

Coolah Tops National Park

Fire Management Strategy
2021 – 2026

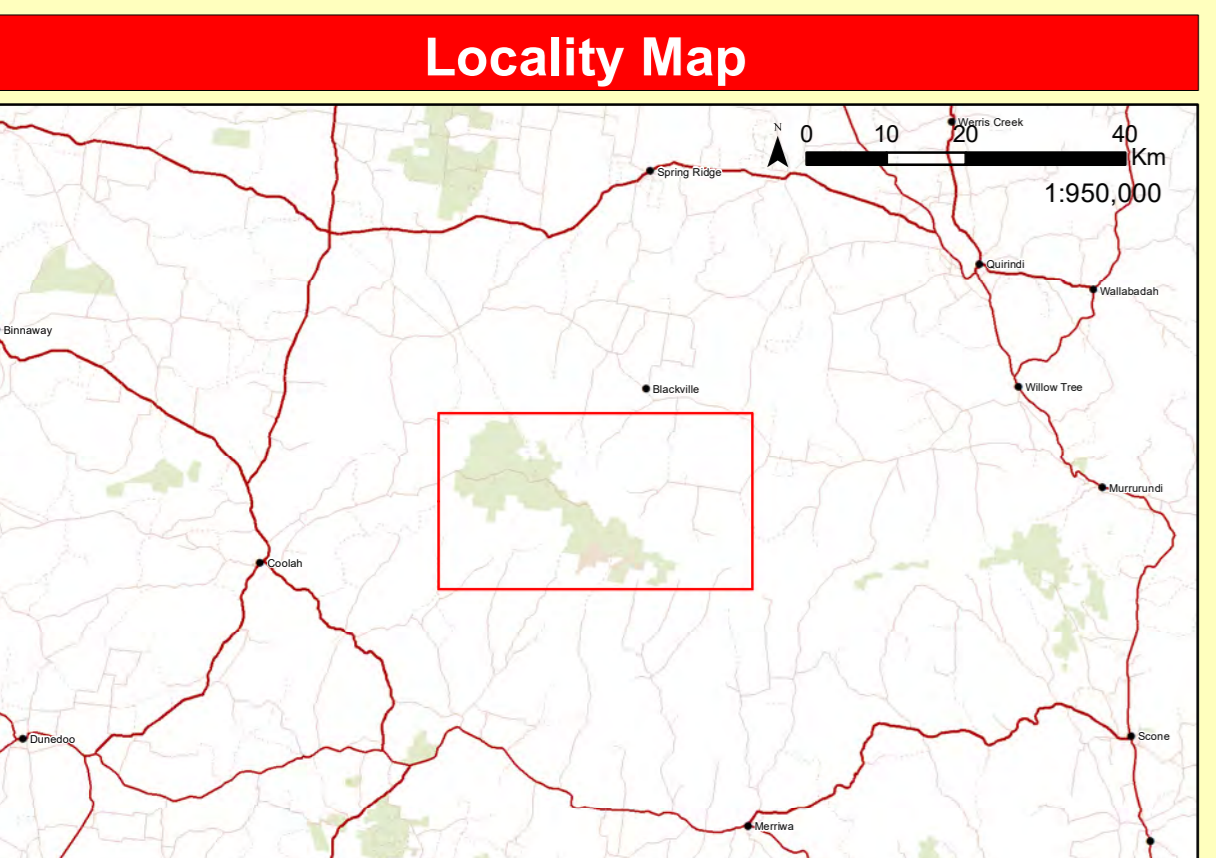
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Contact: NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Northern Tablelands District

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NSW | This strategy is a relevant Plan under Section 38 (4) and Section 44 (3) of the Rural Fires Act 1997.



Map details

Date: 05/11/2021 | Scale: 1:50,000 | Datum: GDA 1984 MGA Zone 56 | Geographic Coordinate System: GDA 1984 MGA Zone 56 | Map projection: Transverse Mercator
 Local Government Area: Liverpool Regional Council | Topographic Map: 1:50,000 (Topographic Series)

Contact Information

Agency	Position / Location	Phone
National Parks & Wildlife Service	Area Manager - John Whittall Duty Officer (24 hour) Castlereagh Area Office (Sun. hours) Castlereagh Zone Manager - Corey Philip	0428 893 300 8275 1742 8843 4003 0417 415 032
NSW Rural Fire Service	Castlereagh Zone Office	8826 8300
Liverpool Range (remainder)	Liverpool Range Manager - Mylene O'Reilly Liverpool Range Zone Office	8826 247 750 8745 9850
Fire & Rescue NSW	Police, Fire, Ambulance	000
Emergency Services	SES	132 500
Police	Coolah	6377 1200
	Merilla	6543 2003
	Upper Hunter (South Coolah Tops)	6540 1100
	Liverpool Plains (North Coolah Tops)	8745 3000
	Warumbungle (NW Coolah Tops)	8849 2000
Council		
Local Aboriginal Land Council	Warabulal LALC	walac@labcad.com

Communications

Service	Channel	Location and Comments
NPWS	310	North Vole Group
Repeaters	617	Fire ground
Radio Reception is very good	317	Coolah Tops to NB 310 hub
RFS	100	Coolah Tops to Blue Mountains 100 hub
	N011	Castlereagh
	N004	Liverpool Range (Upper Hunter)
	N005	Liverpool Range (Liverpool Plains)
UHF - CB	134.70	Small fires channel 15, large fires determined by MIT
Aviation - CTAF		NB frequency unless another frequency is allocated on an incident
Mobile phone		Mobile reception is limited throughout the Reserve. Known reception points are the lookout and the first information bay.

Fire Season Information

Wildfires
The critical wildfire season occurs during October to March. The position of the Reserve high above the plains means lightning strikes are the main ignition source. Rapid response with direct attack is a key to containing wildfires from these ignition sources.

Prescribed Burning
The high elevation and cool climate of Coolah Tops NP means conditions need to be warmer and drier before effective hazard reduction burns can occur. Prescribed burning is most effective in late Spring, Summer and early Autumn when fuel moisture has dried sufficiently for enough fuel to be available to sustain combustion.

Operational Guidelines

Aerial Operations

- 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 operations require the consent of a senior NPWS officer or the Section 44 Appointee.

Backburning

- All personnel must be fully briefed before back burning operations begin.
- Backburning in areas of Low - Moderate CHFI will require the use of wind, or low humidity to maximise effectiveness.
- Where possible clear around dead and fibrous barked trees adjacent to control lines prior to backburning.

Command & Control

- The first compliant agency on site may assume control of the fire, but then must ensure the relevant land management agency is notified promptly.
- The initial Incident Controller will liaise with the RFS to ensure that the agency in command is determined and an Incident Controller is appointed.

Containment Lines

- 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.

Earthmoving Equipment

- 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 (NPWS). When engaged in direct or parallel attack, this vehicle must be a fire fighting vehicle.
- Plant must be washed down, where practicable, prior to entering NPWS estate and again on exiting NPWS estate.

Fire Suppression Chemicals

- The use of foam, wetting agents and retardants will NOT be permitted within 50 metres of dams and watercourses holding water.
- The aerial use of gels and retardants should be approved by a senior NPWS officer.
- The use of retardants requires the approval of a senior NPWS officer.

Rehabilitation

- Where practicable, containment lines should be stabilised and rehabilitated as part of the wildfire suppression operation.

Water Points

- Water points are limited and not always reliable. Consider deployment of a bulk water carrier to support fire operations.

Smoke Management

- Potential smoke impacts and mitigation tactics will be assessed during the planning of fire operations.

Visitor Management

- Implement the emergency management plan during Severe + Fire Danger, or when fires are threatening walking trails and public use facilities. Ensure the closure is advised on the NPWS website.

WARNINGS

The Reserve within Coolah Tops National Park are generally moist high elevation forests with seldom dry enough to make all the significant forest fuels available for combustion. During extended dry periods dustiness is required when evaluating the potential fire behaviour that is likely to occur, as available fuel loads may be significantly higher than anticipated.

Heritage Guidelines

IS 1 - As far as possible protect site from fire. Do not cut down trees.

IS 2 - As far as possible protect the site from fire. Avoid all ground disturbance and driving over sites. Avoid water bombing which may cause ground disturbance.

Modified trees

- Avoid all ground disturbance, avoid water bombing. Site may be burnt by fire without damage.
- As far as possible, protect the site from fire, and do not cut trees.
- Use of foams & retardant is acceptable.

Habitat sites

- Exclude control line construction from sites. Consider a buffer zone of about 50 metres from the sites.
- Avoid all activities that may be checked as part of planning for fire operations.

Historic Sites
Historic sites in Coolah Tops National Park relate to logging and forestry activities. Sites are generally in maintained clearings and no special protective measures are required in the event of a fire.

Threatened Fauna & Flora
There are no threatened flora records in Coolah Tops National Park. The protective actions for threatened fauna have been incorporated into the Operational Guidelines.

Soil Erosion Management
The soils within the reserve are generally stable. Steep terrain is susceptible to erosion after disturbance. Fire trails used in fire operations should be drained as soon as possible after use.

Suppression Strategies

Conditions

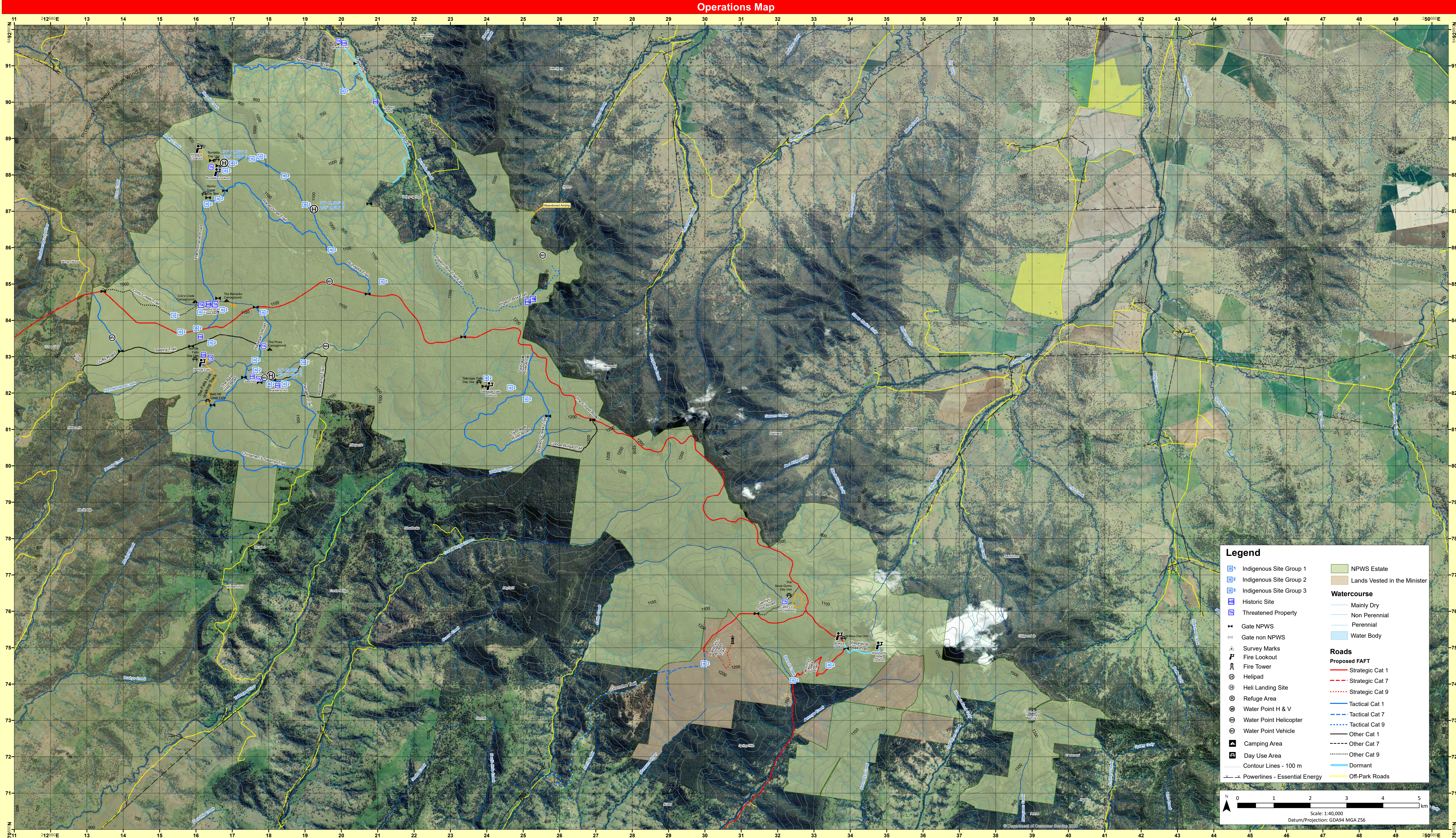
Low - High
Consider a broad containment strategy using existing roads, allowing long-term management requirements for biodiversity.

Very High
Direct and parallel attack may be applied with earthmoving machinery and fire units.

Extreme +
Consider RMT for lighting difficulties.

Guidelines

- 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.
- Secure and deepen containment lines on the next predicted downwind side of the fire.
- May require aerial support to manage spot covers and monitor fire spread.
- Undertake broad containment strategies using main fire trails and cleared country.
- Tactics will include property protection where safe and necessary.
- Close parallel or direct attack and/or mop up of fire edge may be an option at night depending on weather conditions.
- Warning: Fire lines should be anticipated with winds from any direction. Entrapment risk is very high.

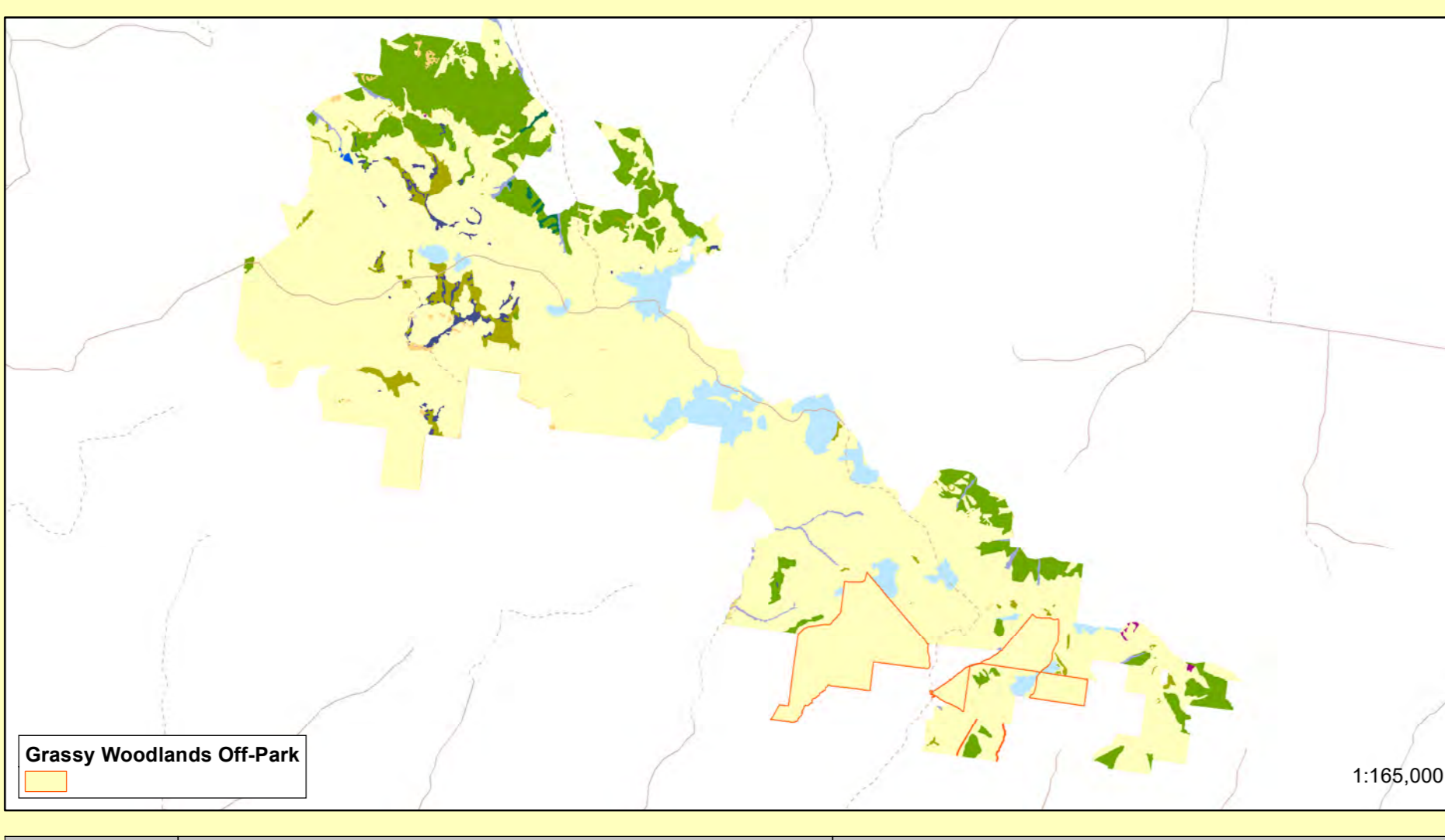


Legend

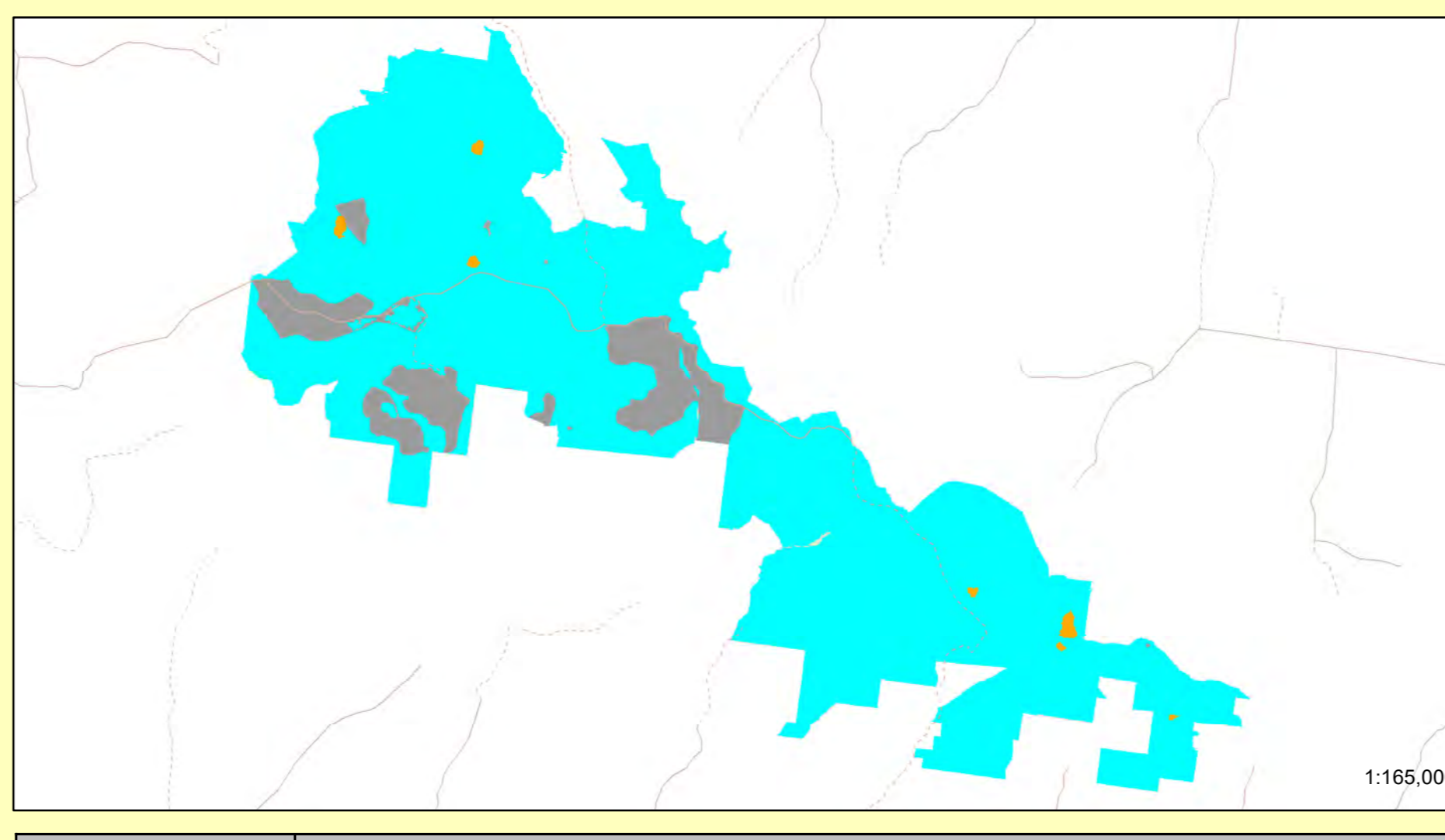
Indigenous Site Group 1	NPWS Estate
Indigenous Site Group 2	Lands Vested in the Minister
Indigenous Site Group 3	Watercourse
Historic Site	Mainly Dry
Threatened Property	Non Perennial
Gate NPWS	Perennial
Gate non NPWS	Water Body
Survey Marks	Roads
Fire Lookout	Proposed FAFT
Fire Tower	Strategic Cat 1
Helipad	Strategic Cat 7
Helilanding Site	Strategic Cat 9
Refuge Area	Tactical Cat 1
Water Point H & V	Tactical Cat 7
Water Point Helicopter	Tactical Cat 9
Water Point Vehicle	Other Cat 1
Camping Area	Other Cat 7
Day Use Area	Other Cat 9
Contour Lines - 100 m	Dormant
Powerlines - Essential Energy	Off-Park Roads

Scale: 1:40,000
Datum/Projection: GDA84 MGA Zone 56

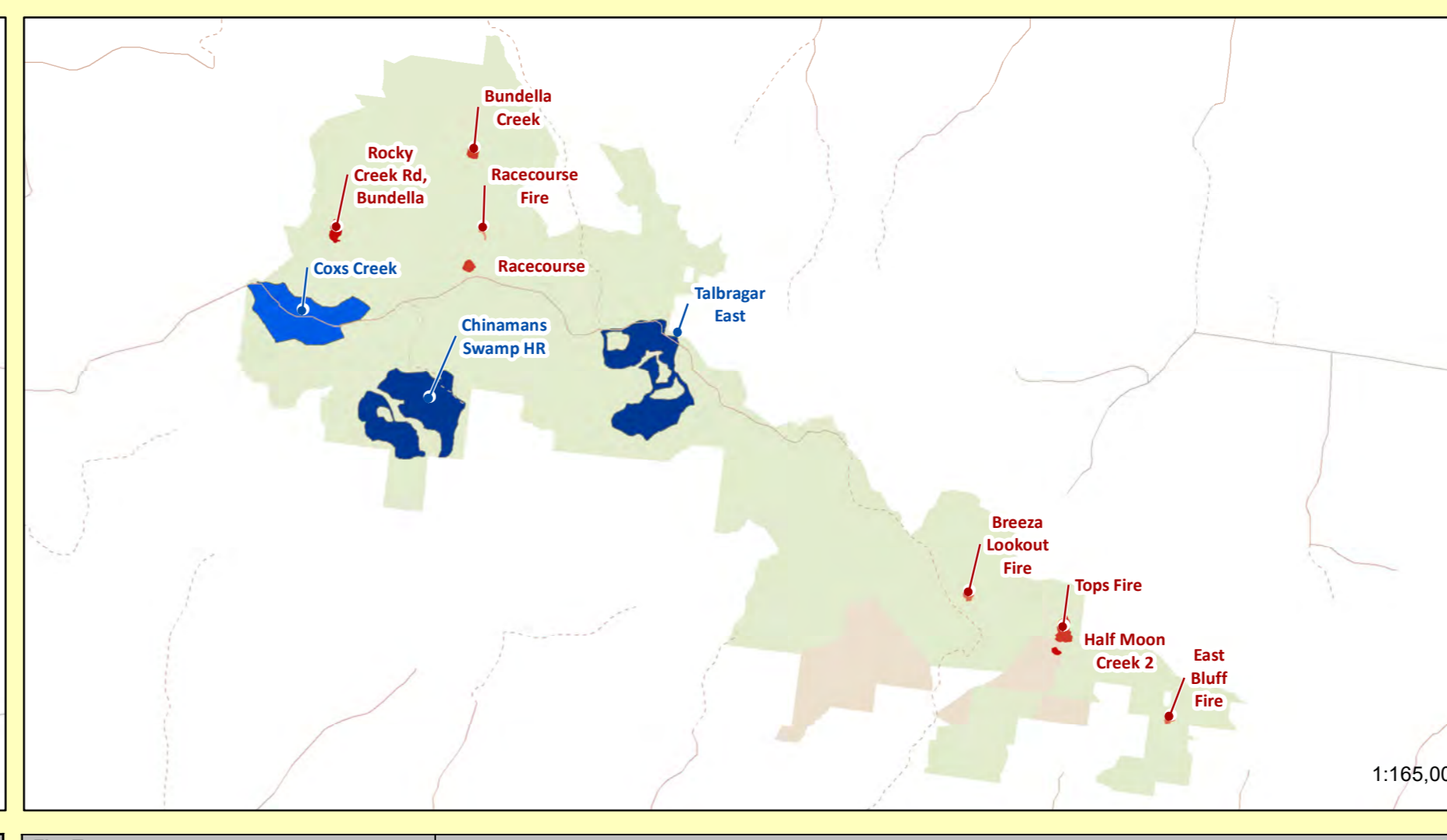
Vegetation



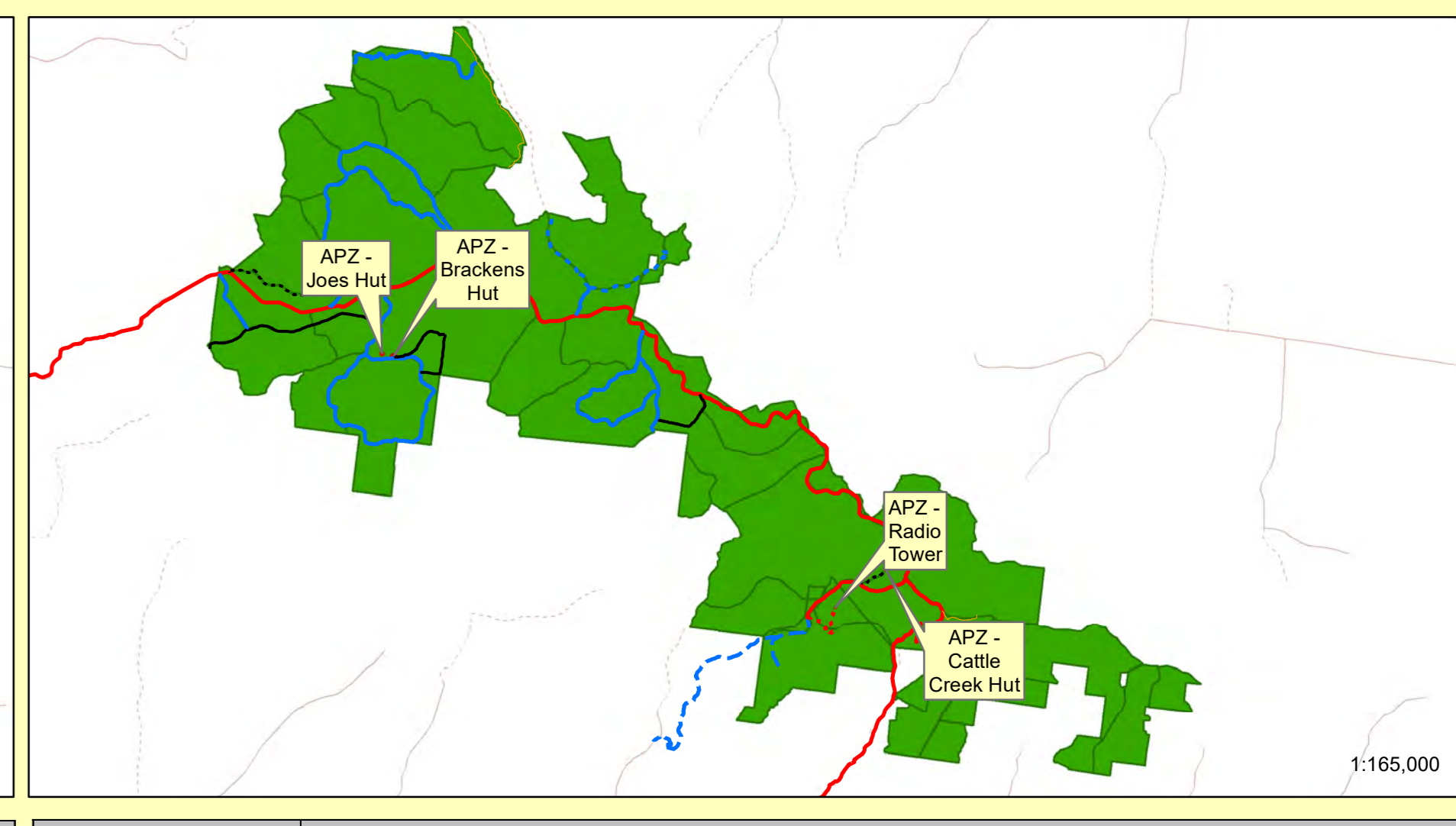
Vegetation Fire Thresholds



Fire History



Risk Management Information



Suggested Fuel Loads

Vegetation Type	Vegetation Management Guidelines	Fire Behaviour
Grassy woodlands	• The maximum fuel load in healthy stands of grassy woodlands should be 10 t/ha. Where the height of the overstorey is less than 10m, the maximum fuel load should be 5 t/ha. • The maximum fuel load in stands of grassy woodlands should be 10 t/ha. • The maximum fuel load in stands of grassy woodlands should be 10 t/ha.	• Overstorey trees are dependent on seasonal conditions. • Low CHFI conditions are likely to result in a high fire intensity. • The maximum fuel load in stands of grassy woodlands should be 10 t/ha. • The maximum fuel load in stands of grassy woodlands should be 10 t/ha.
Open forests	• The maximum fuel load in healthy stands of open forests should be 10 t/ha. • The maximum fuel load in stands of open forests should be 10 t/ha. • The maximum fuel load in stands of open forests should be 10 t/ha.	• The maximum fuel load in stands of open forests should be 10 t/ha. • The maximum fuel load in stands of open forests should be 10 t/ha. • The maximum fuel load in stands of open forests should be 10 t/ha.
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Vegetation Threshold

Vegetation Threshold	Treatment
Too Frequently Burnt	Fire thresholds have been exceeded. Protect from fire as far as possible.
Vulnerable to Frequent Fire	The area will be Too Frequently Burnt if it burns this year. Protect from fire as far as possible.
Within Threshold	Fire history is within the threshold for vegetation in this area. A burn is neither required nor should one necessarily be avoided.
Long Unburnt	Fire frequency is below fire thresholds in the area. A prescribed burn may be advantageous. Consider allowing unplanned fires to burn.
Unknown	Insufficient data to determine fire threshold.
No Regime Assigned	Areas which do not have recommended fire intervals assigned to them eg. cleared land, rock.

NB. Fire thresholds are defined for vegetation communities to conserve biodiversity.

Fire Type

Fire Type	Fire Details
Prescribed Burn	2015-16: Chimens Swamp HR - A 450 ha fire. 2015-16: Tabragga East HR - A 304 ha fire. 2014-15: Coxs creek HR - A 344 ha fire of moderate intensity that did not reach tree crowns.
Wildfires	2019-20: Rocky Creek Rd Bundella - a small (20 ha) moderate intensity fire. 2019-20: Half Moon Creek 2 - a 4 ha fire. 2018-19: Racocourse - a small (9 ha) moderate intensity fire. 2018-19: Bundella Creek - a small (10 ha) moderate intensity fire. 2018-19: Tops Fire - a small (26 ha) fire of moderate intensity. 2017-18: Breeza Lookout Fire - a 6 ha fire. 2017-18: East Bluff Fire - a 2 ha fire. 2015-16: Racocourse Fire - a 5 ha fire.

Fire Management Zone

Fire Management Zone	Treatment
Asset Protection Zones	The objective of APZs is the protection of human life and property. This will have precedence over guidelines for the management of biodiversity. Maintain Overall Fuel Hazard at Moderate or below.
Strategic Fire Advantage Zones	The objective of SFAZs is to reduce fire intensity in locations to assist containment of wildfires, by maintaining the Overall Fuel Hazard less than HIGH.
Land Management Zones	The objective of LMZs is to conserve biodiversity and protect cultural heritage. Manage fire consistent with fire thresholds.