



Inquiry into the ACT environment's bushfire preparedness
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
02 April 2024

Asked by Mr Ed Cocks MLA on 2 April 2024: Mr Rohan Scott took on notice the following question:

In relation to Development Applications (Page 10 Uncorrected Proof Transcript):

MR COCKS: So in terms of that coordination across organisations and parts of the ACT government, I wonder if you can speak to how the planning and bushfire operations sides of the equation interact before an area is developed or approved to be developed, and perhaps the Stromlo Reach example is a useful one. Is there any input that comes from that bushfire perspective when that sort of development is being considered.

Ms Vassarotti: Yes, there is, and that is why you will see things such as the development of a bushfire containment zone. Again, I might look to officials in terms of the process in terms of the input into that process.

Mr Scott: From the ESA's perspective, all four services have input to any development applications, so ambulance, SES, fire and rescue, and the rural fire service.

MR COCKS: And is that development applications for a building or for a suburb or for both?

Mr Scott: From what I understand, it is predominantly for the building side of it. I will have to take it on notice for the development side of it, as in each suburb, but I know we do have input into the bushfire management standards, like we do for every other land tenure around the ACT to make sure that they actually are following the standards as set out in the strategic bushfire management plan.

MINISTER GENTLEMAN: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) is a referral agency for development applications including estate development plans. Where applicable, development applications and all estate development plans are referred to ESA for comment as outlined in section 2.4 of the ACT Bushfire Management Standards 2023.

As part of the development application package, the ESA has submission requirements as outlined in Appendix 2 of the ACT Bushfire Management Standards 2023 for development within the Bushfire Prone Area as determined by the ESA. If the bushfire requirements have not been met, ACT Fire & Rescue and/or ACT Rural Fire Service will not support the development and may request further information for the development to be assessed.

For new suburbs, such as Stromlo Reach, an estate development plan was lodged with the Planning Authority and referred to ESA for comments. The Bush Fire Assessment Report submitted as part of this plan outlined asset protection requirements including management, water supply, utilities (e.g. gas supply), access and egress including edge road requirements, landscaping and bushfire maintenance plans and construction standards in line with AS3959 (Construction of buildings within bushfire prone areas). This identified what Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) rating each building had to be built to according to the risk.

For Stromlo Reach, all buildings within the hazard interface that are not immediately adjacent to managed land as defined in clause 2.2.3.2 of AS3959, have a BAL rating of BAL12.5. The Bush Fire Assessment Report usually finishes with a summary of recommendations which allows ESA to assess that the requirements as set out in the ACT Bushfire Management Standards 2023 and AS3959 have been met and provide comment that these protection measures are a condition of our support of the development and that they can be cost effectively managed by the ACT Government into the future.

The ESA also receives development applications for individual blocks, where applicable, and if the block is mapped as bushfire prone by ESA, the application must be supported by a Bush Fire Assessment Report.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity.



Mick Gentleman MLA
Minister for Fire and Emergency Services

Date: *12.14.2024*.....