

Thursday 31 July 2014

NEW VEGETATION CLEARING RULES FOR HIGH RISK BUSHFIRE AREAS

A new code for clearing vegetation around suburban homes in high risk bushfire areas has been released by the Rural Fire Service. The new 10.50 Vegetation Clearing Code can be viewed at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au. The code documentation should be referred to prior to undertaking any works.

The new rules come into effect from Friday 1 August 2014, and it is hoped that the new rules will give better protection to residents in these high risk areas.

There are some specific requirements of the code that may be widely confused by the community about what works can and can't be done. Below is an explanation of what owner residents need to adhere to if they wish to undertake additional clearing:

- The Code is not enforceable and those who do not wish to clear their land are not bound to do so.
- The Code only applies to owners of lands within High Risk Areas and the 350m buffer from High Risk Areas.
- A map identifying if your property falls within a High Risk Area is located at <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/1050-vegetation-clearing/tool>. You will need Explorer version 10 or Google Chrome to access this site.
- The Code allows owners to clear trees up to 10 metres away from an approved habitable dwelling. This does not include pergolas or garages.
- The Code allows owners to clear other vegetation that is not a tree 50m from an approved habitable dwelling. This does not include pergolas or garages.
- The Code does not permit clearing on neighbouring properties without permission from the owner of the land, inclusive of Council and or Crown owned or managed lands.
- Tree removal is not permitted on slopes greater than 18 degrees.
- This code does not apply to Aboriginal Heritage areas
- No clearing is permitted within 10m of a prescribed stream/creek/river.
- Definition of a tree under this code is: "a perennial woody plant having:
 - (a) a single stem or trunk
 - (b) is 3 or more metres in height, and
 - (c) the trunk, at a height of 1.3 metres above the ground, has a circumference of more than 0.3 metres.

In addition, Council advises that land owners seeking to remove trees within their property should engage a suitably qualified Arborist and trees are removed in accordance with the NSW Work Cover Code of Practice: Amenity Tree Industry 1998, to ensure works are undertaken in a safe manner.

For more information on Engaging an Arborist www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/environment/trees

If you would like to speak to a Council officer on any matter regarding tree removal please ring 9952 8222.