

Merriwindi State Conservation Area (CCA Z3) Fire Management Strategy 2015 - 2020

This strategy should be used with aerial photography and field reconnaissance. This is a relevant Plan under Section 38 (4) and Section 44 (3) of Rural Fires Act 1997. These data are not guaranteed to be free from error or omission. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife and its employees disclaim liability for any act done on the information in the data and any consequences of such acts or omissions. This document is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of study, research criticism or review, as permitted under the copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is part of the Office of Environment and Heritage.

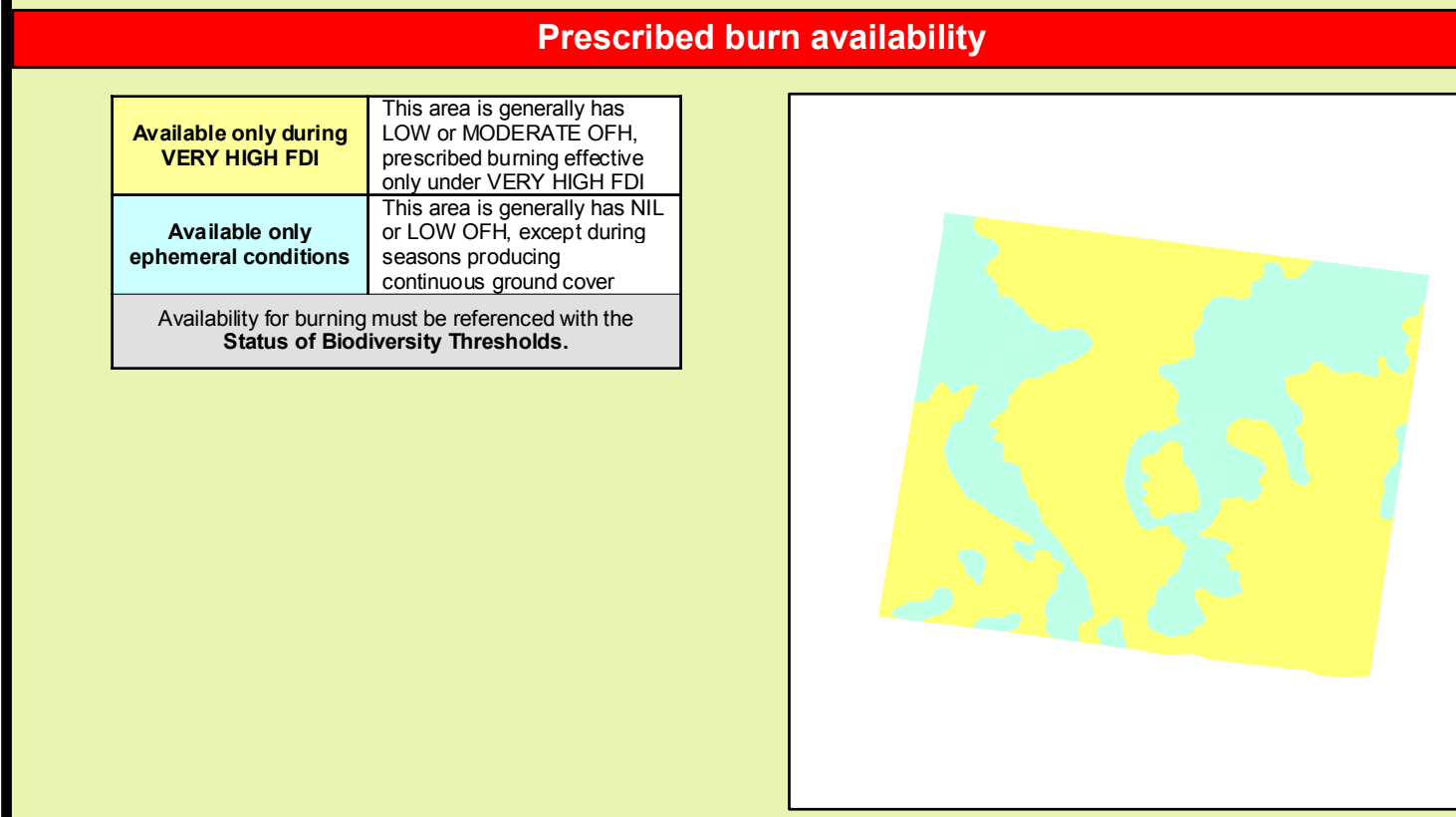
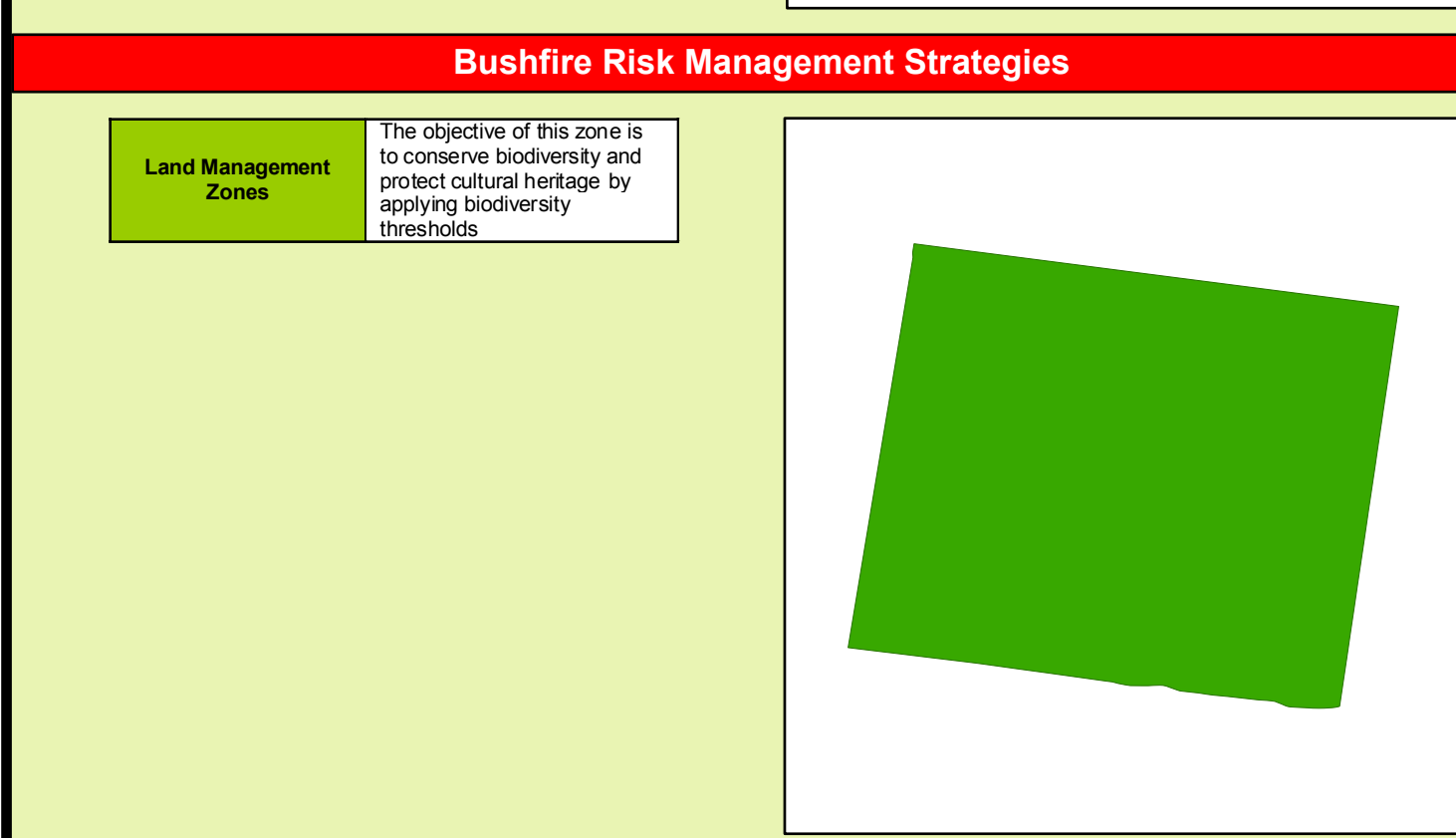
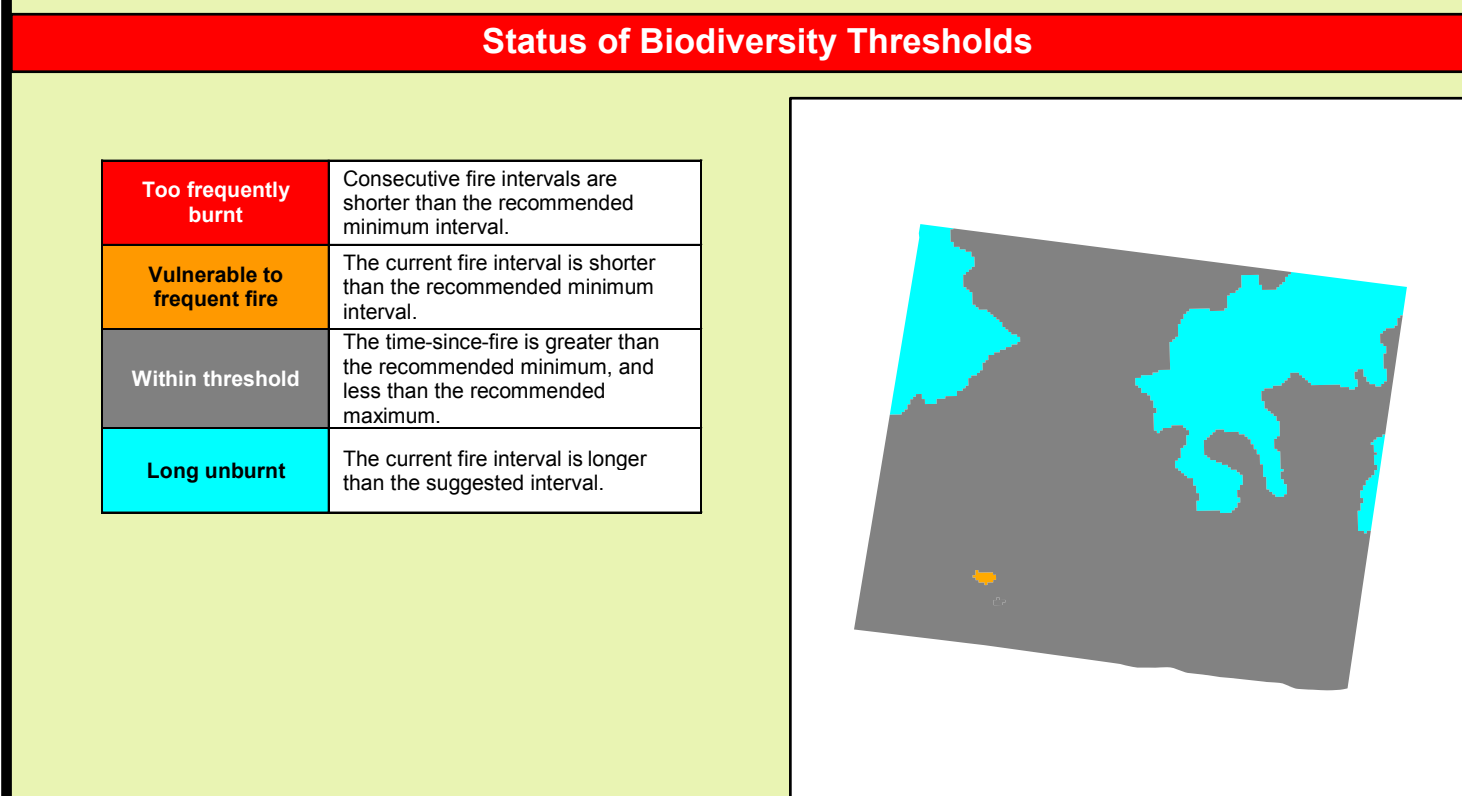
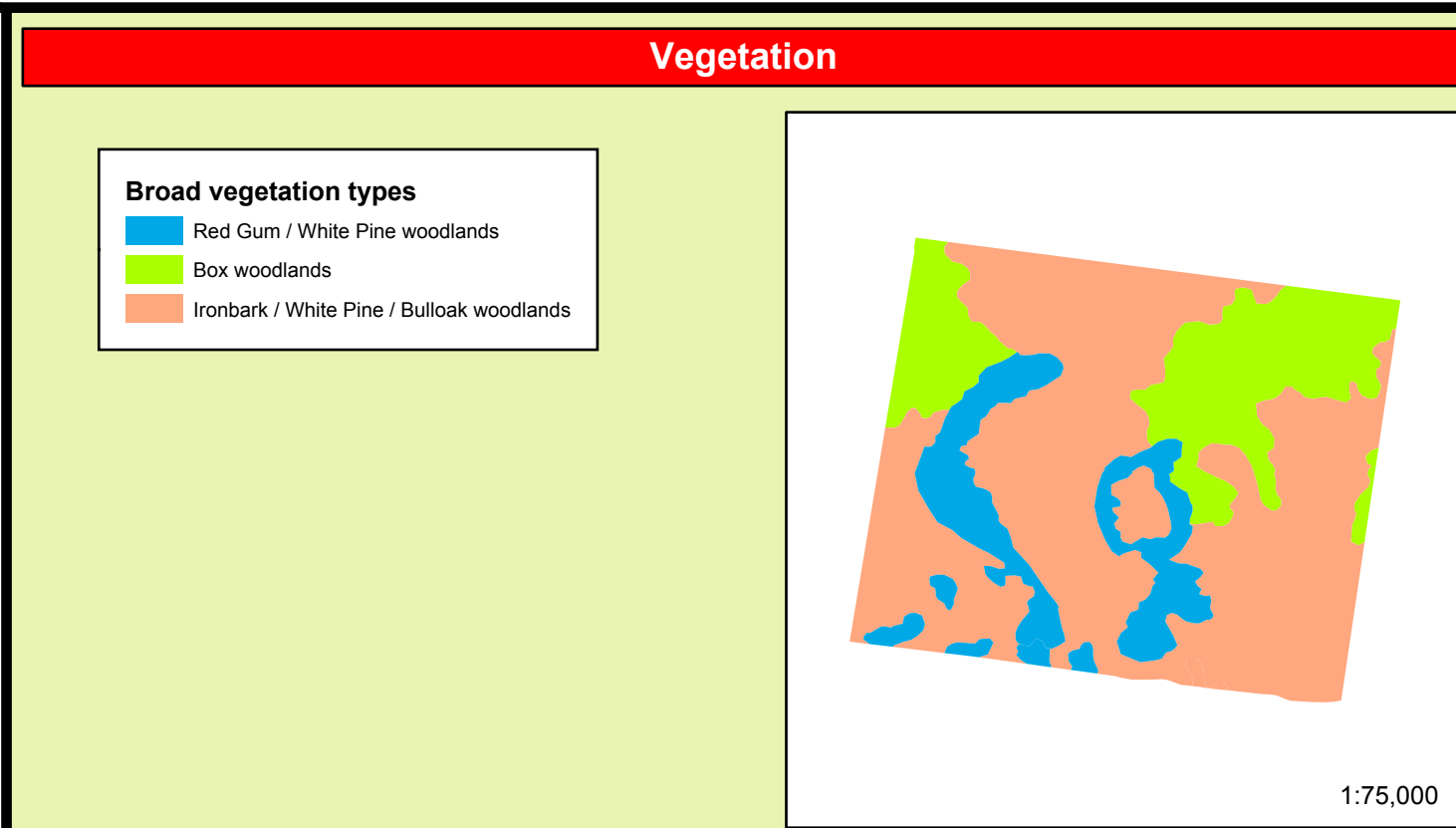
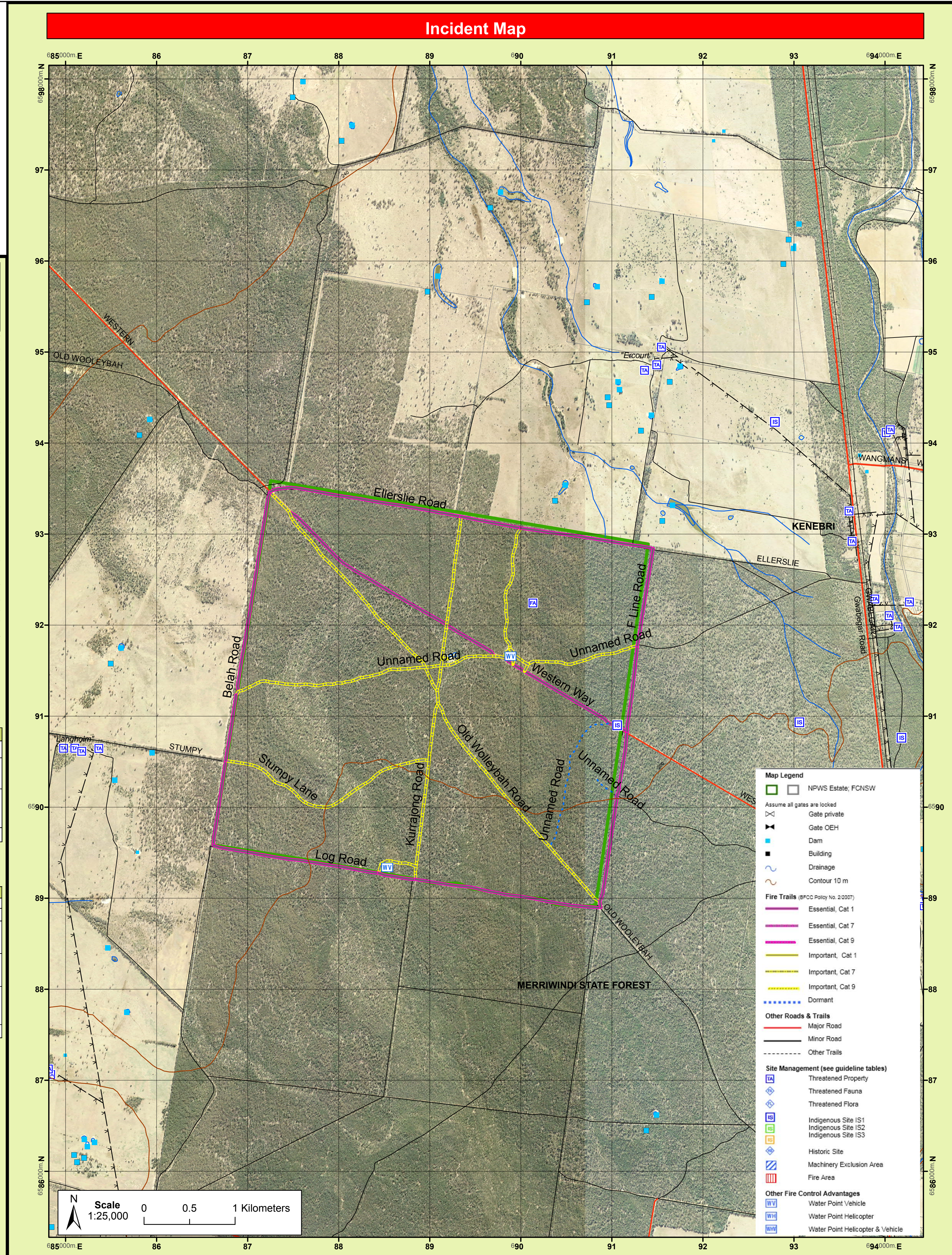
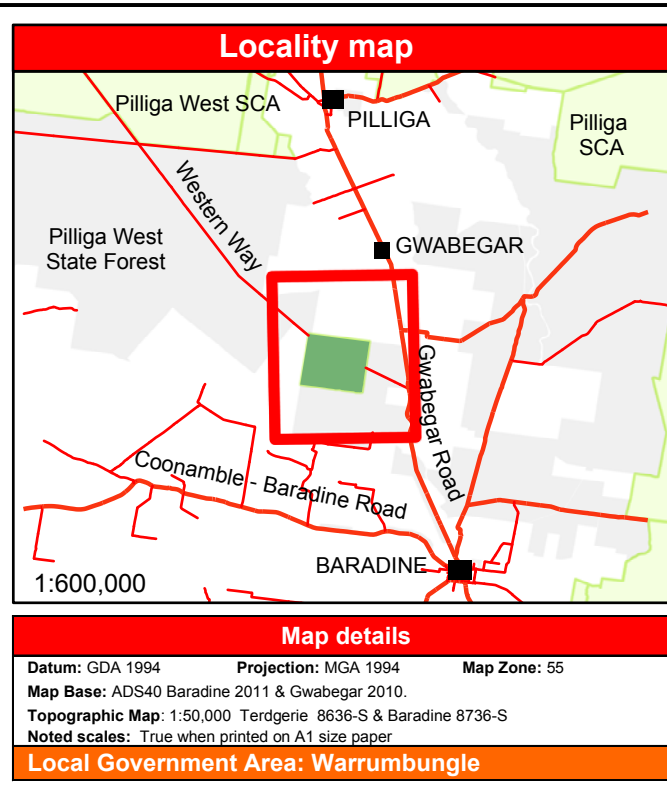
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Related and reference documents

- Office of Environment and Heritage (2012) Fire Management Manual
- Porteners, M.F. (2007) Aerial photo interpretation of vegetation communities for the Pilliga Community Conservation Areas Zones 1-3, West Pilliga and Merriwindi. Report to DECC NSW

Communications Information		
Service	Channel	Location and Comments
NPWS Repeaters	26 31	• Gwabegar • Needle Mountain
RFS	P154 P032	• Baradine (Castlereagh) • Gwabegar (Narrow Gwydir)
Forestry NSW	98 & 99	• Fireground simplex
UHF - CB		• Small fires - Channel 10 • Large fires - determined by IMT
Parks Radio	11-17	• NPWS Fireground channels
Aviation - CTAf	126.7	• Wellington
Mobile phone		• Telstra 3G coverage - marginal

Contact Information		
Agency	Position / Location	Phone
National Parks & Wildlife Service	Duty Officer (24 hour)	6842 3041
Forestry NSW	Coonabarabran Area Office (bus. hours)	6842 1311
	Baradine	6842 1607
NSW RFS Castlereagh Zone	Zone Manager	0417 415 032
	Duty Officer	6842 2645
RFS Rural Fire Brigades	Baradine Country - David Pickelie	6843 6735
	Baradine Support - Steven Walton	6843 1945
NSW Fire & Rescue	Newcastle	4929 7177
Emergency Services	Police, Fire, Ambulance	000
SES		13 2500
Police	Baradine	6843 1808
Council	Warrumbungle Shire	6849 2000 1300 795 099



Fire Season Information

- Wildfires**
 - The critical wildfire season generally occurs during November and December.
 - During periods of strong negative Southern Oscillation Indices (El Niño events), this period may commence late September and extend into the first half of January.
 - The end of the critical fire season is often marked by wet storm activity.
- Prescribed Burning**
 - Effective prescribed burning may need to be conducted once the "critical fire season" and thunderstorm season is over. This is due to the LOW - MODERATE Overall Fuel Hazard for most vegetation types. Prescribed burning attempted after autumn rain is unlikely to be effective.

Operational Guidelines

General	Guidelines
Aerial operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aerial operations will be managed by trained and competent personnel. This includes directing aerial bombing and aerial ignition operations. The use of bombing aircraft without the support of ground based suppression crews should be limited to very specific circumstances. All aerial ignition operations require the consent of the NPWS Regional Manager or the Section 44 Appointee. All personnel must be fully briefed before back burning operations begin. Backburning in areas of Low - Moderate OFH will require the use of wind, slope or low humidity to maximise effectiveness. The first combatant agency on site may assume control of the fire, but then must ensure the relevant land management agency is notified promptly. On the arrival of other combatant agencies, the initial Incident Controller will consult with regard to the ongoing command, control and incident management team requirements as per the relevant BFM Plan of Operations. New containment lines require the prior consent of a senior NPWS officer. Construction of new containment lines should be avoided, where practicable, except where they can be constructed with minimal environmental impact. All personnel involved in containment line construction should be briefed on, and must consider both natural and cultural heritage sites in the location. All containment lines not required for other purposes should be closed immediately at the cessation of the incident. Plant may only be used with the prior consent of a senior NPWS Officer. Plant must always be guided and supervised by an experienced officer, and accompanied by a support vehicle. When engaged in direct or parallel attack, this vehicle must be a fire fighting vehicle. Containment lines running along valley areas should be constructed at 20 - 50 metres from the gullyline to avoid severe erosion. Plant must be washed down, where practicable, prior to entering NPWS estate and again on exiting NPWS estate.
Backburning	
Command & Control	
Containment Lines	
Earthmoving Equipment	
Fire Suppression Chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of foam, gels and retardants will NOT be permitted within 50 metres of dams and watercourses holding water. The aerial use of foam, gels and retardants should be approved by Regional Manager or delegate. Where practicable, containment lines should be stabilised and rehabilitated as part of the wildfire suppression operation. Consider deployment of a bulk water carrier to support fire operations.
Rehabilitation	
Watering points	
Smoke Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential smoke impacts and mitigation tactics will be assessed during the planning of fire operations.
Visitor Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This reserve will be closed to visitors during fire danger periods rated Extreme or higher and during fire operations.

Operational Guidelines - Heritage

General	Guidelines
Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Site Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modified trees (IS1) Protect the site from fire, clear base of litter and shrubs, exclude site tree from fire where possible Foam may be used to protect the tree, or to extinguish fire Do not cut trees
Threatened Flora and Fauna Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The protective actions for threatened fauna have been incorporated into the Operational Guidelines

Vegetation management guidelines

Community	Management guidelines	Fire Behaviour
Red Gum / White Pine woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An interval between fire events less than 20 years should be avoided A high intensity fire may be permitted after a fire free period 30 - 50 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential rates of spread is low due to Low OFH Fire runs are likely to slow down when entering this vegetation Ephemeral fuels may develop
Box woodlands		
Ironbark / White Pine / Bullock woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An interval between fire events less than 15 years and greater 40 years should be avoided A high intensity fire to be considered after 30 years Retain some areas with an interval greater than 50 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential rates of spread is low due to Low - Moderate OFH Localised areas of High OFH may produce restricted areas of higher fire intensity

OFH - Overall fuel hazard - A rating system that includes surface (leaf litter), near surface (low shrubs & grasses), elevated (shrubs), and bark fuels.
 ROS - Rate of spread

Suppression Strategies

Conditions & forecast	Guidelines
All vegetation types	
Years with saturated soils and sub-soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a broad containment strategy using existing trails and roads, recently burnt areas, creeklines or vegetation with LOW OFH. (This is necessary due to the high risk of vehicles and machines bogging)
Fire danger rating LOW - HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a broad containment strategy using existing roads, allowing long-term management requirements for biodiversity Direct and parallel attack may be applied with earthmoving machinery and fire units.
Fire danger rating VERY HIGH - EXTREME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close parallel attack, moving around the head only when the fire stops running Distance between the flank and machinery and fire units should be kept to a minimum If fire is running, it may slow considerably when it reaches Pilliga Box, Poplar Box or White Box country
Catastrophic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revert to property protection.