of the lake and the surrounding land uses, there is limited fire run potential in the surrounding landscape.</p>
<p>The education centre has been designed and sited to respond to bushfire with the assessment of the bushfire risk being undertaken to ensure the education centre maximises the separation from the hazard and achieves a radiant heat exposure no greater than 10kW/m².</p>	<p>Following the site inspection and a detailed assessment of the plans, it is supported that the buildings exposure will not exceed 10 kW/m². This is as a result of the setbacks being incorporated within the design.</p> <p>Since the development of the Euca Report, the property to the east has been further developed and could now be classified as ‘excluded’ under AS3959 <i>Building in bushfire prone areas</i> instead of the grassland classification that has been allocated.</p> <p>The classification to the west, classified as Woodland surrounding the car parking area could be considered conservative and results in a higher level of protection.</p> <p>It is also noted that the siting of the buildings means that the majority of them are not within the BMO.</p>

FRC Determination: The assessment against Clause 13.02 – 1S – Bushfire Planning is effective and meets the requirements of the policy.

3.2 Clause 44.06 – Bushfire Management Overlay

The Euca Report addresses all three areas required by Clause 44.06 – Bushfire Management Overlay of the Casey Planning Scheme. These are:

1. Bushfire Hazard Site Assessment (BHSA)
2. Bushfire Hazard Landscape Assessment (BHLA)
3. Bushfire Management Statement (BMS)

The BHSA outlines the various vegetation types that exist within 150 metres of the development. These vegetation types include Woodland, Grassland and areas that are considered excluded due to their low threat nature. There are other landscape features that limit the potential for bushfire activity in the local area including Horswood Road, the Lysterfield Lake car parking area and the lake itself. To the east are developed properties that will not support bushfire activity.

Following consideration of the information contained within the Euca Report and FRC's site inspection, the maps provided in Appendix A have been developed and demonstrate the low risk to the development. During the site inspection we classified a small area of vegetation to the north west of the development site as Forest. Due to the distance from the property, this has not altered the outcome.

The BHLA effectively identifies the influence that the surrounding landscape will have on this development. The presence of Lysterfield Lake is a significant landscape feature that will provide protection to the development from both the north west and south west bushfire approaches.

It is unlikely for bushfires to be able to travel long distances and impact on the development.

The Euca Report has classified the landscape as Type 1 in accordance with the DELWP Technical Guide¹. This is supported as the surrounding landscape meets the following Type 1 descriptors:

- There is little vegetation beyond 150 metres of the site (except grasslands and low-threat vegetation).
- Extreme bushfire behaviour is not possible.
- The type and extent of vegetation is unlikely to result in neighbourhood-scale destruction of property.
- Immediate access is available to a place that provides shelter from bushfire.

¹ https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0029/107669/Technical-Guide-Planning-Permit-Applications-Bushfire-Management-Overlay.pdf



Figure 1 - Car parking area at Lysterfield Lake Park



Figure 2 - Existing fire break and access track along the western boundary

The property is provided with immediate access to a place that provides shelter from bushfire. The Euca Report identifies the multiple options to travel to the east and south to leave the area if a bushfire was occurring in the landscape.

FRC Determination: The BMS has been prepared in accordance with Clause 53.02 – Bushfire Planning. This is supported by the CFA response to the original Planning Permit application.

3.3 Bushfire Management Plan

The BMP is a document required by CFA to outline the conditions required to be implemented to manage bushfire risk.

The BMP outlines conditions relating to firefighting water supply, construction level, defensible space, access and the requirement for an Emergency Plan.

Fire hydrant design documentation has been supplied and this is consistent with the conditions specified in the BMP and the CFA proposed conditions.

FRC Determination: The supplied BMP contained within the Euca Report is consistent with the conditions specified within the BMS. It is acknowledged that CFA provided additional water supply conditions within their response to the assessment of the Planning Permit application. This related to an increase in water supply for firefighting purposes. CFA indicated that the static water supply for bushfire protection purposes could be integrated with the fire hydrant system that is required by the National Construction Code for the protection of the buildings.

4 Review of Emergency Plan

Version 2 of the Lysterfield Lake College Bushfire and Emergency Management Plan (BEMP) has been provided. This plan was prepared by My Emergency Management and is dated 20th November 2019.

The BEMP was developed for the purpose of supporting the Planning Permit application and once the school is developed, it will be updated to reflect the arrangements implemented including site plans and other information.

The BEMP identifies the importance of having a shelter in place option available in the event that staff and students can't leave the property due to a bushfire threatening the property. The BEMP also identifies the construction level of the buildings and the importance of annual checks to ensure that the bushfire construction measures including screens on windows and other ember protection measures are in place.

In locations where there is a bushfire risk present, it is common practice to identify the need to check weather forecasts and commence planning if the fire danger is elevated either on the day or in the coming days. The BEMP states:

Prior to the commencement of each day's activities when severe weather has been forecasted and when Forest Fire Danger Ratings reach severe and above, (during summer), provide a briefing to all staff on severe weather warnings and / or pending elevated Forest Fire Danger Ratings predicted within the 4-day monitoring period and planned changes to activates etc.

Within Victoria, it is Government Policy through the Department of Education and Training² (DET) and Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)³ for all schools to meet the requirements specified that relate to bushfire safety. All schools (both public and private) are required to comply with the requirement to undertake emergency management planning and if DET deems the risk is elevated, develop a policy that requires the school to close on Code Red days.

The BEMP provides triggers to enhance bushfire preparedness, and this includes requirements relating to the closure of the school on certain elevated fire danger days. These requirements are greater than those specified by DET and VRQA. It is noted that at the time of the development of the BEMP, the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) in place at the time was utilised. A new AFDRS system has been launched and is being implemented in September 2022. It would be expected for the BEMP to be updated prior to the school commencing operations and this will be included.

It is noted that CFA in their response to the Planning Permit application indicated support for the BEMP that was provided.

FRC Determination: The BEMP generally achieves the requirements of an Emergency Management Plan required to assist with managing the bushfire risk. This in addition to the DET and VRQA policies will ensure that an effective response to elevated bushfire risk or an actual bushfire will be effective.

² <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/bushfirerisk.aspx?queryid=S#startbarr>

³ <https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/schools/Pages/bushfire-preparedness.aspx>

5 Conclusion

The application to develop a school on the property at 19-23 Horswood Road, Narre Warren North has been assessed against the bushfire matters outlined within the Casey Planning Scheme.

The development of a Bushfire Planning Report that addresses Clause 13.02-1S, 44.06 and 53.02 has clearly articulated the surrounding landscape and the bushfire risk to the proposed development. In addition, a draft Bushfire and Emergency Management Plan has been developed to support the application.

Following our assessment, no additional requirements to address bushfire risk have been identified. The documentation supplied is sound and meets the minimum requirements of the relevant planning clauses.

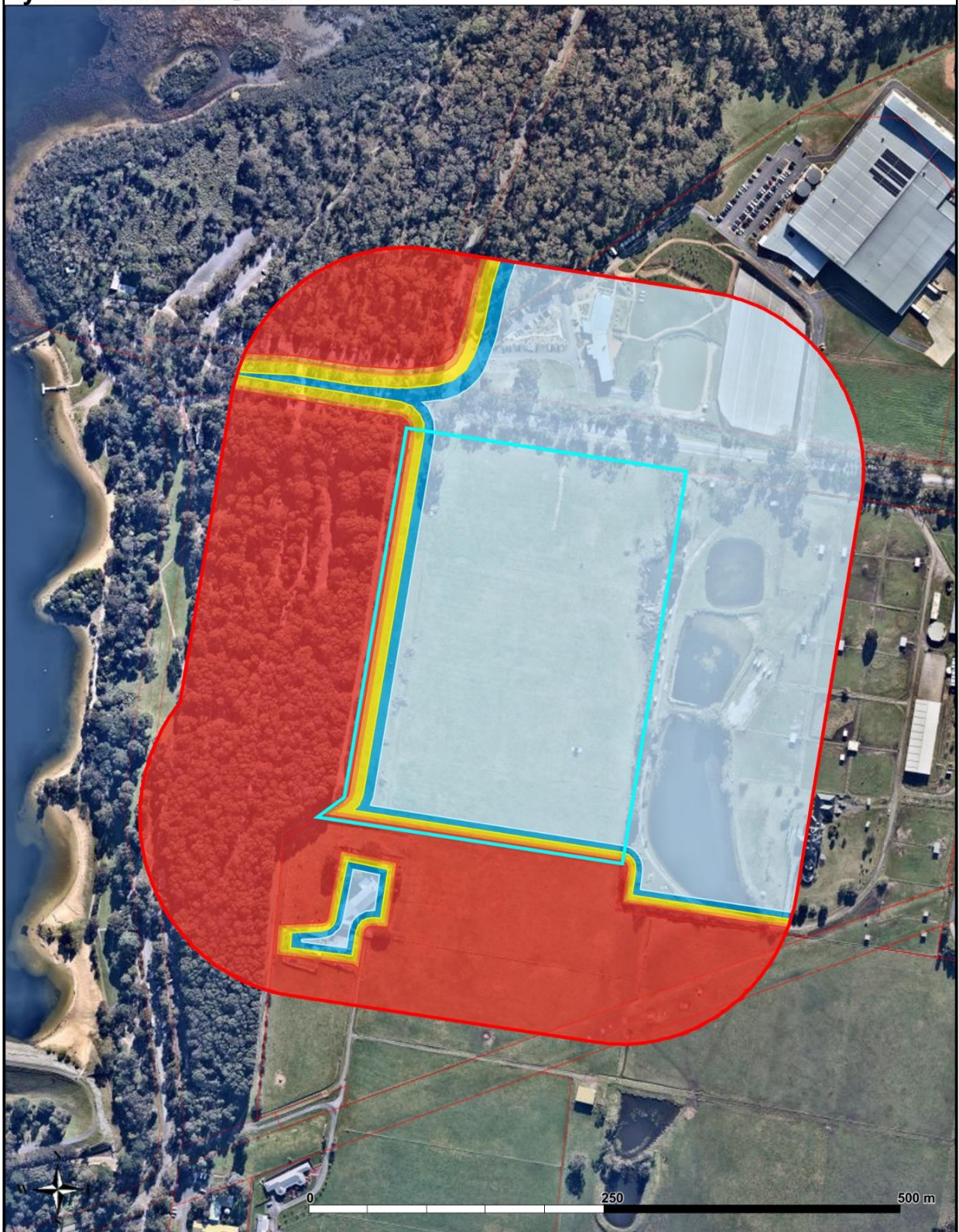
In some cases, the treatment exceeds the minimum requirements such as the closure of the school on certain elevated fire danger days. This in addition to formalized CFA support and the ongoing management requirements including DET and VRQA policies means an acceptable level of bushfire safety is achieved in relation to the proposed development.

6 Appendix A – Bushfire risk maps

Lysterfield Lake School - vegetation classification



Lysterfield Lake School



Property boundary AS3959 BAL ratings BAL-19 BAL-40 Property Boundary
Property boundary (approx) BAL-12.5 BAL-29 BAL-FZ

Map Printed from FireMaps on Mon Aug 15 08:05:29 AEST 2022