

Bushfire Risk Assessment 25 Craigie Park Road Craigie



November 2025

xwb consulting
Town Planning and Bushfire Consultants



1. Introduction

XWB Consulting has been engaged by Tract Consultants on behalf of RDA Victoria (RDAV) to prepare a bushfire risk assessment for a proposed horse riding school at 25 Craigie Park Road Craigie.

The land is in a Bushfire Management Overlay under the Central Goldfields Planning Scheme and is in a designated Bushfire Prone Area under the Building Regulations 2018.

A horse riding school falls within the broader definition of agriculture under the Central Goldfields Planning Scheme which does not trigger a planning permit under the Bushfire Management Overlay. However given the nature of the surrounding landscape and use proposed, a bushfire risk assessment has been undertaken to inform consideration of the planning permit application.

The bushfire assessment has been prepared by:

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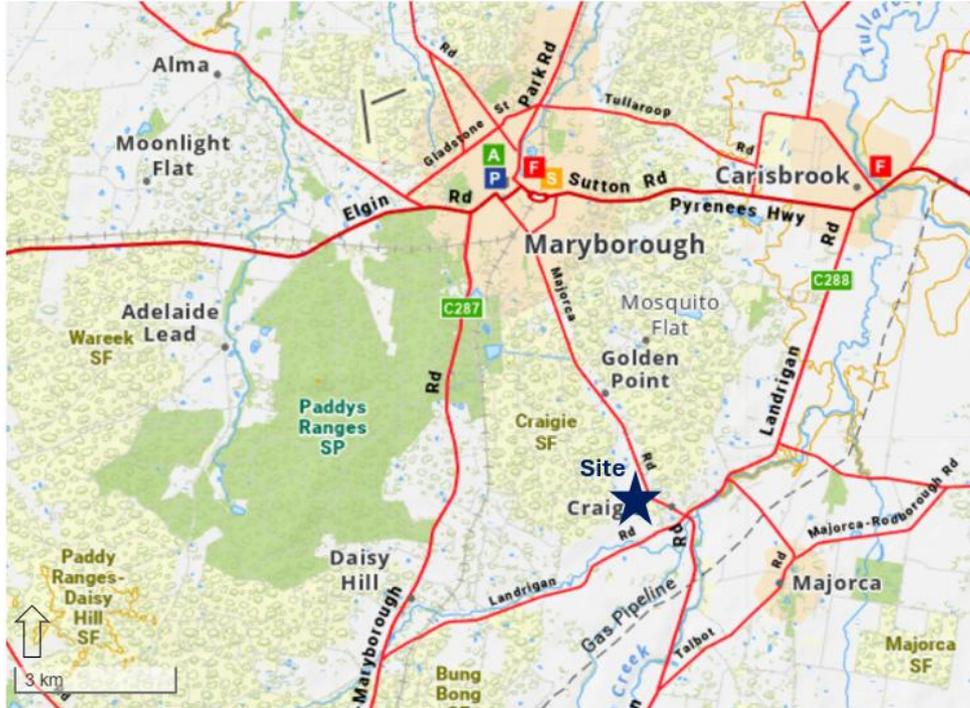
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An inspection of the site has not been undertaken as part of the assessment. The assessment has been informed by aerial photograph, video of the site provided by the client and the authors experience from previous visits to the Maryborough area.

2. Site Description

The site is a public reserve known as Craigie Park Reserve which is located on the south side of Craigie Park Road approximately 5km south of the Maryborough Township and 230m west of Majorca Road as shown on the locality plan below:



The site has an area of 3.98 ha with a frontage of 166m to Craigie Park Road. The site comprises a flat open paddock with scattered trees around the boundary of the site. Craigie Park Road is a rural standard road with a gravel pavement. The site is shown on the aerial photograph below:



The surrounding area is characterised significant areas of state park and state forest to the north and west. The landscape to the south and east comprises mainly open paddocks with pockets of bushland.

The site is within a Public Park and Recreation Zone under the Central Goldfields Planning Scheme. As indicated, the site is also within a Bushfire Management Overlay under the Central Goldfields Planning Scheme.

3. Proposal

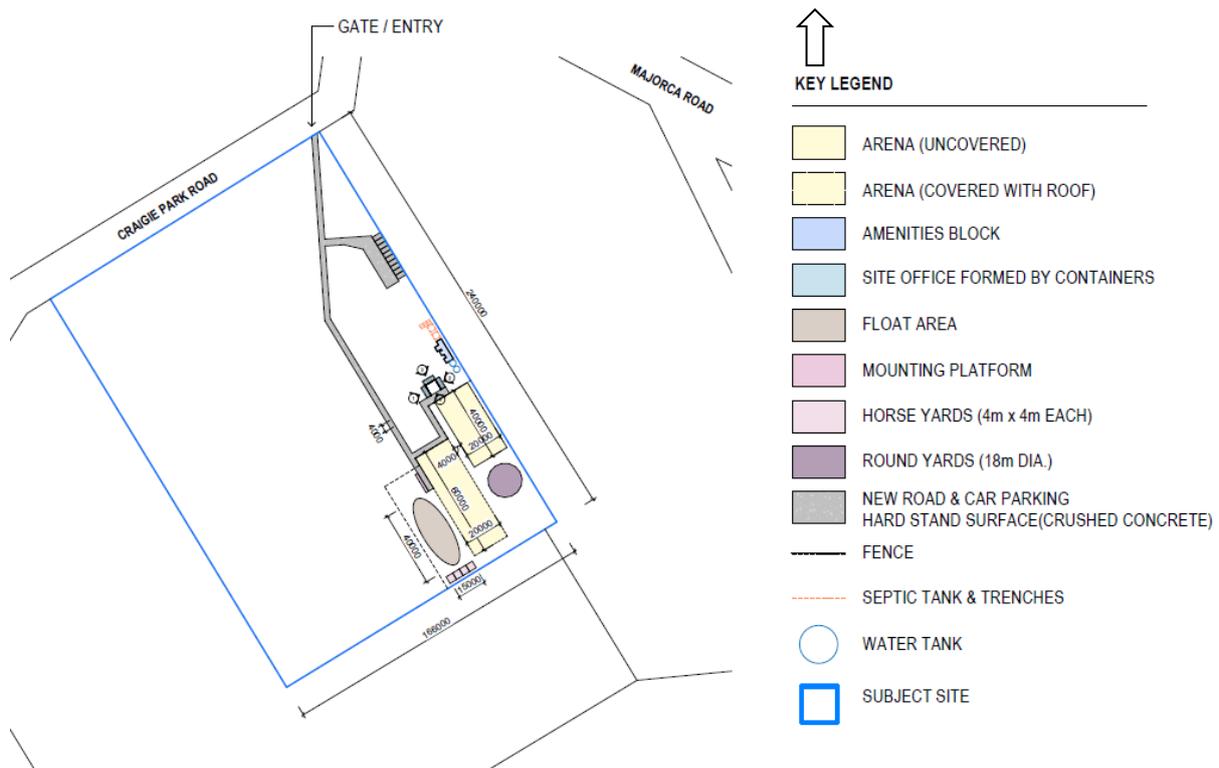
It is proposed to use and develop the site which is owned by the Central Goldfield Shire Council for a horse riding school to be operated by RDAV. RDAV activities provide people with disabilities of all types (including intellectual, physical, sensory, and mental illness) and ages to experience enjoyment, personal enrichment and a sense of achievement through equine assisted activities.

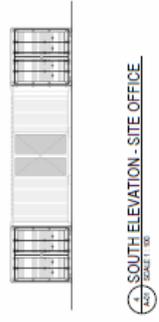
Activities will be conducted 2 -3 times per week for a 4 hour period. There will be a maximum of 10 participants per lesson which will last for 30 minutes. Participants will be driven to the site for their lesson and leave following their lesson.

The facilities proposed will include:

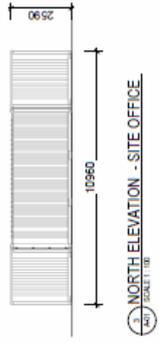
- A covered 60m by 40m arena.
- An uncovered 40m by 20m arena.
- A round yard.
- Horse yards.
- A float parking area.
- Shipping containers used for storage and a site office.
- An amenities block.
- Access and carparking.

The site is not used for accommodation purposes and the facilities on site are not habitable structures. The facilities on the site are shown on the site plan below and the elevations of the structures are shown on the following page.

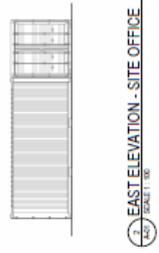




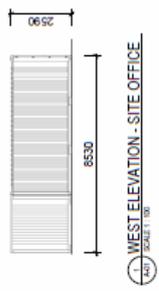
1. SOUTH ELEVATION - SITE OFFICE
 SCALE: 1:100



2. NORTH ELEVATION - SITE OFFICE
 SCALE: 1:100



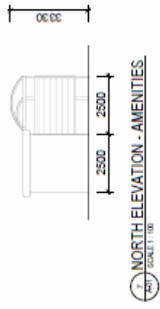
3. EAST ELEVATION - SITE OFFICE
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4. WEST ELEVATION - SITE OFFICE
 SCALE: 1:100



5. SOUTH ELEVATION - AMENITIES
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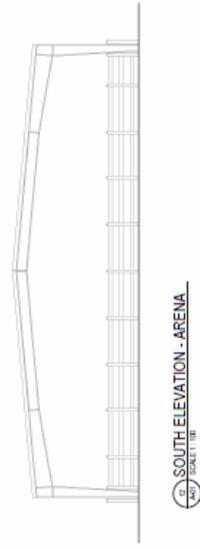
6. NORTH ELEVATION - AMENITIES
 SCALE: 1:100



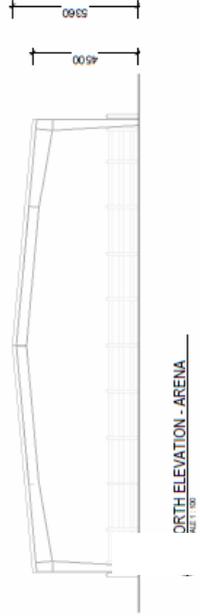
7. EAST ELEVATION - AMENITIES
 SCALE: 1:100



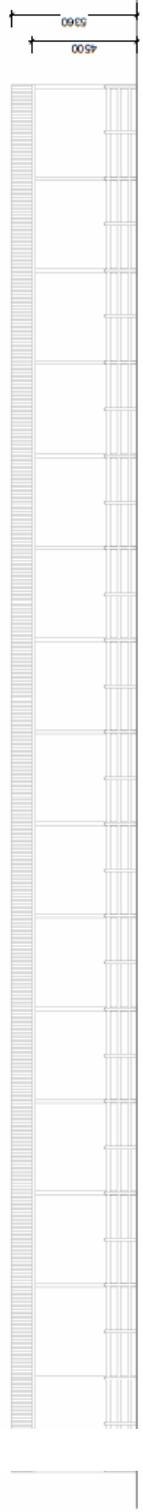
8. WEST ELEVATION - AMENITIES
 SCALE: 1:100



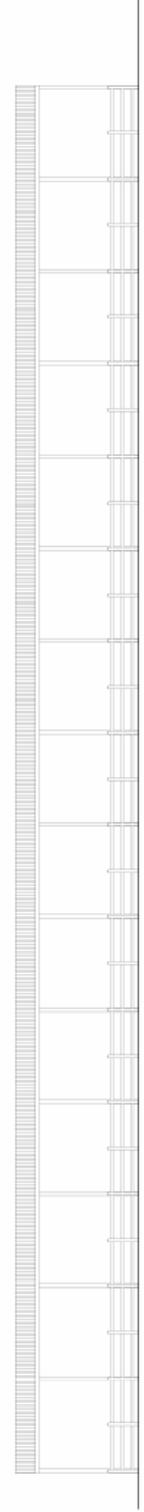
9. SOUTH ELEVATION - ARENA
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10. NORTH ELEVATION - ARENA
 SCALE: 1:100



11. WEST ELEVATION - ARENA
 SCALE: 1:100



12. EAST ELEVATION - ARENA
 SCALE: 1:100

4. Planning Policy Framework

4.1 State Planning Policy

State planning policy in relation to bushfire planning is set out in Clause 13.02-1S of the planning scheme. The objective of the state policy is to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities to bushfire through risk-based planning that prioritises the protection of human life.

Strategies to achieve this objective are:

Protection of human life

Give priority to the protection of human life by:

- Prioritising the protection of human life over all other policy considerations.
- Directing population growth and development to low risk locations and ensuring the availability of, and safe access to, areas where human life can be better protected from the effects of bushfire.
- Reducing the vulnerability of communities to bushfire through the consideration of bushfire risk in decision-making at all stages of the planning process.

Bushfire hazard identification and assessment

Identify bushfire hazard and undertake appropriate risk assessment by:

- Applying the best available science to identify vegetation, topographic and climatic conditions that create a bushfire hazard.
- Considering the best available information about bushfire hazard including the map of designated bushfire prone areas prepared under the *Building Act 1993* or regulations made under that Act.
- Applying the Bushfire Management Overlay in planning schemes to areas where the extent of vegetation can create an extreme bushfire hazard.
- Considering and assessing the bushfire hazard on the basis of:
 - Landscape conditions - meaning the conditions in the landscape within 20 kilometres and potentially up to 75 kilometres from a site;
 - Local conditions - meaning conditions in the area within approximately 1 kilometre from a site;
 - Neighbourhood conditions - meaning conditions in the area within 400 metres of the site;
 - The site for the development.
- Consulting with emergency management agencies and the relevant fire authority early in the process to receive their recommendations and implement appropriate bushfire protection measures.
- Ensuring that strategic planning documents, planning scheme amendments, planning permit applications and development plan approvals properly assess bushfire risk and include appropriate bushfire protection measures.
- Not approving development where a landowner or proponent has not satisfactorily demonstrated that the relevant policies have been addressed, performance measures satisfied or bushfire protection measures can be adequately implemented.

Settlement planning

Plan to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities and prioritise protection of human life by:

- Directing population growth and development to low risk locations, being those locations assessed as having a radiant heat flux of less than 12.5 kilowatts/square metre

under *AS 3959-2018 Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas* (Standards Australia, 2018).

- Ensuring the availability of, and safe access to, areas assessed as a BAL-LOW rating under *AS 3959-2018 Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas* (Standards Australia, 2018) where human life can be better protected from the effects of bushfire.
- Ensuring the bushfire risk to existing and future residents, property and community infrastructure will not increase as a result of future land use and development.
- Achieving no net increase in risk to existing and future residents, property and community infrastructure, through the implementation of bushfire protection measures and where possible reduce bushfire risk overall.
- Assessing and addressing the bushfire hazard posed to the settlement and the likely bushfire behaviour it will produce at a landscape, settlement, local, neighbourhood and site scale, including the potential for neighbourhood-scale destruction.
- Assessing alternative low risk locations for settlement growth on a regional, municipal, settlement, local and neighbourhood basis.
- Not approving any strategic planning document, local planning policy, or planning scheme amendment that will result in the introduction or intensification of development in an area that has, or will on completion have, more than a BAL-12.5 rating under AS 3959-2018.

Areas of high biodiversity conservation value

Ensure settlement growth and development approvals can implement bushfire protection measures without unacceptable biodiversity impacts by discouraging settlement growth and development in bushfire affected areas that are of high biodiversity conservation value.

Use and development control in a Bushfire Prone Area

In a bushfire prone area designated in accordance with regulations made under the *Building Act 1993*, bushfire risk should be considered when assessing planning applications for the following uses and development:

- Subdivisions of more than 10 lots
- Accommodation
- Childcare centre
- Education centre
- Emergency services facility
- Hospital
- Indoor recreation facility
- Major sports and recreation facility
- Place of assembly
- Any application for development that will result in people congregating in large numbers.

When assessing a planning permit application for the above uses and development:

- Consider the risk of bushfire to people, property and community infrastructure.
- Require the implementation of appropriate bushfire protection measures to address the identified bushfire risk.
- Ensure new development can implement bushfire protection measures without unacceptable biodiversity impacts.

Policy guidelines

Consider as relevant:

- Any relevant approved State, regional and municipal fire prevention plan.

Policy documents

Consider as relevant:

- *AS 3959-2018 Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas* (Standards Australia, 2018)
- *Building in bushfire-prone areas - CSIRO & Standards Australia* (SAA HB36-1993, 1993)
- Any bushfire prone area map prepared under the *Building Act 1993* or regulations made under that Act

4.2 Local Planning Policy

The Municipal Planning Strategy at Clause 02.03-1 of the Central Goldfields Planning Scheme recognises that the shire is subject to significant bushfire hazards, particularly surrounding the townships of Maryborough, Dunolly, Moliagul and Bealiba. This hazard is due to the extent of Box Ironbark forest encircling the townships and traversing into forests.

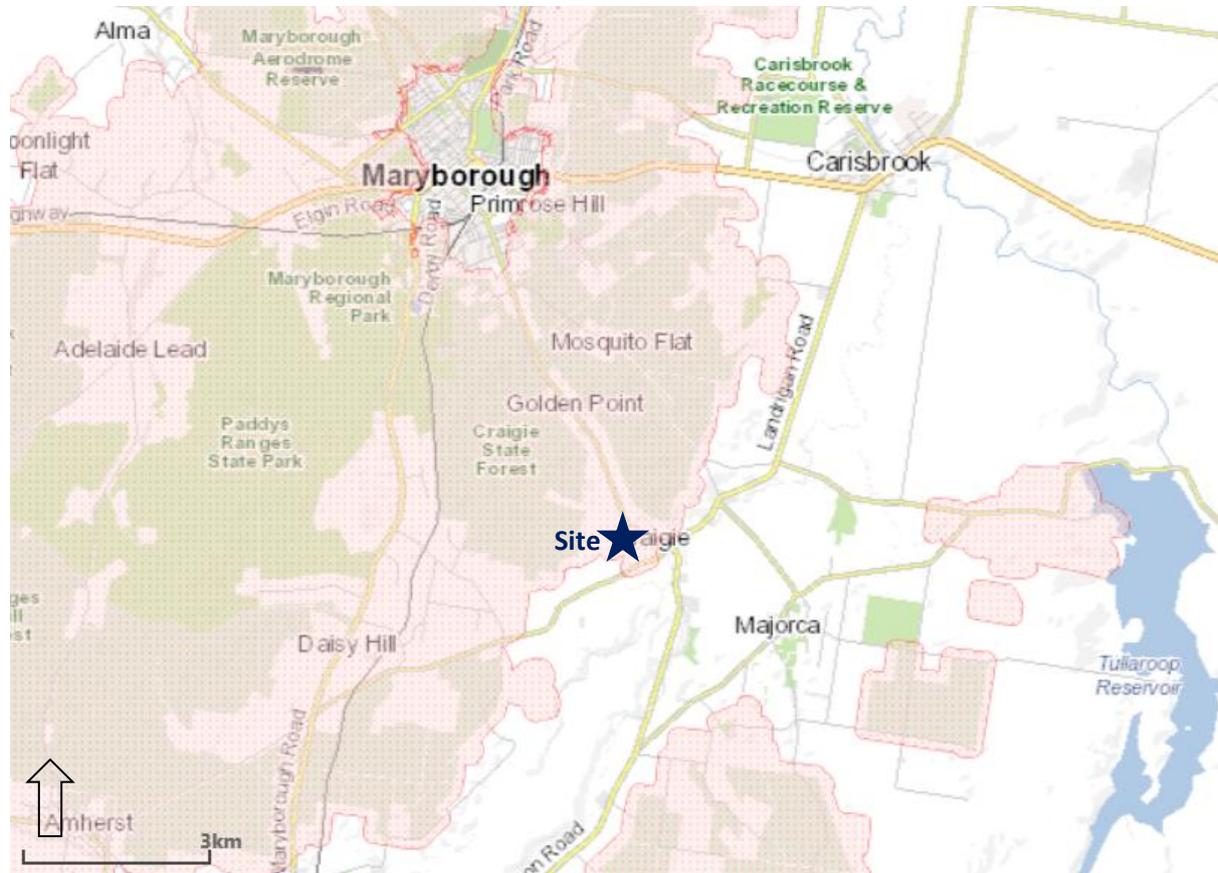
Strategies to address this bushfire risk include:

- Directing future growth to existing townships to protect environmental values and improve community safety from environmental hazards, including high bushfire risk.
- Encouraging development only when the risk to life and property from bushfire and flooding can be reduced to an acceptable level and bushfire and flooding protection measures can be implemented.

5 Bushfire Risk Assessment

5.1 Bushfire Designation

The site is within a Bushfire Management Overlay under the Central Goldfields Planning Scheme as shown on the plan below:



The Bushfire Management Overlay is applied in planning schemes to areas where the extent of vegetation can create an extreme bushfire hazard. The Maryborough Township is surrounded by state parks and state forests comprising Box Ironbark forest which is included within the Bushfire Management Overlay. The site sits on the southern edge of this area with the more open landscape to the east and south falling outside the Bushfire Management Overlay other than pockets of bushland.

The site is included with a Bushfire Prone Area under the Building Regulations 2018.

4.3 Bushfire Site Hazard Assessment

A bushfire site hazard site assessment as required under the planning scheme describes the bushfire hazard within 150 metres of the proposed development (as defined by the concept plan). The description of the hazard is prepared in accordance with Sections 2.2.3 to 2.2.5 of AS3959:2018 Construction of Buildings in Bushfire Prone Areas (Standards Australia) excluding paragraph (a) of section 2.2.3.2. Photographs or other techniques may be used to assist in describing the bushfire hazard. The plan below shows the bushfire hazard within 150m of the site.



The majority of the site comprises open paddocks which would be classified as grassland under AS3959. The slope of the grassland is flat.

Part of the site and adjoining land to the west, south and east comprises bushland with low trees, little to no understorey other than grassland and a low canopy cover. The bushland area would be classified as woodland under AS3959 and the slope of the woodland is flat.

Beyond the woodland to the north, west and south are open paddocks which would be classified as grassland under AS3959. The slope of the grassland is flat.

The vegetation is shown in the photographs below:



Looking west across the site



Looking north along the eastern boundary including grassed area and bushland on adjoining land



Adjoining bushland to the east

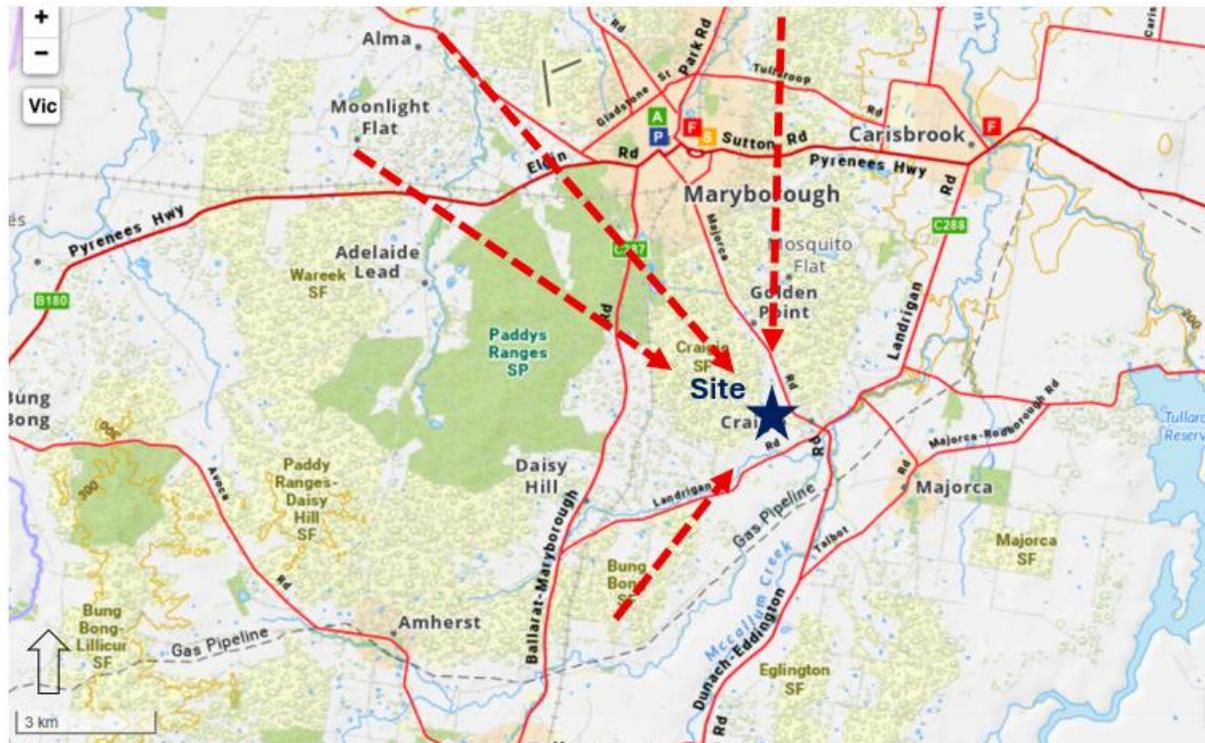


Site of horse arenas with bushland and open paddocks to the south.

4.5 Bushfire Landscape Risk

The surrounding area is characterised significant areas of state park and state forest to the north upto Maryborough and to the west. There is a corridor of open paddocks along Majorca Road extending towards Maryborough. The landscape to the south and east comprises mainly open paddocks with pockets of bushland.

The surrounding landscape is shown on the plan below:



In south eastern Australia, the greatest bushfire threat occurs when there is a strong dry north westerly wind followed by a south westerly wind change. Under these conditions there is the potential for long run bushfires (as shown by the dashed red arrows) within the bushland areas around Maryborough to impact the site. Access to Maryborough may be compromised by bushfire along numerous routes. Overall the landscape bushfire risk to the site is considered to be high.

4.5 Proposed bushfire risk response

The bushfire risk to the site is high, although this bushfire risk can be mitigated to an acceptable level given the nature of the activity proposed and subject to appropriate management measures.

Whilst the activity involves vulnerable people, the nature of the activity is such that they only attend the site for a short duration of time. The buildings/structures on site are not habitable buildings and serve a more functional purpose (eg: amenities, storage, site office, covered riding area). This distinction is important because alternative activities such as accommodation or a day activity centre where people would attend for extended periods would not be suitable given the bushfire risk. The activity should be managed through a Bushfire Emergency Management Plan which should include the following requirements:

- Activities should not be conducted or participants present on site during a day of extreme or catastrophic fire danger in the relevant fire district. (Currently North Central District).
- The RDAV Manager for the site must monitor emergency information sources such as Vic Emergency website and / or app, CFA social media and ABC local radio.
- In the event of an advice message affecting the site, the RDAV Manager should continue to monitor emergency information sources for any changes in the situation.
- In the event of a watch and act message affecting the site, the RDAV Manager should direct all persons to evacuate the site via a safe route.
- In the event of an emergency warning message affecting the property, the RDAV Manager should direct people to evacuate the site if safe to do so or shelter in place if not safe to evacuate.
- The preferred evacuation route would be to Maryborough or Carisbrook to the north east along Landigan Road to avoid heavier bushland areas, or south west to Talbot via Dunach Eddington Road. However evacuation routes must consider areas affected by warnings and avoid routes likely to be impacted by the bushfire.
- The RDAV Manager must have a mobile phone contact number for participants and/or their carers so they can be contacted to be advised of the closure of the site due to an extreme or catastrophic fire danger rating or bushfire warning affecting the site.
- Activities on site including maintenance works must accord with the requirements applicable to the declared fire danger period and/or a declared total fire ban day.
- Any staff or volunteers involved in managing activities on the site should to undertake training by no later than either the commencement fire danger period or the 1 November (which ever is the earlier) on bushfire emergency procedures set out in the Bushfire Emergency Management Plan.
- As participants, staff and volunteers will arrive at the site by private transport, they should evacuate by the same private transport if safe to do so having regard to the location of the fire.
- Reopening of the site following a closure due to a fire or an evacuation should only occur when determined safe to do so by the manager following the downgrading of a warning to an advice message or all clear, and if appropriate following consultation with emergency services.
- Shelter in place should be a final option in the event of a bushfire when it is too late to evacuate or it is not safe to evacuate. Where there is sufficient warning of a bushfire before shelter in place becoming necessary (ie: watch and act message) people should be evacuated from the site. Shelter in place should occur where an emergency warning

affecting the property has been issued and it is no longer safe to evacuate, or as directed by emergency services. People should shelter at the northern end of the covered arena.

The buildings / structures on site are not habitable buildings to which a BAL rating would apply. The amenities are a demountable building and the site office storage is shipping containers. A fire break should be provided around the amenities and site office/storage buildings for a minimum distance of 25m. Grass within this area should be regularly slashed so that grass height does not exceed 100mm. It is understood that the land to the east is Parks Victoria land which is leased by the President of the RDAV Centre which would allow for a fire break adjoining the amenities building.

A static water supply should be provided on site for firefighting purposes. The static water supply should meet the following requirements:

- Be in an above ground water tank constructed of concrete or metal with a minimum capacity of 10,000 litres.
- All fixed above-ground water pipes and fittings required for fire fighting purposes must be made of corrosive resistant metal.
- The tank must incorporate a ball or gate valve (British Standard Pipe (BSP) 65mm) and coupling (64 mm CFA 3 thread per inch male fitting) for firefighting purposes.
- The outlets of the water tank must be within 4m of a driveway accessible at all times by a fire truck.
- The water tank must be readily identifiable from the building or appropriate identification signage to the satisfaction of CFA must be provided.
- Any pipework and fittings must be a minimum of 65 mm (excluding the CFA coupling).

The access to the site should be constructed to accommodate access by a fire truck. The access is relatively flat and should be constructed to meet the following requirements:

- All-weather construction.
- A load limit of at least 15 tonnes.
- Provide a minimum trafficable width of 3.5 metres.
- Be clear of encroachments for at least 0.5 metres on each side and at least 4 metres vertically.
- Curves must have a minimum inner radius of 10 metres.
- A turning area for fire fighting vehicles must be provided close to the arenas by the provision of a vehicle turning heads– such as a T or Y head – which meet the specification of Austroad Design for an 8.8 metre service vehicle.

In terms of state and local planning policy:

- The protection of human life is prioritised by ensuring that activities do not occur on a day of extreme or catastrophic fire danger with a management plan in place to manage bushfire risk. The activity does not involve accommodation or people being onsite daily or for extended periods of time, with only small numbers of people being onsite at any one time.

- Given the nature of the activity the risk to life and property from bushfire can be reduced to an acceptable level with appropriate bushfire protection measures implemented.

7 Conclusion

The proposal involves the use and development of the site for a horse riding school by RDAV. A planning permit is not required under the Bushfire Management Overlay.

The bushfire risk to the site is high, although this bushfire risk can be mitigated to an acceptable level given the nature of the activity proposed and subject to appropriate management measures which should be implemented through a Bushfire Emergency Management Plan as a condition of the planning permit for the use and development.