## **BUSH FIRES ACT 1949—REGULATION**

(Bush Fires Regulation 1992)

**NEW SOUTH WALES** 



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HIS Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, and in pursuance of the Bush Fires Act 1949, has been pleased to make the Regulation set forth hereunder.

TED PICKERING Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

# PART 1—PRELIMINARY

## Citation

1. This Regulation may be cited as the Bush Fires Regulation 1992.

## **Commencement**

2. This Regulation commences on 1 September 1992.

## **Definitions**

- 3. (1) In this Regulation:
- "fire brigade district" means a fire district within the meaning of the Fire Brigades Act 1989;
- "light a fire" includes to fuel or otherwise maintain a fire and to cause a fire to be lit, fuelled or otherwise maintained;
- "motorised machine" includes any vehicle or machine (including a steam-powered machine) that is operated by means of an internal combustion engine or other fuel burning engine;

"steam-powered machine" means any machine that is operated by means of an engine that burns wood, coal or coke;

"the Act" means the Bush Fires Act 1949.

- (2) In this Regulation:
- (a) a reference to a function includes a reference to a power, authority and duty; and
- (b) a reference to the exercise of a function includes, where the function is a duty, a reference to the performance of the duty.

## Effect of contravention of Regulation

**4.** Pursuant to section 49 of the Act, a person who contravenes a provision of this Regulation is guilty of an offence against the Act and is punishable accordingly.

#### PART 2—BUSH FIRE PREVENTION

## **Division 1—General**

## Burning to demolish buildings etc. outside fire brigade districts

- **5.** A person must not light a fire on land outside a fire brigade district for or in connection with:
  - (a) the demolition of a building; or
  - (b) the destruction of old building materials; or
  - (c) any like purpose,

except in accordance with the conditions set out in a permit obtained from the council of the area.

## Burning to destroy sawmill waste material

- **6.** (1) A person must not light a fire to destroy sawmill waste material unless the fire is lit:
  - (a) in an incinerator designed to prevent the escape of sparks and burning material; or
  - (b) on ground enclosed by a fence of galvanised iron or other fire resisting material not less than 1.8 metres high so that the top of the waste to be burned is not less than 600 millimetres below the level of the top of the fence; or
  - (c) in a pit dug for the purpose so that the top of the waste to be burned is not less than 600 millimetres below the top of the edge of the pit; or

- (d) if the council of the area is of the opinion that it is impracticable for the sawmill waste material to be so destroyed, in accordance with the conditions set out in a permit issued by the council.
- (2) A person who lights a fire in accordance with the conditions set out in subclause (1) (b) or (c) must ensure that the ground within 9 metres of any part of the fence or edge of the pit is cleared of inflammable matter and that at least 2 knapsack spray pumps and a supply of not less than 450 litres of water is readily available for use on the fire.

## Use of spark arresters

- **7. (1)** A person must not (in connection with any agricultural, pastoral, railway or other land use) drive or use any steam-powered machine unless:
  - (a) the smoke box is fitted with a spark arrester constructed of a mesh not exceeding 3.2 millimetres; and
  - (b) the fire box is fitted with a tray constructed in such a manner as to prevent the escape from the fire box of any sparks or burning material; and
  - (c) the spark arrester and tray are maintained in a good and serviceable condition.
- (2) A person must not (in connection with any agricultural, pastoral or other land use) drive or use a motorised machine unless the machine's exhaust is fitted with a spark arrester that complies with AS 1019–1985 and that is maintained in a good and serviceable condition.
  - (3) In this clause:
  - "AS 1019–1985" means the Australian Standard entitled "AS 1019–1985 Internal Combustion Engines—Spark Emission Control Devices" published by Standards Australia on 10 May 1985.

## Other safety requirements

- **8.** (1) A person must not drive or use in any grass, crop or stubble land any motorised machine unless the machine is fitted with safety guards so constructed as to prevent any heated areas from coming into contact with inflammable matter.
- (2) A person must not drive or use a motorised machine while harvesting unless all surplus oils, oil impregnated dust and vegetative matter are removed from the external surfaces of the machine as often as may reasonably be necessary to prevent the outbreak of fire.

- (3) A person must not drive or use a motorised machine in the circumstances or for the purposes referred to in subclause (1) or (2) unless the person:
  - (a) carries on the machine a knapsack spray pump filled with water, or a hand held chemical fire-extinguisher (liquid type) of 1 litre minimum capacity, maintained in a serviceable condition; and
  - (b) maintains in good order and condition the machine's combustion chambers, manifolds, exhaust pipes, expansion chambers and their related joints.

# Division 2—Provisions applicable during bush fire danger periods

## **Application of Division**

9. This Division applies during bush fire danger periods.

## Lighting fires for cooking etc.

- 10. (1) A person must not light a fire in the open to cook, heat or prepare meals or to boil water or for any like purpose unless the fire is not less than 4.5 metres from any log or stump and is lit:
  - (a) in a properly constructed fireplace within 1.5 metres of which the ground is clear of all inflammable matter; or
  - (b) if located in the Western Division of the State, in accordance with paragraph (a) or at a site within 3 metres of which the ground is clear of all inflammable matter.
  - (2) Subclause (1) (a) does not apply to the lighting of a fire:
  - (a) by an employee or agent of a council or public authority in the course of his or her employment, if the fire is lit in a container (of a kind approved by the council or public authority) within 1.5 metres of which the ground is clear of all inflammable matter; or
  - (b) by a person in charge of walking or grazing stock holding a permit or authority under the Rural Lands Protection Act 1989, if the fire is lit at a site within 3 metres of which the ground is clear of all inflammable matter.

## Burning household refuse etc.

11. (1) A person must not light a fire to burn household or garden refuse or rubbish or for any like purpose or to destroy animal carcases otherwise than in accordance with this clause.

- (2) Such a fire may be lit:
- (a) at any time, in an incinerator designed to prevent the escape of any sparks or burning material; or
- (b) between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m., at a site within 4.5 metres of which the ground is clear of all inflammable matter.
- (3) A person who lights a fire in accordance with subclause (2) (b) must ensure that it is extinguished not later than 7 a.m.

# Burning at garbage depots

12. A person must not light a fire to destroy garbage or refuse at a council garbage depot except at a site within 30 metres of which the ground is clear of all inflammable matter.

# Lighting fires to produce charcoal etc.

- 13. (1) A person must not light a fire for or in connection with:
- (a) charcoal production; or
- (b) lime burning; or
- (c) the distillation of eucalyptus or other oils,

except at a site within 30 metres of which the ground is clear of all inflammable matter.

- (2) A person must not light a fire to burn waste products resulting from the activities referred to in subclause (1) unless:
  - (a) all conditions set out in a permit obtained from the council of the area are complied with; and
  - (b) the fire is lit at least 30 metres from the site of any other fire lit in connection with the distillation of eucalyptus.
- (3) In this clause, a reference to inflammable matter does not include a reference to any timber to be reduced to charcoal, any charcoal so produced, any material used for the distillation of eucalyptus or other oils or any building or fence.

#### PART 3—DISTRICT FIRE COMMITTEES

## **Constitution of District Fire Committees**

- **14.** (1) The Co-ordinating Committee may constitute a District Fire Committee for an area that is not wholly within a fire brigade district.
- (2) A District Fire Committee may be constituted for 2 or more adjoining areas.

(3) A District Fire Committee is not to be incorporated and is not to become a committee of a council under the Local Government Act 1919.

## Eligibility for membership of District Fire Committees

- **15.** Unless the Co-ordinating Committee determines otherwise, the following persons are to be invited to become members of a District Fire Committee:
  - (a) the President or Mayor, or a councillor or alderman, of the council (or of each of the councils) for the Committee's area, being a person or persons nominated by the council or councils concerned:
  - (b) the person specified by each of the following organisations as being in charge of its affairs in the area:
    - the Forestry Commission of New South Wales
    - the National Parks and Wildlife Service
    - the New South Wales Fire Brigades
    - the Police Service
    - the local electricity supply authority (within the meaning of the Electricity Act 1945)
    - the Ambulance Service
    - the State Rail Authority
  - (c) the fire control officer for the council (or for each of the councils) for the area or, if the area has not been declared to be a bush fire district, a bush fire brigade captain or group captain of bush fire brigades for the area;
  - (d) a person specified by the council (or by each of the councils) for the area as being responsible for the performance of the council's functions under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979:
  - (e) a person nominated by the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales and resident within the area;
  - (f) if the area is within an area mentioned in Schedule 3 to the Act, a person nominated by the Chief Co-ordinator;
  - (g) not more than 2 persons chosen (in the manner determined by the council or councils for the area) by bush fire brigades operating in the area;
  - (h) any other persons nominated by such council or councils and approved by the Co-ordinating Committee.

## **Functions of District Fire Committees**

- **16.** (1) A District Fire Committee must, at the request of the Co-ordinating Committee:
  - (a) assist the Committee in the performance of its functions under section 41A of the Act; and
  - (b) assist the Committee or a Fire Prevention Association operating in the Committee's area in the performance of its functions under sections 41B and 54 of the Act.
  - (2) A District Fire Committee may draw to the attention of:
  - (a) the Co-ordinating Committee; or
  - (b) a prescribed organisation (within the meaning of section 41A of the Act); or
- (c) a public authority exercising its functions in the Committee's area, any matter it considers relevant to the protection of land, life or property in that area from the impact of bush fires.
- (3) A District Fire Committee has no power to conduct or take part in firefighting or fire prevention operations authorised by the Act, this Regulation or any other Act, regulation, by-law, ordinance or rule.

## Rules about the conduct of District Fire Committees

17. The Co-ordinating Committee, on the advice of the council or councils for a District Fire Committee's area, is to make rules with respect to the conduct and procedure of the District Fire Committee.

## PART 4—FIRE PREVENTION ASSOCIATIONS

#### Formation or approval of Fire Prevention Associations

- **18.** (1) A Fire Prevention Association is formed, or a Fire Prevention Association already formed is approved, when a resolution of the Co-ordinating Committee to that effect is made and recorded in the minutes.
- (2) The resolution must describe the geographical extent of the Association's territory and list its members.

## Eligibility for membership of Fire Prevention Associations

**19.** The Co-ordinating Committee may invite any one or more of the following persons to be members of a Fire Prevention Association:

- (a) a representative from each council for an area within or partly within the Association's territory;
- (b) the senior regional officer, or a deputy of that officer, of each of the following bodies:
  - the Forestry Commission
  - the National Parks and Wildlife Service
  - the New South Wales Fire Brigades
  - the Department of Planning
  - the Department of Conservation and Land Management
  - the Roads and Traffic Authority
  - the Water Board
  - the Police Service
  - the State Rail Authority
- (c) a person resident in the Association's territory, nominated by the New South Wales Farmers' Association;
- (d) a person resident in the Association's territory, nominated by the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales;
- (e) a fire control officer nominated by the fire control officers for the bush fire districts within or partly within the Association's territory;
- (f) any other person approved by the Co-ordinating Committee.

#### **Functions of Fire Prevention Associations**

- **20.** In addition to the functions conferred or imposed on a Fire Prevention Association by sections 22A and 41B (1) (h) of the Act, an Association:
  - (a) may, at the request of the Co-ordinating Committee, assist the Committee in the performance of its functions under section 41A or 41B of the Act; and
  - (b) may deliberate on, and consult and discuss with the Co-ordinating Committee, any matters relating to the prevention, control or suppression of bush fires so far as those matters are relevant to the Association's territory; and
  - (c) may address any of the bodies invited to nominate a representative to be a member of the Association on any such matters.

## Chairperson of Fire Prevention Association

21. A Fire Prevention Association is to elect, in such a manner as it determines, a person to be chairperson of the Association.

## **Executive officer of Fire Prevention Association**

**22.** The Co-ordinating Committee is to appoint a person to be executive officer of a Fire Prevention Association but that person is not by virtue of that appointment a member of the Association.

## Quorum

23. The quorum for a meeting of a Fire Prevention Association is two-thirds of its members for the time king.

#### **Decisions of Fire Prevention Associations**

- **24.** (1) A decision supported by a majority of the votes cast at a meeting of a Fire Prevention Association at which a quorum is present is the decision of the Association.
- (2) A decision of a Fire Prevention Association relating to the prevention, control or suppression of bush fires has no effect unless approved by the Co-ordinating Committee and included by the Committee in a plan of operations for the Association under section 41A of the Act.

## Presiding member

- 25. (1) The chairperson of a Fire Prevention Association is to preside at all meetings of the Association at which the chairperson is present and, if the chairperson is absent from a meeting, a member elected by the members present is to preside at that meeting.
- (2) The person presiding at a meeting of an Association is to have a deliberative vote and, in the event of an equality of votes, a second or casting vote.

#### PART 5—MISCELLANEOUS

#### Publication of notice about bush fire danger period

**26.** For the purposes of section 7 (6) (b) of the Act, the prescribed time within which a notice of a resolution or instrument declaring or revoking a bushfire danger period must be published in a newspaper is the time ending 2 days before the commencement of the period specified in the resolution or instrument in accordance with section 7 (2) (a) or (b) of the Act, as the case requires.

## Notice of intention to burn off or burn firebreak

- **27.** (1) For the purposes of section 10 (1) of the Act, the prescribed notice is a written or oral notice which includes particulars of the location, purpose and time of the fire proposed to be lit.
- (2) The notice must be given to each of the persons referred to in subclause (3) at least 12 hours before the fire is lit.
- (3) For the purposes of section 10 (1) of the Act, the prescribed persons are the occupiers (or, if there are no occupiers, the owners) of all land contiguous to, or which is separated merely by a lane, road or waterway (whether fenced or unfenced) from, the land on which the fire is to be lit.

# Notice to public authority not to light fires during a bush fire danger period

- **28.** (1) For the purposes of section 10 (5C) (b) of the Act, a notice in writing to a public authority which contains or has attached to it a copy of the relevant determination must be given at least 24 hours before the period specified in the notice begins.
  - (2) The notice is to be given:
  - (a) by serving a copy of the notice on an officer or employee of the authority whom the authority has notified to the council as being authorised to receive the notice; or
  - (b) by sending a copy of the notice to the head office of the authority by post, lettergram, telex, facsimile transmission or document exchange facility.

## Notices of fire prohibition in specified zones

- **29.** (1) Each weather forecast district referred to in Schedule 1 (comprising the administrative areas and divisions listed in relation to each such district) is a zone for the purposes of any notification or direction under section 16 (2A) of the Act.
- (2) For the purposes of any such notification or direction, the boundaries of any such area or division are those current when the notification is published or the direction is given.

## Voluntary work by bush fire brigades

**30.** For the purposes of section 22B of the Act, the following functions of a public authority are prescribed:

- (a) in the case of any public authority—a function that may be exercised by the public authority under the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989;
- (b) in the case of a prescribed organisation (within the meaning of section 41A of the Act) or the State Rail Authority—a function that may be exercised by the organisation or the Authority in relation to the prevention and suppression of bush fires and other fires:
- (c) in the case of the Director-General of New South Wales Fire Brigades—a function of the Director-General in relation to chemical spillage and like matters;
- (d) in the case of the Police Service—traffic control by a police officer.

# Fire patrol officers

**31.** For the purposes of section 42 (1) of the Act, the offices specified in Schedule 2 are offices by virtue of which the holder is a fire patrol officer.

## Notices to owners when addresses are unknown

**32.** For the purposes of section 56 (3) (a) (ii) of the Act, an advertisement must be published in at least one newspaper circulating in the council area.

## Repeals

- 33. The following Regulations are repealed:
  - Bush Fires (General) Regulations
  - Bush Fires (Return of Premiums) Regulations 1959
  - Bush Fires (District Fire Committees and Fire Prevention Associations) Regulation 1989.

#### Savings and transitional provisions

- **34.** (1) In this clause:
- "General Regulations" means the Bush Fires (General) Regulations;
- **"1989 Regulation"** means the Bush Fires (District Fire Committees and Fire Prevention Associations) Regulation 1989.
- (2) A District Fire Committee constituted under the 1989 Regulation is taken to have been constituted under clause 14.

#### 1992—No. 473

- (3) Rules made under the 1989 Regulation with respect to the conduct and procedure of a District Fire Committee are taken to have been made under clause 17.
- (4) A resolution of the Co-ordinating Committee made under the 1989 Regulation forming a Fire Prevention Association or approving an Association already formed is taken to be a resolution made under clause 18.
  - (5) Any person:
  - (a) holding the office of chairperson of a Fire Prevention Association immediately before the commencement of this Regulation is taken to have been elected under clause 21 to the corresponding office under this Regulation; or
  - (b) holding the position of executive officer of a Fire Prevention Association immediately before the commencement of this Regulation is taken to have been appointed under clause 22 to the corresponding position under this Regulation.
- (6) Any notice duly given under the General Regulations is taken to be a corresponding notice given under Part 5.

#### **SCHEDULE 1—FIRE PROHIBITION ZONES**

(Cl. 29)

#### Upper Western Weather Forecast District

City of Broken Hill;

Shires of Bourke, Brewarrina, Central Darling, Cobar, Walgett;

That part of the Western Division north of the Barrier Highway.

#### Lower Western Weather Forecast District

City of Broken Hill:

Shires of Balranald, Carrathool, Central Darling, Cobar, Wentworth;

That part of the Western Division south of the Barrier Highway.

## Riverina Weather Forecast District

Cities of Albury, Wagga Wagga;

Municipality of Deniliquin;

Shires of Berrigan, Bland, Carrathool, Conargo, Coolamon, Corowa, Culcaim, Griffith, Hay, Hume, Jerilderie, Lachlan, Leeton, Lockhart, Murray, Murrumbidgee, Narrandera, Temora, Urana, Wakool, Windouran.

## South West Slopes Weather Forecast District

Cities of Albury, Wagga Wagga;

Shires of Bland, Boorowa, Cootamundra, Gundagai, Harden, Holbrook, Hume, Junee, Temora, Tumbarumba, Tumut, Weddin, Yass, Young.

#### 1992—No. 473

#### Southern Tablelands Weather Forecast District

Cities of Goulburn, Queanbeyan;

Shires of Bombala, Boorowa, Cooma-Monaro, Crookwell, Gunning, Mulwaree, Snowy River, Tallaganda, Yarrowlumla, Yass.

#### South Coast Weather Forecast District

City of Shoalhaven;

Shires of Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Tallaganda.

#### Illawarra Weather Forecast District

Cities of Shoalhaven, Wollongong; Municipalities of Kiama, Shellharbour; Shires of Wingecanibee, Wollondilly.

#### Central West Plains Weather Forecast District

Shires of Bland, Bogan, Coonamble, Forbes, Gilgandra, Lachlan, Narromine, Parkes, Walgett, Warren, Weddin.

## Central West Slopes Weather Forecast District

City of Dubbo;

Shires of Cabonne, Coolah, Coonabarabran, Cowra, Forbes, Gilgandra, Parkes, Weddin, Wellington.

## Central Tablelands Weather Forecast District

Cities of Bathurst, Blue Mountains, Goulburn, Greater Lithgow, Orange; Shires of Blayney, Cowra, Crookwell, Evans, Hawkesbury, Merriwa, Mudgee, Mulwaree, Oberon, Rylstone, Wellington, Wollondilly.

#### North West Plains Weather Forecast District

Shires of Coonabarabran, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Walgett, Yallaroi.

#### North West Slopes Weather Forecast District

City of Tamworth;

Shires of Barraba, Bingara, Coonabarabran, Gunnedah, Inverell, Manilla, Murrurundi, Narrabri, Nundle, Parry, Quirindi, Yallaroi.

### Northern Tablelands Weather Forecast District

City of Armidale;

Municipality of Glen Innes;

Shires of Copmanhurst, Dumaresq, Guyra, Inverell, Kyogle, Nymboida, Severn, Tenterfield, Uralla, Walcha

## 1992-No. 473

#### Northern Rivers Weather Forecast District

Cities of Grafton, Lismore;

Municipality of Casino;

Shires of Ballina, Byron, Copmanhurst, Kyogle, Maclean, Nymboida, Richmond River, Tweed, Ulmarra.

#### Mid North Coast Weather Forecast District

City of Greater Taree;

Municipality of Hastings;

Shires of Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, Gloucester, Great Lakes, Kempsey, Nambucca, Nymboida, Ulmarra.

#### **Hunter Weather Forecast District**

Cities of Gosford, Greater Cessnock, Maitland, Newcastle;

Municipality of Lake Macquarie;

Shires of Dungog, Great Lakes, Hawkesbury, Merriwa, Murrurundi, Muswellbrook, Port Stephens, Scone, Singleton, Wyong.

#### Metropolitan Weather Forecast District

Cities of Bankstown, Blacktown, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, Sydney;

Municipalities of Ashfield, Auburn, Botany, Burwood, Camden, Canterbury, Concord, Drummoyne, Holroyd, Hunters Hill, Hurstville, Kogarah, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Leichhardt, Manly, Marrickville, Mosman, North Sydney, Randwick, Rockdale, Ryde, South Sydney, Strathfield, Waverley, Willoughby, Woollahra; Shires of Baulkham Hills, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Sutherland, Warringah.

# SCHEDULE 2—FIRE PATROL OFFICERS

(Cl. 31)

## Bush fire brigades

Group Captain
Deputy Group Captain
Captain
Senior Deputy Captain
Deputy Captain

#### Council of a local government area

The fire control officer and the deputy fire control officer appointed for a district under section 26 of the Act

## Department of Bush Fire Services

Chief Co-ordinator
Director Operations
Manager Operations
Regional Officer
Member of the Bush Fire Council

## Department of Conservation and Land Management

District Soil Conservationist Rangeland Management Inspector Rangeland Liaison Officer

## **Forestry Commission**

Chief Forest Inspector
Forest Inspector
Regional General Manager
Regional Manager
Fire Management Officer
Deputy Fire Management Officer
Fire Management Forester
District Forester
Forester
Forest Assistant

# New South Wales Fire Brigades

Chief Officer
Executive Officer, Fire Services
Regional Commander
Deputy Regional Commander
Zone Commander
District Officer
Station Officer
Captain
Deputy Captain

Officer in charge within the meaning of section 3 of the Fire Brigades Act 1989

## National Parks and Wildlife Service

Deputy Director
Divisional Manager
Regional Manager
Assistant Regional Manager
District Superintendent
Chief Ranger
Protection Systems Officer
Fire Management Officer

## 1992-No. 473

#### **Police Service**

Police officer

## Water Board

Catchment Protection Officer

#### TABLE OF PROVISIONS

## PART 1—PRELIMINARY

- 1. Citation
- 2. Commencement
- 3. Definitions
- 4. Effect of contravention of Regulation

#### PART 2—BUSH FIRE PREVENTION

#### Division 1—General

- 5. Burning to demolish buildings etc. outside fire brigade districts
- 6. Burning to destroy sawmill waste material
- 7. Use of spark arresters
- 8. Other safety requirements

#### Division 2—Provisions applicable during bush fire danger periods

- 9. Application of Division
- 10. Lighting fires for cooking etc.
- 11. Burning household refuse etc.
- 12. Burning at garbage depots
- 13. Lighting fires to produce charcoal etc.

#### PART 3—DISTRICT FIRE COMMITTEES

- 14. Constitution of District Fire Committees
- 15. Eligibility for membership of District Fire Committees
- 16. Functions of District Fire Committees
- 17. Rules about the conduct of District Fire Committees

## PART 4—FIRE PREVENTION ASSOCIATIONS

- 18. Formation or approval of Fire Prevention Associations
- 19. Eligibility for membership of Fire Prevention Associations
- 20. Functions of Fire Prevention Associations
- 21. Chairperson of Fire Prevention Association
- 22. Executive officer of Fire Prevention Association
- 23. Quorum
- 24. Decisions of Fire Prevention Associations
- 25. Presiding member

#### PART 5—MISCELLANEOUS

- 26. Publication of notice about bush fire danger period
- 27. Notice of intention to burn off or burn firebreak
- 28. Notice to public authority not to light fires during a bush fire danger period
- 29. Notices of fire prohibition in specified zones
- 30. Voluntary work by bush fire brigades
- 31. Fire patrol officers
- 32. Notices to owners when addresses are unknown
- 33. Repeals
- 34. Savings and transitional provisions

SCHEDULE 1—FIRE PROHIBITION ZONES SCHEDULE 2—FIRE PATROL OFFICERS

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The purpose of this Regulation is to repeal and replace the Bush Fires (General) Regulations and the Bush Fires (District Fire Committees and Fire Prevention Associations) Regulation 1989. This Regulation also repeals, but does not replace, the Bush Fires (Return of Premiums) Regulations 1959.

The new Regulation makes provision, under the Bush Fires Act 1949, as to the following matters:

- (a) precautions to be taken to prevent bush fires, especially during a bush fire danger period;
- (b) the constitution, eligibility for membership, functions and rules for the conduct of District Fire Committees;
- (c) the formation or approval, eligibility for membership, functions, election of chairperson, appointment of executive officer and conduct of meetings of Fire Prevention Associations;
- (d) functions which bush fire brigades may voluntarily undertake with the consent of the local council;
- (e) office holders who, by virtue of being such holders, are prescribed fire patrol officers;
- (f) various other matters required to be prescribed under the Bush Fires Act 1949.

This Regulation is made in connection with the staged repeal of subordinate legislation under the Subordinate Legislation Act 1989.