

Bushfire hazard planning in Caboolture Shire

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Caboolture Shire Council is located north of Brisbane and is also on the southern perimeter of the Sunshine Coast. The Shire abuts the Pacific Ocean on its eastern boundary and the D'Aguilar and Blackall Ranges (taking in the areas of Mt Mee and Bellthorpe) on its western boundaries. It also contains the southern portions of the geological features known as the Glasshouse Mountains on its northern boundary.

The purpose of the project was to undertake a comprehensive vegetation mapping exercise throughout the Shire, to develop a bushfire hazard map for the Shire identifying areas of high, medium and low bushfire hazard, using the methodology described in the State Planning Policy: Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Flood, Bushfire and Landslide (SPP1/03).

Shire wide vegetation mapping was required prior to undertaking site analysis and GIS analysis of vegetation, slope and aspect to determine high, medium and low bushfire hazard areas within the Shire.

A major benefit of mapping vegetation communities, as opposed to just regional ecosystems, was that the scale of geological mapping e.g. 250,000 scale did not restrict the output. This vegetation and bushfire hazard mapping was able to be reinterpreted to generate a biodiversity risk map, identifying those vegetation communities which were potentially at risk from a bushfire event, and which required a level of protection in terms of prescribed burning and even wildfire suppression, to ensure their biodiversity values could be maintained.

The outputs resulting from this study will form the first round of amendments to the Caboolture ShirePlan. As well as providing an updated overlay to identify bushfire hazard areas in the Caboolture ShirePlan, the mapping will also inform Council's operational disaster planning and mitigation programs.

Translating science into practice - ecological bushland management