



## SHELTER-IN-PLACE BUILDING POLICY

### RATIONAL

Melba College Shelter-in-Place building (SIP) must meet performance criteria based on the school's risk profile. The Shelter-In-Place building at Melba College:

- meet the minimum prescribed performance criteria for their SIP;
- consider some protection to make their SIP more resistant to bushfire and/or grassfire ember attack schools with a bushfire or grassfire risk

### Policy

Melba College must nominate a building or buildings on the College site that provides a last resort temporary shelter-in-place option until either an emergency has passed or a more suitable alternative is available.

In the case of a bushfire, the SIP may be used as a central assembly point prior to evacuation, or as a last resort when evacuation from the site is no longer a viable option. Leaving early is always the best option.

The Melba College SIP is to be identified in the Emergency Management Plan and in the Evacuation Diagrams which are displayed in each building in the school and in all classrooms and offices of the school.

### Shelter-in Place

Melba College has selected 'Building B' as the Shelter in Place for all students Years 7 to 12.

### Shelter-in-Place performance criteria

The selection of the Melba College SIP needs to be based on existing accessible facilities. The following performance criteria have informed the choice of SIP at Melba College, with the criteria including additional elements as the risk from bushfire/grassfire increases.

The Melba College nominated SIP must ensure:

- all students and staff and visitors present on the site at the initiation of the emergency are able to be accommodated;
- the requirements under the National Construction Code (NCC) are met for safe egress, assuming that the maximum school population occupies the building;
- access to toilets and water from within the building(s) is considered;
- access for emergency services;
- safety equipment (i.e. fire fighting services and equipment) is in proper working order and meets the relevant [essential safety measures](#) (ESM) maintenance requirements applicable to the age of the building;
- that at the time of construction, or where there is any substantial renovation to an existing SIP, works comply with the current NCC and are independently certified by a building surveyor.

**As Melba College has bushfire and or grassfire identified as a threat or hazard in their Emergency Management Plan risk assessment, the SIP must also:**

- be sited as far as practicable from sources of bushfire both within the school and beyond the school boundary;
- have adequate building surroundings that: allow safe egress and passage to the next contingent shelter option;
- not present an unacceptably high ignition risk;
- not provide an unacceptably high level of toxic smoke load to the SIP building or egress routes;
- minimise flammable elements including combustible material within 10m of the building, such as plastic equipment, rubbish skips, recycling bins, wood piles, gas cylinders and plants with the potential to produce localised flame contact with any vulnerable part of the building; and
- have access to a static water supply i.e. a properly maintained hydrant, booster systems and/or tank water supply that ensures fire crews have adequate means to defend the SIP if they are able to attend.

**NOTE: Occupant safety is a fundamental requirement of the selection of the Melba College SIP.**

**Maintenance around the SIP and school buildings**

Melba College must endeavour to ensure the below maintenance activities are met. These requirements are of increasing importance around the SIP.

- the school site has been slashed or cleared of all flammable undergrowth such as dry grass and vegetation to the site boundary unless it is greater than 50m from buildings, evacuation routes and evacuation locations.
- a fuel reduced zone must be established around buildings (20 metres as a guide) consistent with the following requirements:
- grass must be short cropped and maintained during the declared fire danger period;
- all leaves and vegetation debris must be removed at regular intervals during the declared fire danger period;
- within 10 metres of a building, flammable objects must not be located close to the vulnerable parts of the building;
- plants greater than 10 centimetres in height must not be placed within 3 metres of a window or glass feature of the building;
- shrubs must not be located under the canopy of trees.
- individual and clumps of shrubs must not exceed 5 square metres in area and must be separated by at least 5 metres;
- trees must not overhang or touch any elements of the building.
- the canopy of trees must be separated by at least 5 metres; and
- there must be a clearance of at least 2 metres between the lowest tree branches and ground level.
- remove dead vegetation and other flammable elements and prune lower limbs of established trees (check with local council before removing trees)
- the fuel reduced zone, does not have plantings that are dense and typical of bushland settings
- trees or branches overhanging buildings and sheds have been removed or trimmed to a height of 2 metres from building rooflines and 2 metres clear of buildings;
- all stockpiled leaves, pruning, dead limbs and trees and other combustible materials have been removed from the site;

- thick, continuous shrubs or other vegetation contacting building walls or directly under windows have been removed; and
- rooves and roof gutters are clear of leaves, twigs and branches.

## **COMMUNITY BUSHFIRE SAFETY OPTIONS ON SCHOOL PREMISES**

### **Neighbourhood Safer Places**

There are a number of school sites where a building or land or both, with Minister for Education consent, has a Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP).

If Melba College is approached to become a Neighbourhood Safer Place, this must be referred to the Department of Education and Training for consideration and approval.

### **Related policies**

- [Bushfire Preparedness](#)
- [Emergency and Security Services Support](#)
- [Emergency Management Planning](#)
- [Reporting \(emergency and incidents\)](#)
- [Safety, Emergency and Risk Management](#)

### **Department resources**

- [Emergency Management Planning Online](#) - for an Emergency Management Plan (EMP) for government schools and EMP templates for early childhood services and non-government schools.
- [Landscaping for Bushfire Prone Areas](#)
- [Safety and Compliance - information for schools](#)(eduGate)
- [School Bushfire/Grassfire Readiness Checklist](#)

### **Other resources**

- [Australian Building Codes Board](#)
- [Australian Standard AS3959: Construction of Buildings in Bushfire Prone Areas](#)
- [Building Amendment Specific Use Bushfire Protected Buildings and Other Matters\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [Essential Safety Measures: Maintenance Manual](#)
- [Guide to retrofitting certain Class 9 buildings for better protection from bushfire ember attack \(VBA\)](#)
- [Neighbourhood Safer Places Assessment Guidelines](#)
- [Victorian Building Authority](#)
- [VRQA Guidelines on Bushfire Preparedness - Registered Schools](#)

### **Further Information**

Further information is available from [emergency.management@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:emergency.management@edumail.vic.gov.au) or the relevant regional Manager, Operations and Emergency Management.