

# Pilot Fuel Break Grants Program

**Guidelines**



Tasmania Fire Service  
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# I. Fuel Reduction Program

The Fuel Reduction Program was initiated in response to the findings of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (2009) and the Tasmanian Bushfires Inquiry (2013). The objective of the Fuel Reduction Program is to reduce the impact of bushfire on Tasmania and its communities through fuel reduction.

The Fuel Reduction Program adopts a risk-based approach to bushfire risk mitigation; whereby the location of mitigation strategies are carefully selected to reduce bushfire behaviour and the potential bushfire impacts on Tasmanian communities.

The Pilot Fuel Break Grants Program is an extension of the Fuel Reduction Program, being piloted by the Tasmania Fire Service during 2024-25.

## 2. Objectives of Grants Program

The Pilot Fuel Break Grants Program (hereafter, the Grants Program) is designed to support the implementation and/or upgrading of fuel breaks in the urban-rural interface.

The Grants Program should align with strategic objectives of implementing long term bushfire mitigation strategies (e.g. *relevant Bushfire Risk Management Plans*<sup>1</sup>) and improve bushfire protection in those communities of greatest risk from bushfire.

The Grants Program will also adhere to the *Tasmania Fire Service Fuel Break Guidelines*<sup>2</sup> (Fuel Break Guidelines) and be of public value.

As outlined in the *Fuel Break Guidelines* the functions of a fuel break are to provide the following:

### a) Access

Provide access to the bushfire hazard to permit preparedness activities to be undertaken, such as:

- Bushfire hazard monitoring;
- Planned burning; and
- Other bushfire fuel treatments including mechanical removal and modification.

### b) Protection

Provide a degree of separation between the built assets and bushfire hazard to improve building defendability, by reducing:

- Radiant heat load on the building; and
- Ember attack from short range spotting.

### c) Advantage

Provide tactical advantage for emergency response operations, such as:

- Back-burning; and
- Direct attack.

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<sup>1</sup> Bushfire Risk Management Plans - [Publications & Resources | State Fire Management Council \(sfmc.tas.gov.au\)](https://www.sfmcc.tas.gov.au/publications-resources)

<sup>2</sup> Fuel Break Guidelines - [Guidelines for the design of Fuelbreaks in the Urban-Rural Interface \(fire.tas.gov.au\)](https://www.fire.tas.gov.au/guidelines)

### 3. Applicant Eligibility

The Grants Program is open to any Council as defined under the *Local Government Act 1993* for projects seeking up to a nominal funding amount of \$100,000 *excluding GST*.

A Council may apply for funding and implement the works on behalf of other landowners; however, the Council is then responsible for negotiating and documenting the ongoing fuel break maintenance program.

### 4. Eligible Projects

Eligible projects include:

- The implementation of a new fuel break within an Asset Protection Zone (APZ) to meet or exceed the prescriptions outlined in the *Fuel Break Guidelines*.
- The upgrading of an existing fuel break within an APZ to meet or exceed the prescriptions outlined in the *Fuel Break Guidelines*.

### 5. Recipient Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Grant Recipient to meet all legislative and regulatory requirements/provisions (e.g. landowner approval / consent, planning approval, threatened species assessment and approval, community engagement) involved in the implementation and maintenance of the fuel break.

Ongoing maintenance of funded fuel break is also the responsibility of the Grant Recipient.

### 6. Ineligible Projects

Projects generally considered ineligible for include those that:

- Failed to meet Grants Program Selection Criteria.
- Do not produce significant community benefit.
- Duplicate existing initiatives.
- Cannot be completed within 12 months of funding approval (except where a strong case can be made for a longer timeframe).
- Seek funding for ongoing maintenance or upkeep of the approved project.
- Predominantly supplement 'business as usual' costs (e.g., overheads, staff or associated administrative costs).
- Seek reimbursement for works and measures already undertaken.
- Are for the sole benefit of an individual landholder.

## 7. Application Process

Expression of Interest and Application Forms for the Grants Program can be downloaded from the Tasmania Fire Service website [www.fire.tas.gov.au](http://www.fire.tas.gov.au).

Applicants are encouraged to submit an Expression of Interest Form prior to their Application Form; however, Applicants will not be excluded if they chose not to submit an Expression of Interest Form.

All applications must be submitted on the provided application form and submitted electronically.

Once completed, applications should be emailed to [FRPGrants@fire.tas.gov.au](mailto:FRPGrants@fire.tas.gov.au) together with any supporting documentation.

### 7.1 Selection Criteria

Detailed below are the criteria against which eligible applications will be assessed. The grant application must address each criteria. The criteria are not equally weighted.

#### 1. Bushfire Risk Reduction (25 points)

- Aligns with strategic objectives of implementing long term bushfire mitigation strategies (e.g., *relevant Bushfire Risk Management Plan*).
- Project is located within a Bushfire Prone Area overlay.
- Improves bushfire protection to communities at greatest risk from bushfire.
- Aligns to the *Fuel Break Guidelines*.
- Implementation of the project contributes to reducing the impact of severe bushfire.

#### 2. Project Management and Capacity to Maintain (20 points)

- Project has been well conceived and planned.
- Project adheres to relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Milestone tasks and timeframes are realistic and clear.
- Requested funding is reasonable, cost-effective and contributes to public value.
- Capacity and commitment to make contributions of funding or other in-kind resources towards the implementation and ongoing costs of the project (including maintenance).
- Capacity to deliver and maintain the project over the long term.

#### 3. Community Engagement and Support (5 points)

- Social and environmental values have been considered and satisfactorily addressed.
- Project demonstrates local community support.
- Community benefits from the project through increased bushfire resilience and/or preparedness.
- Misuse and security of the new or upgraded fuel break has been considered and addressed.

## 7.2 Budget

Applicants are required to submit a budget as a part of their application form. Details on how to fill out this information can be found on the application form.

Budgets must be reasonable and clearly articulated. Additional funds will not be provided under the Grants Program if project budget is exceeded, this will be the responsibility of the recipient.

In-kind contributions are permitted to help meet the shared component. These are contributions towards the project that are paid or given in services, expertise, time, commodities or goods, instead of money. However, the value of in-kind contributions must be expressed in monetary terms in your budget. Such contributions must be substantiated on request.

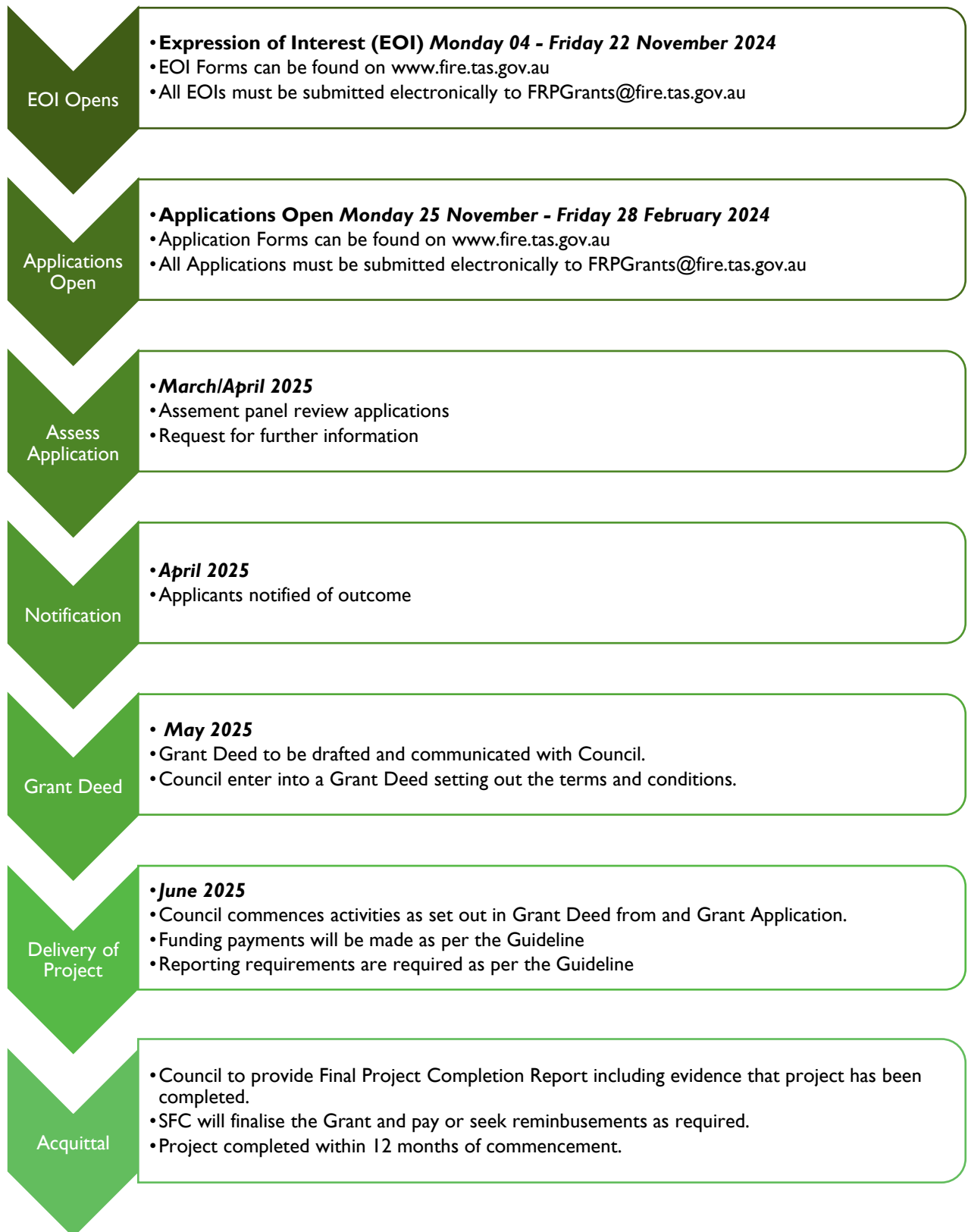
## 7.3 Assessment Process

An assessment panel will consider each submission against the selection criteria, assessing the relative benefit and priority of each application received. The skill set based panel will comprise of members from Local Government Authority of Tasmania (LGAT), Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) and Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS).

TFS will be responsible for advising applicants of the assessment outcome and details of the funding process.

## 8. Indicative Timeline

Outlined below is an indicative timeline for the Pilot Grants Program





## 9. Grant Payment

The Grant Deed will state the maximum grant amount available for payment.

Grant Payments will be made at the following intervals. Grant Recipients are required to invoice SFC for each interval.

**Initial investigative amount as quoted** at execution of the Grant Deed and receipt of an invoice (excluding GST) raised by the Grant Recipients. This initial funding is to allow Grant Recipient's to undertake project preliminaries such as further investigation (e.g., natural values assessments), planning and obtain necessary approvals and permits to complete the project. If Grant Recipients are unable to proceed with the project post this stage, Grant Recipients will not be required to reimburse SFC for this funding and the Grant Deed will be void past this stage.

**60% of remaining funds** following the submission of the Project Progress Report and all project preliminaries and approvals have been finalised. This funding allows Grant Recipients to undertake works to implement the approved fuel break (e.g., engage contractors).

**40% of remaining funds** on submission of the Project Completion Report and receipt of an invoice raised by the recipient. Evidence of successful project completion will also be required as part of the Project Closure Report, this may include a site audit.

If there are unspent grant funds, SFC will forward the Grant Recipients an invoice to enable repayment of the unspent amount. SFC will not reimburse any expenditure that exceeds the maximum grant amount, unless specified in an approved project variation request that was requested and approved prior to the additional costs being incurred.

If a Grant Recipients incurs extra costs without an agreed variation, it must be paid by the Grant Recipients.

The recipient must maintain a thorough and complete audit trail of receipt and expenditure of the grant money.

Funding approval may be withdrawn for the Pilot Grants Program if projects do not commence within one year of approval without prior approval.

All forms and templates can be located at [www.fire.tas.gov.au](http://www.fire.tas.gov.au).

## 10. Audited Financial Statements

In line with Treasury Instruction, Financial Control, no. 12.8 and 12.9, grants considered of high risk (as decided by the Assessment Panel) and high value grants (more than \$100,000), must produce fully audited financial statements with the Project Completion Report.

Audited financial statements should include the receipt and manner of disbursement of funds, together with an audit certificate. The cost of an auditor to complete the financial statements could be included in the budget plan if necessary.

As per the Grant Deed, for all other projects, recipients will need to sign the financial statement on the Final Report.

The Grant Deed will require recipients to maintain proper record keeping showing the use and expenditure of the grant. It will also require recipients to give the Auditor-General for Tasmania access to all financial statements and records about the use and expenditure of the grant if necessary.

## 11. Reporting

Milestone reporting is required three times during the project:

### 1. Initial Investigation Report (Gate One)

Once works have been completed as per the quote provided in the Application Form.

This Report will indicate whether the project is a viable project and whether it will continue to Gate Two and Three.

### 2. Project Progress Report (Gate Two)

When all necessary planning and approvals are complete and confirming that the recipient is ready to receive the second payment.

All works are quoted in the initial payment quotation have been completed.

### 3. Project Completion Report & Spatial Data (Gate Three)

At the completion of the project showing evidence of successful project completion (no later than 30 days post completion).

Spatial Data will need to be supplied with the Completion Report. The spatial data will be stored for future bushfire mitigation and bushfire response purposes.

Failure to submit reporting may result in funds being delayed or withheld until the outstanding report is provided.

If there are major changes required after project commencement, a project variation request must be submitted for approval prior to making any changes.

Any unspent funding will be returned to TFS for reallocation to other eligible projects.

Reporting templates can be found on the TFS website, and all completed forms are to be sent to the [FRPGrants@tfs.com.au](mailto:FRPGrants@tfs.com.au).

## 12. Publicity

Where projects receive funding through the Grants Program, appropriate acknowledgement is to be given to the contributions made by the State Government. This applies to all publications, articles, signs, posters, relevant forums, conferences, and project launches.

All recipients will consult with the TFS in advance of any announcements, including project milestones, and funding approval to enable appropriate communication.

### **I3. Failure to Adhere to Grant Deed**

The State Government can visit any approved project with reasonable notification provided to the recipient.

Funding provided under the Grants Program may be terminated if the recipient has refused or failed to fulfil a condition of the Grant Deed, or if the project has not been undertaken in accordance with the Grant Deed. If terminated, the recipient must refund all grant monies, less reasonable expenses.

### **I4. Further Assistance**

If you require further assistance or advice in relation to the program, please contact:

**Policy and Projects Officer - Bushfire Risk Unit**

**Tasmania Fire Service**

**GPO Box 308, Hobart, Tasmania, 7001**

**T (03) 6166 5633**

**Email: [FRPGrants@fire.tas.gov.au](mailto:FRPGrants@fire.tas.gov.au)**

## 15. Glossary

Asset	A term used to describe anything valued by the community that may be adversely impacted by bushfire. This may include houses, infrastructure, agriculture, production forests, industry, and environmental and heritage sites.
Asset Zone (AZ)	The geographic location of asset(s) and values of importance requiring bushfire exclusion.
Asset Protection Zone (APZ)	An <b>Asset Protection Zone (APZ)</b> is an area adjacent to or near Asset Zones, the primary management purpose of which is to protect human life, property and highly valued assets and values. Treatment can include intensive fuel reduction treatment around specific assets to provide a fuel reduced buffer.
Bushfire	Unplanned vegetation fire. A generic term which includes grass fire, forest fire and scrub fires both with and without suppression objective.
Bushfire Risk Management Plans	Plans maintained by Fire Management Area Committees that identify areas of bushfire risk and prioritise strategic works in response to those risks.  <a href="http://sfmc.tas.gov.au">Publications &amp; Resources   State Fire Management Council (sfmc.tas.gov.au)</a>
Fuel Break	A natural and manmade change in fuel characteristics which affects fire behaviour so that fires burning into them can be more readily controlled. refer to the Tasmania Fire Service Guidelines for design of fuel breaks in the urban interface.  <a href="http://fire.tas.gov.au">Guidelines for the design of Fuelbreaks in the Urban-Rural Interface (fire.tas.gov.au)</a>
SFC	State Fire Commission
TFS	Tasmania Fire Service



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