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| Fire protection (roadside fuel reduction) exemption |
| Application template to rely on exemption |

## Instructions

This template is designed for use by road authorities seeking written agreement from the Secretary to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) to rely on the Fire protection (roadside fuel reduction) exemption within roadsides under their direct management. Written agreement is provided to the road authority; however, it enables third parties to undertake the vegetation removal on their behalf.

All sections of this application must be completed to address the criteria necessary to seek written agreement. Each section should be completed as accurately and explicitly as possible so staff assessing the application clearly understand the bushfire risk, biodiversity impacts and vegetation treatments adopted to reduce that risk. This application should be completed with consideration of the guidance document titled *Fire protection (roadside fuel reduction) exemption – Application guidance March 2022*.

To prepare this application, the road authority, as the applicant must:

* **Step 1** – Identify the bushfire risk and fire management objective for the relevant section(s) of road and relate it to a relevant strategic/landscape fire management plan.
* **Step 2** – Engage with a multi-agency group, which includes biodiversity staff, to decide upon a vegetation treatment to reduce the bushfire risk and avoid impact to significant biodiversity values. This should include DEECA’s Natural Environment Programs (NEP).
* **Step 3** – Develop a work plan that identifies the location, bushfire risk, fire management objective, and vegetation treatment for each separate section of the treatment area.
* **Step 4** – Map the treatment area

## Submit application

Once completed, submit this application, any additional attachments, and shapefile of the treatment area to DEECA’s Native Vegetation Regulations at nativevegatation.support@delwp.vic.goc.au.

**Note:** This exemption only applies to Clauses 52.16 and 52.17 of local planning schemes. The following may still apply:

* Permit requirements under planning scheme overlays.
* Obligations under other pieces of legislation e.g., the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, *Wildlife Act 1975, Marine and Coastal Act 2018.*
	+ Early discussions with DEECA NEP about the proposed impact will assist in identifying any addressing any obligations under these acts.

DEECA’s NEP teams can assist with processes under other state environmental legislation. Native Vegetation Regulation can provide NEP contacts if necessary.

## 1. Road authority and treatment location details

Complete the Project details section below. Contact details will only be used to correspond with the applicant.

Blue, italicised text is for example purposes only. Please replace with project specific information.

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| **Project Details** |  |
| Responsible road authority | *Better roads Victoria* |
| Organisation doing the work | *Roadside Services LTD.* |
| Contact  | Name, position | *Brad Smith – Manager emergency services* |
| Email | *Brad.smith@BRV.com* |
| Phone | *0412345678* |
| Timing of works | *Autumn 2023* |
| Road name(s) | *Great Mountain View Road, Old Lake Road* |
| Local government area(s) | *Great Mountain Shire* |
| Catchment management authority(s) | *Upper Highlands Water Corporation* |
| Work plan reference ID | *BRV – WP001* |
| Are works part of the ‘Safer Together Program’? | *No* |
| Brief description of works | *Treatment works will consist of post fire (2019 bushfire) regrowth native vegetation removal from both sides of the roads to prevent and or contain the spread of bushfire along identified sections of road, as well as the removal of trees with structural defects which are likely to fall across the road and block movement during a bushfire. Specifically, we propose to:** *Remove falling trees, branches, and debris from the full width of the road reserve for a 10-kilometre stretch on Great Mountain Road between the township of Stuart to the Cross-Country Highway,*
* *Remove Clear and Present Danger Trees which are overhanging the roadway or shoulder along a 5-kilometre stretch of Old Lake Road between the townships of Stuart and Hull.*
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## 2. Bushfire risk assessment

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| 1. **Methodology**
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| Name the risk assessment method used to determine the bushfire risk to the treatment area. Describe the risk assessment method if different from the *Victorian Road Bushfire Risk Assessment Mapping*. (Include methodology as an attachment) |
| *We used the Victorian Fire Risk Register Roadside (VFFR) Bushfire Risk Assessment Mapping to assess the bushfire risk to the treatment area. We also verified the risk rating with the DELWP regional Risk and evaluation Team.**The two treatment areas were assessed as having a high-risk rating.**The Bushfire risk commentary from the DELWP risk and evaluation team is included as an attachment to this application.* |
| 1. **Fire management plan**
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| Provide the name of the fire management plan and identify the section in the document that references the treatment area. (Include plan as an attachment)  |
| The treatment areas have been identified as having a high risk to life and property from bushfire, within Section 5 (Emergency Access and Egress Routes) of the *Great Mountain Shire Emergency Fire Management Plan – 2020-2025. The plan is included as an attachment to this application.*  |
| 1. **Treatment selection**
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| Provide the names of the agencies that make up the multi-agency group, who determined the proposed vegetation treatments. |
| * *DEECA: Gippsland Risk and evaluation team, Gippsland Natural Environment Programs*
* *Country Fire Authority: Vegetation management officer*
* *Great Mountain Shire: Emergency management team, Biodiversity team*
 |
| 1. **Workplan endorsement**
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| The treatment(s) contained in the work plan must be endorsed by the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee, before being provided to the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee for comment/support. (Include endorsement as an attachment)  |
| *The treatment areas within the work plan were presented to the Great Mountain Shire Municipal Emergency Management Planning committee on 22 July 2023. The endorsement of the work plan is included within the meeting minutes. The minutes are included as an attachment to this application.* |

## 3. Biodiversity values impacted

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|  **Biodiversity assessment method** |
| 1. Describe the method used to identify biodiversity value.
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| *A desktop analysis was conducted across the treatment area, using the following datasets:** *Pre 1750 Ecological Vegetation Class*
* *Native Vegetation Condition*
* *Victorian Biodiversity Atlas*

*A site visit was conducted by council’s’ biodiversity staff and DEECA’s Natural environmental programs staff to verify on ground EVCs and observe vegetation condition and level of disturbance in treatments areas.* |
| 1. Treatment area extent (ha)
 | *15 hectares* |
| 1. Describe the vegetation to be removed
 | Ecological Vegetation Class(es) | * *Lowland Forest (EVC 16)*
* *Lowland Herb-rich Forest (EVC 877)*
 |
| Vegetation condition (compared to its EVC benchmark) | *The treatment area has been heavily disturbed from previous construction, as well as the 2019 bushfires. The understorey is mostly dominated by a dense layer of regrowth of Austral Bracken or Silver Wattle.**The canopy layer* is mostly absent with most trees not yet considered large, with the exception of the large trees considered clear and present danger trees, which have not recovered since the 2019 bushfire. |
| Large trees | *Only trees overhanging the roadway and shoulder and assessed as presenting a clear and present danger will be removed. 15 trees have been identified for removal along the 5KM stretch of Old Lake Road. Other trees may present as clear or present danger during the removal operations. Qualified personal will be on site during operations to identify if any additional clear and present danger trees need to be removed.* |
| 1. Explain measures in place to restrict native vegetation removal to only what is necessary to achieve the fire management objective.
 | *Native vegetation removal will be kept to the minimum extent necessary by:** *Providing the contractor with a map that explicitly identifies the treatment/non treatment areas and which trees to be removed or lopped*
* *Avoiding the removal of several trees by restricting treatment to the removal of hazardous limbs, where the tree itself is not a clear or present danger.*
 |
| 1. Has a due diligence check for FFG listed matters been undertaken?
 | *Yes. There are no FFG obligations in the treatment area.*  |

## 4. Attachments

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| **Attachments** |
| Attach the following information as separate documents. These documents will provide further detail/background to the responses you provided above. |
| Information | Included with Application (Y/N) |
| 1. Bushfire risk assessment
 | *Y* |
| 1. Strategic/landscape fir management plan
 | *Y* |
| 1. Landscape context map of treatment area, including biodiversity values

(EVCs, VBA records within 500m, environmental overlays) | *Y* |
| 1. Municipal endorsement of work plan
 | *Y* |
| 1. Shape file of treatment area
 | *Y* |
| 1. Photos

(Representative of current type and condition on-ground vegetation within treatment area) | *Y* |

5. Work Plan

 Please complete the following. This information provides a succinct summary of the information you describe above.

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| 1. **Summary**
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| **Treatment location** | **Treatment attributes** |
|  | Road name, and section (from – to) | Bushfire risk rating | Fire management objective | Vegetation treatment | Time of works | Treatment area extent (ha) | Are additional approvals required? |
| FFG permit | Planning provision permit | MACA consent | Cultural heritage |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **Vegetation treatment methodology**
 |
|  | Describe the vegetation removal method for each discrete treatment listed above in the summary, including the width of treatment area and method of vegetation removal. Also describe what ongoing works will occur to maintain the reduced bushfire risk within the treatment area. |
|  |  Treatment location | Treatment method |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 1. **Hazardous tree removal**
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| If the removal of clear and present danger trees is included in the treatment area, describe the method used to determine that a tree is hazardous and must be removed. (Type NA if no hazardous tree removal). |
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