



# PRIMARY CARE PREPAREDNESS

## NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES (NSP)

In Victoria, a Neighbourhood Safer Place – Bushfire Place of Last Resort (NSP-BPLR) is a location only designated for use as a last resort during a bushfire emergency, when your primary bushfire plan has failed. It is important to note that:

- it is not a substitute for planning to leave early
- it may offer some protection from flame and radiant heat but does not guarantee safety
- NSPs are often open spaces (sports fields, parks or existing buildings, not purpose-built fire structures).

<b>Why do they exist?</b>	After major bushfires (notably the 2009 Black Saturday fires), Victorian fire-agencies and councils recognised that despite the best plans many people could be caught without a safer option. NSPs provide a backup option when leaving home, staying to defend or when evacuating via alternative routes is no longer a viable option.
<b>How are NSPs designated?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal councils (or equivalent authorities) identify and designate sites such as NSPs within their jurisdiction.</li><li>• The Country Fire Authority or CFA assesses potential sites using Assessment Guidelines e.g. for radiant heat exposure, access and exit and vegetation clearance</li><li>• Once designated, NSPs are listed publicly e.g. on the CFA website.</li></ul>
<b>How you can recognise an NSP-BPLR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You can recognise a NSP-BPLR in Victoria and New South Wales by a green and white sign which includes the words:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 'Bushfire Neighbourhood Safer Place – A Place of Last Resort'</li><li>○ 'Bushfire Place of Last Resort – Neighbourhood safer Place'.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>What kinds of places can an NSP be?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A local sports oval or recreation reserve</li><li>• Foreshore reserve or park</li><li>• Community hall</li><li>• School oval</li></ul>
<b>What you should know and do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The safest option on days of high bushfire risk is always to leave early from high-risk areas. An NSP is only for when all other plans have failed.</li><li>• Travel to an NSP may be dangerous – smoke, fire activity, fallen trees and blocked roads may intervene.</li><li>• At an NSP you may face – No emergency services present, no facilities for pets, no food/water supply guaranteed, exposure to smoke heat, flying embers, poor visibility.</li><li>• If you are forced to use an NSP wear protective clothing, bring drinking water, medications, phone etc.</li><li>• Monitor conditions and be prepared to move.</li></ul>
<b>What an NSP is not</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is not a substitute for a well-prepared home or a defensible property.</li><li>• Not a place for general daily refuge or for other emergencies.</li><li>• Not to be confused with a Community Fire Refuge, which is a building modified for higher protection.</li></ul>

<b>Locally – what you need to check</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find out if your local council has designated NSPs in your area. Some areas may not have any.</li> </ul> <p>Visit the CFA website or local council website and look for listings/maps in your municipality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know the location/s, how to get there safely and evaluate whether your travel path is viable in extreme conditions.</li> <li>Make sure your personal bushfire plan includes Plan A (leave early), Plan B (defend if appropriate) and Plan C (NSP or other last resort).</li> </ul>
<b>Key points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSPs are only last resort options</li> <li>They provide some protection but do not guaranteed safety</li> <li>Leaving early always remains the best strategy</li> <li>People with special needs, such as the elderly and people with a disability, should always leave before the threat of a bushfire</li> <li>Know your local NSPs, your exit routes and keep your plan current</li> </ul>
<b>More information and resources and how to find an NSP-BPLR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">CFA – Neighbourhood Safer Places Page</a></li> <li><a href="#">NSW Rural Fire Service – Neighbourhood Safer Places Page</a></li> <li>You can find your closest Neighbourhood Safer Place in New South Wales on the <a href="#">interactive map</a>.</li> </ul>

### Other useful links and resources to share with patients

- [NSP-BPLR – List of Locations Victoria](#)
- [NSP New South Wales Factsheet](#)
- CFA's [fire ready kit](#); [protective clothing](#) and [community fire refuges](#).

### Contact us

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