



## REQUIREMENTS FOR SUITABLY QUALIFIED CONSULTANTS

This fact sheet advises councils, applicants, State agencies and other groups involved in the development application process on what the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) recognises as a suitably qualified consultant in bush fire risk assessment.

Section 79BA of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the State Environmental Planning Policy (*Exempt and Complying Development Codes*) 2008 allow councils/certifiers (depending on the process) to utilise persons recognised by the NSW RFS as a 'qualified' consultant in bush fire risk assessment'.

In order for a consultant to be recognised by the NSW RFS, they must demonstrate a number of requirements as part of an accreditation scheme.

### Recognised Schemes

In order for an accreditation scheme to be recognised, the NSW RFS must be satisfied that a number of minimum requirements are satisfied.

The scheme must clearly demonstrate the process of documentation, analysis and peer review in order for practitioners to meet the scheme requirements. Schemes must set terms for practitioners to meet annually to maintain accreditation.

The scheme must have the capacity to manage practitioners who want to undertake Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) assessments and prepare assessments and reports for development applications using prescriptive requirements and performance based solutions Schemes must have:

- Standards outlining the principles of professional behaviour, adherence to best practice and service delivery;
- Minimum insurance requirements;
- Conditions of Accreditation;
- Ensure advertising is accurate and truthful in every respect and is not misleading;
- A Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program that ensures currency of members which is reviewed throughout their accreditation period; and
- Auditing and disciplinary provisions.

The scheme must also be operated by a credible organisation that is able to demonstrate integrity, due-process and quality management and has a sound financial standing.

### Qualified Consultants

In order for a consultant to be recognised, they must undergo a rigorous process of documentation analysis and peer review in order to meet the scheme requirements, and must meet set terms annually to maintain accreditation.

### Technical Requirements

In addition to the Administrative Requirements listed above practitioners must:

- Meet specific requirements in relation to:
  - Identifying bush fire prone land;
  - Assessing potential bush fire behaviour and impact;
  - Make recommendation on actions to mitigate the impact of bush fire; and
  - Achieve sustainable and viable community safety outcomes.

- Have demonstrated the ability to use existing deemed-to-satisfy solutions of *Australian Standard 3959: Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas* to meet the requirements of *Planning for Bush Fire Protection*. This includes developments assessed as being subject to a bushfire attack category as referenced in the Australian Standard 3959.
- Demonstrate they meet specific competency requirements either;
  - Through the completion of a tertiary level bush fire qualification approved by the NSW RFS or
  - Through an assessment of comparable skills, knowledge and experience utilising a process approved by the NSW RFS.

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