



Shire of Northam  
*Heritage, Commerce and Lifestyle*

## **Shire of Northam**

### **Minutes**

### **Bush Fire Advisory Committee**

**14 November 2023**



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## **1 DECLARATION OF OPENING**

The Chief Executive Officer, Ms D Terelinck, declared the meeting open at 7.04pm

## **2 ELECTION OF PRESIDING MEMBER & DEPUTY PRESIDING MEMBER**

In accordance with section 5.12 of the Local Government Act 1995, the members of a committee are to elect a presiding member from amongst themselves in accordance with Schedule 2.3, Division 1.

In accordance with recent changes to the Local Government Act 1995, if there is more than one nomination, the election of Committee Presiding Member will be conducted by secret Ballot and determined using an optional preference voting system, if required.

The members of a committee may elect a deputy presiding member from amongst themselves, but any such election is to be in accordance with Schedule 2.3, Division 2. This does not require the use of optional preferential voting.

Should the presiding member not be available or is unable or unwilling to perform the functions of presiding member, then the deputy presiding member may perform the functions of presiding member.

### **ELECTION PROCESS:**

The Chief Executive Officer advised that 2 nominations for the position of Presiding Member had been received from Mr Chris Marris and Cr Attila Mencshelyi.

The Chief Executive Officer called for any further nominations from committee members for the position of Presiding Member from the floor. No further nominations were forthcoming and as such nominations were declared closed at 7.06pm.

An election was undertaken in accordance with the Local Government 1995 and the Local Government Elections Regulations 1997 by optional preferential voting via secret ballot. The Shire's Waste Projects Officer (Minute Taker) conducted the count and at the conclusion, the Chief Executive Officer announced that Mr Chris Marris has been elected as Presiding Member 7.10pm.

The Chief Executive Officer advised that no nominations had been received in writing for the position of Deputy Presiding Member.

The Chief Executive Officer called for any nominations from committee members from the floor for the position of Deputy Presiding Member. Mr Blair Wilding and Cr Attila Mencshelyi nominated. Nominations were declared closed at 7.11pm.

An election was undertaken in accordance with the Local Government 1995 and the Local Government Elections Regulations 1997 via secret ballot. The Waste Projects Officer (Minute Taker) conducted the count and at the conclusion, the Chief Executive Officer announced that Mr Blair Wilding had been elected as Deputy Presiding Member at 7.14pm.

### **3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

The Shire of Northam would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, the Ballardong and Whadjuk people of the Nyoongar nation and pay our respects to Elders, past present and emerging.

### **4 ATTENDANCE**

#### **4.1 ATTENDEES**

##### **Voting Committee:**

Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Chris Marris
Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer	Kristafer Brown
Councillor - Shire of Northam	Attila Mencshelyi
Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigade	Carla Millar (Proxy)
Clackline Muresk Bush Fire Brigade	Blair Wilding
Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade	Bruce Devereoux
Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade	Nic Dewar
Irishtown Bush Fire Brigade	Terry Hasson (Proxy)
Southern Brook Bush Fire Brigade	Paul Antonio
Jennapullin Bush Fire Brigade	Aaron Smith

##### **Non-Voting Committee:**

Clackline Muresk Bush Fire Brigade	Joe Marasco
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##### **Staff:**

Chief Executive Officer	Debbie Terelinck
Acting Executive Manager Development Services	Jacky Jurmann
Community Emergency Services Manager	Alex Espey
Waste Projects Officer (Minute Taker)	Kayla James

## **4.2 APOLOGIES**

Northam Central Bush Fire Brigade  
Wundowie Bush Fire Brigade  
District Officer Northam  
Irishtown Bush Fire Brigade

Kim Hampton  
Mathew Macqueen  
Drew Graham  
Rob Herzer

## **4.3 APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Nil.

## **4.4 ABSENT**

### **Voting Committee:**

Councillor – Shire of Northam  
Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer  
Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigade

Maria Girak  
Simon Peters  
Bryan Peterson

### **Non-Voting Committee:**

Wundowie Volunteer Fire and Rescue  
Service  
Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue  
Service  
Department of Parks and Wildlife  
(Wheatbelt)  
Department of Parks and Wildlife (Perth  
Hills)

Jeffrey Roberts  
Greg Montgomery  
Graeme Keals  
Michael Pasotti

## **5 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

*Members should fill in Disclosure of Interest forms for items in which they have a financial, proximity or impartiality interest and forward these to the Presiding Member before the meeting commences.*

*As defined in section 5.60A of the Local Government Act 1995, a **financial interest** occurs where a Councillor / Committee Member, or a person with whom the Councillor / Committee Member is closely associated, has a direct or indirect financial interest in the matter. That is, the person stands to make a financial gain or loss from the decision, either now or at some time in the future.*

*As defined in section 5.61 of the Local Government Act 1995, an **indirect financial interest** includes a reference to a financial relationship between that person and another person who requires a Local Government decision in relation to the matter.*

*As defined in section 5.60B of the Local Government Act 1995, a person has a **proximity interest** in a matter if the matter concerns a proposed change to a planning scheme affecting land that adjoins the person's land; or a proposed change to the zoning or use of land that adjoins the person's land; or a proposed development (as defined in section 5.63(5)) of land that adjoins the person's land.*

*As defined in 34C of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996, an **impartiality interest** means an interest that could, or could reasonably be perceived to, adversely affect the impartiality of the person having the interest and includes an interest arising from kinship, friendship or membership of an association.*

Nil.

**6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**6.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL BUSH FIRE ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 25 JULY 2023**

**RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION**

**Minute No: BFAC.313**

**Moved: Mr Kris Brown**

**Seconded: Mr Nic Dewar**

**That the minutes of the Special Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 25 July 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting.**

**CARRIED 10/0**

**For:** Mr Chris Marris, Mr Kris Brown, Mr Attila Mencshelyi, Mrs Carla Millar (Proxy), Mr Blair Wilding, Mr Bruce Devereoux, Mr Nic Dewar, Terry Hasson (Proxy), Mr Paul Antonio and Mr Aaron Smith

**Against:** Nil.



## 7 OFFICER REPORTS

### 7.1 Community Emergency Services Manager Report

<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Alex Espey (Community Emergency Services Manager)
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Jacky Jurmann (Acting Executive Manager Development Services)
<b>Officer Declaration of Interest:</b>	Nil
<b>Voting Requirement:</b>	Simple Majority
<b>Press release to be issued:</b>	No

#### BRIEF

For the Committee to receive and note the update provided by the Community Emergency Services Manager.

#### ATTACHMENTS

Nil

#### A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

This report is to provide the Committee an update on the current issues and actions of the Officer.

#### B. CONSIDERATIONS

##### **B.1 Strategic Community / Corporate Business Plan**

Performance Area: Planet.

Outcome 5: A resilient community.

Objective 5.1: Build community resilience to cope with natural disasters and emergencies, including pandemics, storms, flooding and fire.

Priority Action: Nil.

##### **B.2 Financial / Resource Implications**

Nil.

##### **B.3 Legislative Compliance**

Nil.

##### **B.4 Policy Implications**

Nil.

### **B.5 Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation**

Nil.

### **B.6 Risk Implications**

Refer to Risk Matrix [here](#).

<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Rating (likelihood x consequence)</b>	<b>Mitigation Action</b>
Financial	N/A	N/A	N/A
Health & Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputation	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Interruption	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A

### **B.7 Natural Environment Considerations**

N/A

## **C. OFFICER'S COMMENT**

### **Fire Control Officer - Mark Littlefair**

The Community Emergency Services Manager on behalf of the Council and Staff express their deep condolences to the family, friends and brigade associates on the recent passing of Fire Control Officer Mark Littlefair.

Mark was a highly respected member of the Shire of Northam bushfire community with his contributions greatly appreciated.

### **Acknowledgement of Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer 1 Kris Brown.**

The Community Emergency Services Manager passes on his appreciation to DCBFCO Kris Brown for his ongoing assistance. From time to time Kris is called upon to assist with various tasks in relation to the day to day running of the department. His assistance is always enthusiastically given without hesitation and does not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

### **Computer Assisted Dispatch**

The Shire of Northam Bush Fire Service is in the advanced stages of having its brigades mobilised in the first instance through the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) Computer Assisted Dispatch system.

This will automatically dispatch pre-determined appliances on job submission but will also be followed up with a leadership group call from COMCEN confirming escalation, de-escalation requirements.

It is expected that this will commence in November.

### **Bushfire Manual Review**

This has been a significant body of work carried out in consultation with the leadership group. Chapters 4 and 5 are tabled for adoption by committee members. Refer to separate agenda item.

### **Training Records**

This continues to be an issue for the Community Emergency Services Manager in terms of access and has been escalated within DFES.

### **Permits to Burn**

Following extension of the unrestricted burning period, we are now in restricted burning period. All Fire Control Officers are expected to complete all relevant sections of the permit application, including signing the complete permit.

### **Brigades Undertaking Burns on Shire Verges**

Per the previously tabled verge management policy, brigades "may" undertake these burns with prior Shire approval subject to compliance with verge management policy. Noting that burning is considered clearing and may require a Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) Clearing Permit if proposed to be conducted more than once in a 7 year period.

### **Verge Spraying**

Verge spraying carried out by the Shire in January and at other regular intervals is targeted maintenance to prevent damage to road and drainage infrastructure.

### **Enquiry on Burning Permit Procedure**

At the June BFAC meeting clarification was sought in relation to the existence of a standard operating procedure in relation to issuing "Permits to Burn". Investigations have been undertaken and no adopted Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been located.

**RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION**

**Minute No: BFAC.314**

**Moved: Cr Attila Mencshelyi**

**Seconded: Mr Blair Wilding**

**That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee endorses the following recommendation being presented to Council:**

- 1. That Council notes the Community Emergency Services Manager Report as provided.**

**CARRIED 10/0**

**For:** Mr Chris Marris, Mr Kris Brown, Mr Attila Mencshelyi, Mrs Carla Millar (Proxy), Mr Blair Wilding, Mr Bruce Devereoux, Mr Nic Dewar, Terry Hasson (Proxy), Mr Paul Antonio and Mr Aaron Smith.

**Against:** Nil.

Discussion

Community Emergency Services Manager Mr Alex Espey offered his condolences on behalf of the Shire after the passing of Mr Mark Littlefair.

The Community Emergency Services Manager acknowledged Mr Chris Marris for hard work and assistance in the review of the Bush Fire Manual over recent months.

The Community Emergency Services Manager also acknowledged Mr Kris Brown for his assistance when required over the last few months.

Discussion around the new Computer Aided Dispatch System took place.

Discussion around the Verge Spraying Program took place, particularly around the timing of the Shire's spraying program. The Community Emergency Services Manager will provide further comment at the next BFAC meeting.

## 7.2 Bush Fire Risk Mitigation Coordinator Report

<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Brian Humfrey (Bush Fire Risk Management Coordinator)
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Jacky Jurmann (Acting Executive Manager Development Services)
<b>Officer Declaration of Interest:</b>	Nil
<b>Voting Requirement:</b>	Simple Majority
<b>Press release to be issued:</b>	No

### BRIEF

For the Committee to receive and note the update provided by the Bush Fire Risk Mitigation Coordinator.

### ATTACHMENTS

Nil

## A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

The Bush Fire Risk Mitigation Coordinator role is to coordinate bushfire mitigation works on Shire land and reserves funded through the Department of Fire and Emergency Services' (DFES) Mitigation Activity Fund.

## B. CONSIDERATIONS

### B.1 Strategic Community / Corporate Business Plan

Performance Area: Planet.

Outcome 5: A resilient community.

Objective 5.1: Build community resilience to cope with natural disasters and emergencies, including pandemics, storms, flooding and fire.

Priority Action 5.1.8: Provide bushfire mitigation on Shire controlled land.

### B.2 Financial / Resource Implications

Works are within funding allocation from DFES.

### B.3 Legislative Compliance

N/a

### B.4 Policy Implications

N/a

**B.5 Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation**

Community and landowner consultation will occur as required as part of the works.

**B.6 Risk Implications**

Refer to Risk Matrix [here](#).

<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Rating (likelihood x consequence)</b>	<b>Mitigation Action</b>
Financial	Value of works exceed funding.	Insignificant (1) x Unlikely (2) = Low (2)	Contractor works to be managed to ensure works are within agreement.
Health & Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputation	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Interruption	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A

**B.7 Natural Environment Considerations**

Planned approved works have considered impacts on the natural environment and have been adapted where necessary.

**C. OFFICER'S COMMENT**

The Shire of Northam's Mitigation Activity Fund application for the mitigation works on Shire managed State-owned land was approved to the value \$176,915.00.

This funding is for 25 mitigation treatment throughout the Shire. The tender process has been completed and the contract awarded to Fire Mitigation Services (FMS) to start works with a priority to the higher risk assets prior to the upcoming fire season.

Listed below are the treatment types and locations. The contractor will update the Shire with a schedule of works.

<b>Treatment ID</b>	<b>Treatment Type</b>	<b>Treatment Objective</b>	<b>Primary Asset Name</b>
---------------------	-----------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------

2970	Chemical Works	Apply chemical treatment 3m off existing fire break to reduce the infestation of evasive weeds to minimise the availability of flash fuels	Trimmer Rd
2994	Chemical Works	Apply chemical treatment to reduce the infestation of evasive weeds to minimise the availability of flash fuels.	Carter St Grass Valley
23220	Mechanical Works	Remove the flash fuels along Railway rd to allow for safe access and egress for the resident and firefighting activity Fuel load to be below 2t per ha	Railway Rd Clackline
23221	Mechanical Works	Remove fuels around timber bridge to below 2t per Ha	Eadine Road Clackline
25280	Chemical Works	Apply chemical treatment to reduce the infestation of evasive weeds to minimise the availability of flash fuels.	Clacke St Northam
25286	Chemical Works	Chemical spray the fire access track to reduce the availability of flash fuels which mainly consist of invasive weeds. All spraying to be done prior to October	Benrua Rd Clackline
25316	Mechanical Works	install a 20m low fuel buffer to the assets. mulch /slash to remove the fuel to below 2t per Ha. All trees to be undercut to 2m.	Purkiss Drive Northam
25319	Mechanical Works	Mulch - Slash area to reduce the fuels available to below 2t per ha allowing safe access and exit to fire fighters using the water source	Chitty Rd Bakers Hill

25320	Fire Access Road / Track(s)	Install a fire access track to allow for two point of entry / exit to emergency water supply for the safety of fire fighters	Chitty Rd Bakers Hill
25421	Mechanical Works	Reduce fuel loads along river to below 2t per ha by creating a 20m low fuel buffer by mechanical means on the boundary of the adjoining properties	Industrial Area Cnr Yilgarn & Old York Rd Northam
25443	Mechanical Works	Install a 20m low fuel buffer to residential property including aged housing units	Jarah Rd Wundowie
25462	Access - Install Fencing	Install a stock fence of ring lock and star pickets to allow for the use of livestock to maintain a low fuel buffer with minimal ongoing cost	Old Quarry Rd (Pound) Northam
25503	Mechanical Works	Reduce the availability of flash fuel mainly grasses to below 75mm leaving only natural vegetation within 15m of boundary of a joining properties All works to be done by hand with no ground disturbance	Wilson Street Grass Valley
25504	Mechanical Works	Reduce the availability of flash fuel mainly grasses to below 75mm leaving only natural vegetation within 15m of boundary of a joining properties All works to be done by hand with no ground disturbance	Wilson Street Grass Valley
25505	Mechanical Works	Reduce the availability of flash fuel mainly grasses to below 75mm leaving only natural vegetation All works to be done by hand with no ground disturbance	Wilson Street Grass Valley



25506	Mechanical Works	Reduce fuel loads below 2t per ha to provide a low fuel buffer to adjacent properties	Carter St Grass Valley
25507	Chemical Works	Chemical spray to reduce the return of invasive weed to the area after mulching was completed. spraying to be done prior to seed set from these weeds.	Bakers Hill Town Site South West
25543	Chemical Works	Chemical treat area of previous mulching to prevent the return of invasive weeds and flash fuels prior to the weeds setting seed.	4943-5113 Great Eastern Hwy
25544	Access - Install Gates	install fire access gates to allow controlled entry and exit to reserve.	wilson Street Grass Valley
25594	Mechanical Works	install a 5m wide bare earth fire access tracks suitable to be used by 4.4 fire trucks including removing the steep incline at entry point and installing turn around point prior to steep decent	Old Quarry Rd Waste Management Facility
25596	Chemical Works	Chemical spray 3m both sides of new access track to proved fire fighters safety prior to the fire season. Spray a 10m wide break in the inaccessible area due to the steep incline and may need to be done by hand	Old Quarry Rd Waste Management Facility
25597	Access - Install Gates	Install a fence and gate to prevent fire appliance access to steep and dangerous terrain for the safety of fire fighters. this is to be sign posted as well	Old Quarry Rd Waste Management Facility



25598	Mechanical Works	Reinstall fire breaks and widen to 4m bare earth and suitable for a 4.4 appliance with passing areas where possible. Install a turnaround area to enable emergency retreat on dead end track	Old Quarry Rd Waste Management Facility
25599	Chemical Works	Chemical treatment of the weeds 3m both sides of the new access track to be installed for a low fuel buffer both sides of the access track	Old Quarry Rd Waste Management Facility
25600	Access - Install Gates	Installation of gate to prevent unauthorized access to the waste facility and to prevent illegally dump of rubbish along track	Old Quarry Rd Waste Management Facility

**RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION**

**Minute No: BFAC.315**

**Moved: Mr Kris Brown**

**Seconded: Mrs Carla Millar**

**That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee endorses the following recommendation being presented to Council:**

- 1. That Council notes the report from the Bushfire Risk Mitigation Coordinator as provided.**

**CARRIED 10/0**

**For:** Mr Chris Marris, Mr Kris Brown, Mr Attila Mencshelyi, Mrs Carla Millar (Proxy), Mr Blair Wilding, Mr Bruce Devereoux, Mr Nic Dewar, Terry Hasson (Proxy), Mr Paul Antonio and Mr Aaron Smith.

**Against:** Nil.

Discussion

- Acting Executive Manager Development Services, Mrs Jacky Jurmann, updated the committee on the progress of the current bush fire mitigation activities.

Acting Executive Manager Development Services also advised that the new shared Bush Fire Mitigation Coordinator will commence duties on 4 December 2023 to complete the remainder of the 3 year funded contract position.

Discussion around future fire mitigation around Waterfall Avenue took place with the CBFCO requesting it to be considered in future activities, noting that there was a previous incident two years ago and a recent incident this season again highlighting the importance of undertaking works.

### 7.3 Bush Fire Manual

<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Alex Espey (Community Emergency Services Manager)
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Jacky Jurmann (Acting Executive Manager Development Services)
<b>Officer Declaration of Interest:</b>	Nil
<b>Voting Requirement:</b>	Simple Majority
<b>Press release to be issued:</b>	No

#### **BRIEF**

For the Committee to receive and note the reviewed draft part 4 & 5 of the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Manual provided by the Community Emergency Services Manager.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. BUSHFIRE MANUAL PART 4 FINAL 01112023 [**7.3.1** - 19 pages]
2. PART 5 FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS - FINAL 31102023 [**7.3.2** - 11 pages]

#### **A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS**

At the request of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) a review of part 4 & 5 of the Bush Fire Manual was undertaken over the last 12+ months. The resultant product is the product of this review with input received from Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer 1, Community Emergency Services Manager, Chief Executive Officer, Executive Manager Development Services.

#### **B. CONSIDERATIONS**

##### **B.1 Strategic Community / Corporate Business Plan**

Performance Area: Planet.

Outcome 5: A resilient community.

Objective 5.1: Build community resilience to cope with natural disasters and emergencies, including pandemics, storms, flooding and fire.

Priority Action 5.1.7: Provide a review of the Local Laws and Bushfire Brigades Manual.

##### **B.2 Financial / Resource Implications**

N/A

### **B.3 Legislative Compliance**

N/A

### **B.4 Policy Implications**

This review stipulates numerous changes to the minimum standard expectations to members of the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Service.

### **B.5 Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation**

A consultation period calling for feedback from brigades of 16 working days applies to this draft.

### **B.6 Risk Implications**

Refer to Risk Matrix [here](#).

<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Rating (likelihood x consequence)</b>	<b>Mitigation Action</b>
Financial	Nil	Nil	Nil
Health & Safety	Nil	Nil	Nil
Reputation	Nil	Nil	Nil
Service Interruption	Nil	Nil	Nil
Compliance	Nil	Nil	Nil
Property	Nil	Nil	Nil
Environment	Nil	Nil	Nil

### **B.7 Natural Environment Considerations**

N/A

## **C. OFFICER'S COMMENT**

This review has been a significant and lengthy body of work, with input received from the Community Emergency Services Manager, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer 1, Executive Manager Development Services and Acting Executive Manager Development Services. The Community Emergency Services Manager specifically acknowledges the contribution by Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Chris Marris, in assisting in the delivery of this draft copy.

**RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION**

**Minute No: BFAC.316**

**Moved: Mr Nic Dewar**

**Seconded: Mr Bruce Devereoux**

**That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee endorses the following recommendation being presented to Council:**

- 1. That Council adopts the updated Section 4 and Section 5 of the Bush Fire Manual as presented, to replace the previous Section 4 and Section 5 of this document from 2018.**
- 2. That Council approves a transition target period of 18 months for the training requirements of roles specified within section 4 and 5, to allow members currently holding these positions to meet any training gaps while continuing to fill these roles.**

**CARRIED 10/0**

**For:** Mr Chris Marris, Mr Kris Brown, Mr Attila Mencshelyi, Mrs Carla Millar (Proxy), Mr Blair Wilding, Mr Bruce Devereoux, Mr Nic Dewar, Terry Hasson (Proxy), Mr Paul Antonio and Mr Aaron Smith.

**Against:** Nil.

Discussion

Community Emergency Services Manager explained the work behind the Bush Fire Manual and how consultations were undertaken.

Mr Chris Marris suggested that once the document is in place, any minor changes can be adjusted through the Bush Fire Advisory Committee as a recommendation to Council where required.

Note: The following section of this report should read as per below:

**B.5 Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation**

*A consultation period calling for feedback from brigades of 16 working days applies to this draft.*

**PART 4 BUSH FIRE BRIGADES**

## **4.1 Establishment of a Bush Fire Brigade**

The Shire of Northam may establish a Bush Fire Brigade for the purpose of carrying out normal brigade activities in accordance with section 41 of the Bush Fires Act 1954.

On establishing a Bush Fire Brigade, the Shire of Northam is to give a name to the Bush Fire Brigade, specify the area in which the Bush Fire Brigade is primarily responsible for carrying out normal brigade activities (the "brigade area") and appoint some or all of the following:

- Captain;
- First Lieutenant
- Second Lieutenant;
- Additional Lieutenants if the brigade considers it necessary.
- Equipment Officer;
- Secretary; and
- Treasurer; or
- Secretary/Treasurer combined.

When considering the appointment of persons to the positions of the above, the Council is to have regard to the qualifications and experience that may be required to fill each position. A person appointed to a position is to be taken to be a Brigade Member.

The appointments expire at the completion of the first Annual General Meeting of the Bush Fire Brigade. If a position becomes vacant prior to the completion of the first Annual General Meeting, then the Shire of Northam is to appoint a person to fill the vacancy.

## **4.2 Brigade Membership**

Membership of a Bushfire Fire Brigade comes with responsibility toward the community and other brigade members. Key appointments and office bearers take responsibility for the proper administration of membership and management of members on behalf of the Shire of Northam and the broader community in accordance with the relevant State Hazard Plan (FIRE) and all relevant legislation, policies and procedures.

Whilst Office Bearers of a Bushfire Fire Brigade provide the leadership and management for the Brigade, all members are expected to adhere to appropriate standards of conduct, ethical behaviour and safe work practices. The Shire of Northam, and where applicable, DFES Code of Conduct clarifies the standards of behaviour expected when undertaking duties through a clear set of principles to ensure the standards and integrity expected by the community are met.

### **4.2A Applications for Membership**

To join a brigade, a prospective member is required to:

- Complete a membership application form and accept the conditions for membership.



- The application will be considered by the Captain for approval and if approved, then forwarded to the CESH for registration within 14 days of the approval.
- If a membership application is refused, as soon as practicable after the decision is made, the Captain is to give written reasons for the refusal to the applicant and the Shire of Northam, including advice that the applicant has the right to object to the Shire of Northam.

#### **4.2B Criminal History Checks (CHC)**

All applications for membership to the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Service are subject to a Criminal History Check.

Note: A criminal history does not automatically exclude an applicant from membership.

#### **4.2C Probation Periods**

All new members are placed on a period of probation for up to 3 months or until such time as the brigade leadership team recommends that a member is offered full membership of the brigade.

If the applicant is not offered full membership the following options apply.

- Be offered additional opportunities and training to achieve full membership.
- Be deemed unsuitable for membership and their application made unsuccessful.

Whilst a member is on a period of probation, they are not eligible to attend station or operate appliances without competent supervision.

#### **4.2D Types of Membership of Bush Fire Brigades**

There are four regulated roles within a brigade:

- Active
- Auxiliary
- Probationary
- Honorary Life Member

As a condition of membership, all members must comply with legislation, the Shire of Northam's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Policies and Procedures, that are relevant to their duties as a brigade member.

Members must act in accordance with the Shire of Northam's Bush Fire Manual which includes relevant codes of conduct, policies, procedures and guidelines issued by the Shire of Northam as well as any applicable DFES policies, and policies of their brigade.

The membership of a Bush Fire Brigade may consist of all or some of the following –

##### **Active**

Members are those persons who undertake all normal Brigade activities, including but not limited to frontline firefighting duties.

Volunteer Fire fighters aged 16 or 17 years of age should be accompanied by and under the direction of a parent or guardian when on the fire ground.

Normal brigade activities include but not limited to, training, meetings, maintenance, community engagement, incident response, fundraising, administrative duties, and any other activity that would reasonably be required to maintain the day to day operation of the brigade.

#### **Auxiliary Member**

Auxiliary Members are those persons being at least 16 years of age who provide varied but infrequent support to the Brigades. An auxiliary member can not provide frontline firefighting support to the brigade.

The auxiliary member may be reclassified as active by request to, and subsequent agreement of the Brigade Captain. They may be required to update or undertake additional training related to the role.

Auxiliary Member will not be eligible to vote in Brigade meetings.

#### **Probationary Member**

First time new member completing their probationary period.

Probationary members will not be eligible to vote in brigade meetings.

#### **Honorary Life Member**

The Bush Fire Brigade may by a simple majority resolution, appoint a person as an Honorary Life Member in recognition of services by that person to their Bush Fire Brigade. Each brigade must adopt/develop a procedure and criteria that must be met prior to a life membership being considered.

Honorary members are eligible to vote at the discretion of the member brigade.

#### **4.2E Nomination of Brigade Representatives to the Bush Fire Advisory Committee**

At the Annual General Meeting of a Bush Fire Brigade, one Senior Brigade Member is to be nominated to the Bush Fire Advisory Committee to serve as the representative for the brigade. An additional Brigade Member is to be nominated to serve as a proxy representative if the Brigade Representative is not able to attend a Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting.

#### **4.2F Dual Membership**

A member may be a member of another Bush Fire Brigade, Fire and Rescue Brigade or State Emergency Service Unit, subject to the relevant Captains approvals.

#### **4.2G Transfer between Brigades**

A member of a brigade may transfer to another brigade if:

- the new brigade has a vacancy in an appropriate category of membership and agrees to the transfer.
- Brigade transfers are to be recorded through the completion of the Application for Registration.

A transfer between Brigades may initiate the requirement for an updated Criminal History Check (CHC). All brigade property must be returned to an office bearer of the former brigade prior to the transfer taking effect. Exceptions to this may occur, where in consultation with the Brigade Captain and approval by the CESM, it is considered to be practical and cost effective for the member to retain items such as PPC for use at the new brigade.

#### **4.2H Suspension of Membership**

Where circumstances arise that an immediate suspension of a member is required the Captain may temporarily suspend the member after giving them reasons why the suspension is occurring.

The Captain subsequently must at the earliest opportunity inform the CBFCO and the CESM of the circumstances that resulted in the suspension and the subsequent process detailed below must be followed.

It is encouraged the Captain keeps written records or notes of all the information relating to a suspension and that of witnesses. It is important to note that when decisions are being made to suspend or terminate a membership that transparency and procedural fairness must be adhered to.

The Shire shall provide any administrative support required to assist the Captain or CBFCO in the dealing with disciplinary matters.

When suspension or termination is being considered, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Where the Captain or other elected officer of the Brigade, considers that on complaint or observation a member of the service has:
  - Breached the Shire of Northam, Department of Fire and Emergency Services Code of Conduct
  - Shire of Northam and/or Department of Fire and Emergency Services Policies, Doctrine or Procedures
  - Engaged in conduct that does not meet the standards required of a member of the Brigade, they may temporarily suspend the member.
2. Where the Captain or other elected officer considers it appropriate and necessary to temporarily suspend a member of the Brigade, they must provide notice in writing to the volunteer outlining the reasons for the suspension within 7 days of the member being advised of the suspension.
3. The notification must be in sufficient detail for the member to know what has been alleged so they are able to adequately respond. The member must also be informed of the possible sanctions that are available to the group of Office Bearers if the allegation(s) is/are found proven.
4. The Officer Bearers shall convene a meeting as soon as practicable. The member must be informed of the time, date and location of the meeting in writing least 14 days prior to the meeting being held or by mutual agreement.
5. The member must be allowed to make submissions at the meeting either orally or in writing, and if requested may have a support person present. The

support person cannot answer for the member and is there only to support the member through the process.

6. The member must be given sufficient time to make their submission and their submission must be given due consideration, without bias.

Possible outcomes of any meeting to discuss a volunteer's behavior are as follows:

- No further action.
- Counselling or other improvements action.
- Suspension for a designated time period.
- Termination of membership.

The Captain must advise the member in writing within 14 days of the meeting being held of the outcome of the meeting. Such notification shall include the options for the member to appeal the decision as per below.

7. In the event the Office Bearers resolves to terminate the volunteer membership, the volunteer will cease to be a member of the brigade 14 days after being served this notice.

8. A Brigade member may appeal the outcome of the decision. The member must appeal the decision in writing to the Shire of Northam CESM within 14 days of receiving notice of the meeting outcome.

9. In the instance of an appeal, the Shire of Northam Chief Executive Officer will conduct a review of all available information relating to the recommended outcome for the member.

The CEO will inform the member, CESM, CBFCO and Brigade Captain, in writing, of the appeal outcome, including the reasons for their determination.

10. When a decision to terminate a membership has been finalised, the Captain is to advise the CESM in writing.

#### **4.2I Termination of Membership**

Membership of the Bush Fire Brigade can be terminated at the discretion of the brigade executive team if the member –

- Gives written notice of resignation to the Brigade Secretary; or
- Is permanently incapacitated.
- Is dismissed by the Brigade; or
- Has not been active with the Brigade for a period of twelve (12) months, the brigade may consider the member has abandoned their membership with the brigade and may be resigned.

#### **The individual is responsible for maintaining their membership with their brigade.**

Whereupon a membership is terminated, all property owned by the Shire of Northam shall be returned to the Brigade Equipment Officer within fourteen (14) days of giving notice. Failure to meet these conditions may require the Shire to seek recovery action against the member.

## **4.3 Financial Management**

### **4.3A Funds**

Any funds raised by the Bush Fire Brigade are to be used solely for the purpose of promoting the objectives of the Bush Fire Brigade and must be for legitimate brigade purposes.

### **4.3B Annual Reporting**

Each Brigade shall present a Financial Report at their Annual General Meeting.

### **4.3C Banking and Procurement**

The funds of the Bush Fire Brigade can be administered by the brigade by means of electronic banking, Cheque or Cash.

All major purchases or sales over a value of \$500 must be approved by a Simple Majority vote at an Executive Committee Meeting or a General Meeting.

All minor purchases under \$500 can be approved by two members of the Executive Committee. Alternative limits for minor purchases can be set by the brigades.

Brigades should keep sufficient records of all Brigade financial transactions to meet reporting and auditing purposes.

### **4.3D Equipment**

The Shire of Northam provides items within its allocated ESL Budget that are eligible under the Local Government Grants Scheme. The CESM should be consulted in relation to equipment purchasing to assist in determining eligibility.

## **4.4 Meetings of a Bush Fire Brigade**

Brigade meetings should be held regularly, to discuss issues pertinent to running the brigade. Each Brigade is required to hold a minimum of three (3) meetings per year, inclusive of an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Brigade Rules should detail when and how meetings are to be conducted, the election of officers, voting and ballot processes along with other relevant information.

### **4.4A Ordinary Meetings**

Subject to this clause, a brigade may hold meetings on such days and at such times and places as fits its members. It is recommended to hold at least four (4) meetings per year.

Quorum for voting at ordinary meetings consists of 25% of active and eligible members.

#### **4.4B Special Meetings**

A Special General Meeting may be convened, at any time, by the Captain or an Officer. The Administration Officer, under the direction of the Captain or Officer will convene the Special General Meeting in writing by post or email.

The Administration Officer must convene a Special General Meeting, in writing/email if requested to do so by at least five (5) voting members.

A Special General Meeting must be held within thirty (30) days of the request being received by the Administration Officer. Notice of Special General Meeting must be given to ALL members of the brigade plus the CESM and CBFCO seven (7) days prior to meeting in writing/ email. All meeting notices must include Date, Time, Place and an agenda.

Business not specified in the agenda will not be considered at a special general meeting.

A quorum of a special general meeting consists of 25% of active and eligible members, but no less than 5 members.

#### **4.4C Annual General Meetings**

Every Shire of Northam bush fire brigade shall meet and conduct an Annual General Meeting to elect by ballot the Brigade officers. Election for Office may be by secret ballot. Only active members of a brigade are eligible to be elected.

Officers shall hold office for the term specified in 4.4G, or a shorter period if filling a vacancy. In the event of an officer resigning or being removed from office or ceasing to be a member of the Brigade during the year, the Brigade shall forthwith by Special General Meeting fill the vacancy by ballot. The officer elected shall hold office until the next AGM. The Administration Officer of the Brigade shall, within 14 days of such elections report to the CESM the result thereof.

If an elected member resigns, steps down, or is terminated from the brigade, the brigade executive may appoint a member to act in the resigned position until such time as the position is appropriately filled or the next AGM, whichever occurs first.

It is recommended that expected vacancies more than 6 months be filled by way of a special general meeting election.

The notice for an Annual General Meeting must be provided by the Secretary a minimum of 21 days prior to the meeting to all Brigade Members including life members, the CBFCO, DCBFCO/s and CESM.

The Secretary is to specify in the Notice the business to be conducted at the meeting which may include but is not limited to –

- Elect the Brigade Officers from among the Brigades Members;
- Consider the Captain's report on the year's activities.
- Adopt the Annual Financial Statements.

- It is recommended brigades appoint an Auditor for the ensuing Financial Year.
- An auditor must be independent from the brigade but may be a member of a separate brigade. Example: Treasurer of a neighbouring brigade.
- Any general business.

The Secretary is to forward a copy of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of a Bush Fire Brigade to the CESM within 14 days if the meeting.

A quorum of an annual general meeting consists of 25% of active and eligible members but not less than 5 members.

#### **4.4D Executive Committee**

The minimum Executive Committee of the Brigade comprise of:

- Captain
- 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- BFAC Representative

Additional Lieutenants may be elected at the discretion of the brigade by way of simple majority.

Any Brigade Officer may be removed from office by a Simple Majority decision of the Brigade Members present in person or by proxy at a special meeting called for such a purpose.

Voting at executive committee meetings requires a quorum of at least 50% but no less than 3 members.

#### **4.4E Officer Bearers of Bush Fire Brigade**

The Executive Committee is to have the following functions –

- Recommend to the Bush Fire Advisory Committee via their brigade BFAC representative.
- Propose a motion for consideration at any meeting of the Bush Fire Brigade.
- Recommend to the Shire of Northam, equipment which needs to be supplied by the Shire of Northam to the Bush Fire Brigade.
- Invest or place on deposit, any of the funds of the Bush Fire Brigade not immediately required to perform normal brigade activities.
- Delegate to a person, as from time to time thought fit, any functions (being less than the total functions of the Committee) on any conditions it thinks fit.
- All things necessary or convenient to perform any of its functions and to secure the performance of the normal Brigade activities by the Bush Fire Brigade; and
- Deal with membership applications, grievances, disputes and disciplinary matters.

Where a decision is to be made by the Committee, then the decision may be made by a resolution passed by a Simple Majority of the Brigade Officers who are present in person or by proxy at the meeting whether in person or via electronic means.

All resolutions made by majority decision must be documented in Brigade minutes.

#### **4.4F Voting**

Only active members, or those life members deemed eligible to vote, may cast ballots at brigade elections, or on brigade matters.

Nomination of candidates for brigade elections -

1. Any person accepting a nomination for an office bearer position must be competent and qualified.
2. A person can only be nominated by an active Brigade Member.
3. Each member is only entitled to nominate one (1) person per position.
4. A nomination may be made in writing to be received by the Committee before the official close of nominations.
5. Nominees must sign or indicate acceptance of nomination.
6. The Shire of Northam will assist and mentor new Brigade Officers in their new roles.
7. The CBFCO or CESM or their proxy may act in the position of returning officer during the election of office bearers at the AGM if requested by the brigade.
8. All nominations must be received on the appropriate form by the returning officer at least seven (7) days prior to the AGM date.
9. In the event no nominations are received for a position and/or meet point 1 of this section by the nominations cut-off date, the brigade may choose to take nominations from the floor during the AGM or reconvene the AGM within twenty-eight (28) days

#### **4.4G Elections**

Positions should be determined by vote in the ascending order of preference –

<b>Order</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Term</b>
1	Optional Chairperson at Brigade discretion	1 year
2	Secretary	1 year
3	Treasurer	1 year
4	Brigade Captain	1 year
5	Lieutenants	1 year
6	Equipment Officer(s)	1 year
7	Training Officer	1 Year
11	Bush Fire Advisory Committee Representative	2 years
12	Bush Fire Advisory Committee Proxy Representative	2 years
13	Fire Control Officer	2 years
14	Other position as determined by the brigade	1 year

Appointments are by simple majority. In the event of a tie for any position other than captain, the deciding vote will be made by the incumbent captain.

In the event of a tie for the position of captain, the brigade will reconduct the election to determine an alternate result. If a second tie is subsequently declared a deciding vote will be made by the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.

#### **4.4H Financial Auditor – Secretary / Treasurer**



The Brigade may elect to have an independent Auditor appointed and if so then:

At the Annual General Meeting, a person, not being a Brigade Member, is to be appointed as the Auditor of the Bush Fire Brigade for the ensuing financial year. The Auditor is to audit the accounts of the Bush Fire Brigade not less than seven (7) days before the Annual General Meeting and is to certify to their correctness or otherwise and present a report at the Annual General Meeting.

#### **4.4I Notices and Proxies**

Notices of meetings or Executive Committee meetings of the Bush Fire Brigade are to be in writing including electronic sent to each Brigade or Executive Committee Member.

Any accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to, or non-receipt by a person entitled to receive such notice, is not to invalidate the meeting the subject of the notice or any resolutions passed at the meeting.

Where any notice other than a notice of meeting is to be given under this Manual, the notice is to be –

- a) ~~in~~ in writing.
- b) ~~in~~ Unless otherwise specified, given to or by the Secretary.
- c) Given by personal delivery, email and other electronic means or post.

A Brigade Member who is eligible to vote may vote by proxy. In order for the proxy to so vote, the Brigade Member or the proxy shall give notice in the form in Appendix 3 of the Manual to the Secretary or the person presiding at the meeting before the start of the meeting at which the proxy is to be used. A proxy is to be valid for the meeting for which it is given and for any adjournments of that meeting.

If the donor of the proxy does not give any indication of the manner in which the proxy is to vote, the proxy shall be entitled to vote or not vote as they think fit. A proxy shall be entitled to speak on behalf of the donor of the proxy.

All forms appointing proxies deposited are to be retained by the Secretary for not less than twenty-eight (28) days after the conclusion of the meeting to which they relate but if there is any objection to the validity of any vote at the meeting, they are to be retained until the determination of that objection. The form appointing a proxy shall be in writing and signed by the Brigade Member appointing the proxy and shall be in or substantially in the form in Appendix 3.

#### **4.4J Disclosure of Interests**

A Brigade Member must disclose to the Bush Fire Brigade or Committee any financial interest (whether direct or indirect) they may have in any matter being considered by the Bush Fire Brigade or Executive Committee.

If a financial interest has been disclosed then the Bush Fire Brigade or Committee, as appropriate, is to decide, in the absence of the Brigade Member who has disclosed that interest, whether or not the Brigade Member is to be permitted to vote on that matter.

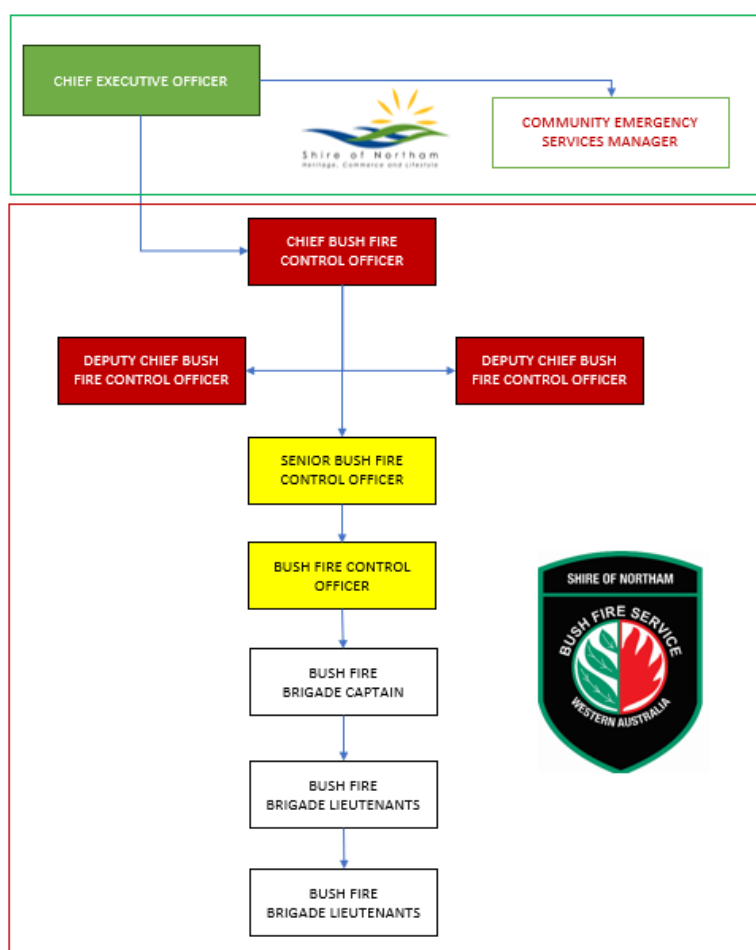
Where the Bush Fire Brigade or Executive Committee, as appropriate, decides that a Brigade Member is not to be permitted to vote on a matter, and the Brigade Member votes on the matter, then their vote is to be taken to have no effect and is not to be counted.

**4.4K Disagreements**

Any disagreement between Brigade Members may be referred to either the Captain or to the Executive Committee. Where a disagreement considered by the Captain or the Executive Committee to be of importance to the interests of the Bush Fire Brigade, or involves the Captain, the Executive Committee is to refer the disagreement to the Chief Bushfire Control Officer and Community Emergency Service Manager for resolution. The Shire of Northam is the final authority on disagreements within the Bush Fire Brigade and may resolve any disagreement which is not resolved.

**4.5 Bush Fire Brigade Structure**

**4.5A Shire of Northam Incident Management Structure/Chain of Command**



### **Role of the CESM.**

The Community Emergency Services Manager provides a critical administrative, logistical, and operational support to the Shire of Northam Bush Fire service.

This role operates as a direct liaison between Incident Controllers, DFES, and the Shire including tertiary support services. The CESM should have a close working relationship with the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and other members of the leadership team.

The CEO authorises the CESM to assume the role of incident control in the following circumstances.

1. At the request of the incident controller
2. An escalating threat to life and or safety.
3. Significant financial, reputational, or commercial loss
4. At the request of the Chief Executive Officer

### **4.5B Ranks within the Bush Fire Brigade**

The chain of command at a fire that is burning within the Shire of Northam will be as set out in Section 44 of the Bush Fires Act 1954.

### **4.5C Dissolution of Bush Fire Brigade**

In accordance with section 41 (3) of the Act, the Shire of Northam may cancel the registration of a Bush Fire Brigade if it is of the opinion that the Bush Fire Brigade is not complying with the Act, the Regulations, or the Rules in this Manual, or is not achieving the objectives for which it was established. Formal notice will be provided to the brigade to effect change within a specified time frame.

### **4.5D New Arrangement After Dissolution**

If the Shire of Northam cancels the registration of a Bush Fire Brigade, alternative fire control arrangements are to be made in respect of the brigade area.

### **4.5E Local Government Responsible for Structure**

The Shire of Northam is to ensure that there is an appropriate structure through which the organisation of Bush Fire Brigades is maintained.

### **4.5F Members to have access to relevant documents**

The Shire of Northam is to ensure each Brigade Member can access a copy of the Act, the Regulations, the Manual, Shire of Northam and DFES policies and SOPs and any other written laws that may be relevant to the performance of a Brigade Member's functions, and any amendments that are made.

## **4.6 Captain**

### **4.6A Role of a Captain**

The Captain of a Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade shall be responsible for the leadership and management of Brigade activities. The Captain will also act as a role model and

mentor for members of the Brigade and should always act with integrity and consider each member equally. All decisions should be in the interest of the Brigade and its membership.

The position reports to the CBFCO on operational matters.

#### **4.6B Duties and Responsibilities of a Captain**

Duties and responsibilities of the Brigade Captain include:

- Manage the affairs and activities of the Brigade.
- Ensure compliance with Shire of Northam Policies.
- May take command at an incident.
- Stand a member down if said members' actions are putting themselves or others at risk.
- Monitor that all members are adequately trained to perform their duties.
- Develop protocols so that all equipment, plant and buildings are kept clean, in good condition and, where applicable, ready for immediate use.
- Establish community-based risk management and public education activities and/or programs.
- In consultation with the Treasurer develop proper financial records which must be kept and presented at meetings.
- Develop and maintain close liaison with other groups that also provide emergency services to the community and with members of other interested groups in the community.
- Provide reports to meetings.
- Ensure all responded incidents are entered into IRS within 14 days of the last attendance.

#### **4.6C Criteria of a Captain**

Demonstrated understanding of the culture within a volunteer organisation.

- Ability to attend further fire and emergency management training.
- Effective Interpersonal skills.
- Good written and verbal communication skills.
- Leadership skills.
- Management skills.
- Experience in managing operations; and
- Ability to perform under stressful conditions.

#### **EXPERIENCED FIREFIGHTERS WHO DO NOT HOLD A COMPETENCY ARE ELLIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR RECOGNITION OF CURRENT COMPETENCY.**

To be eligible for election, prospective Captains must meet the following pre-requisite competencies.

- Bushfire Safety Awareness (Or Equivalent)
- Firefighting Skills (Or Equivalent)
- AIIMS Awareness
- Advanced Bush Firefighting
- Crew Leader
- 3 years firefighting experience

Within 12 Months of appointment, newly elected captains achieve the following competencies in descending order at a minimum rate of 1 per 12 month period. \*

- Leadership fundamentals
- Mental Health First Aid

Desirable

- AIIMS 2017
- Sector Commander
- Incident Controller Level 1

\*Compliance subject to course availability.

## **4.7 Lieutenant**

### **4.7A Role of a Lieutenant**

The Lieutenant of a Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade is responsible for assisting the operational management of Volunteer Bush Fire fighters during Brigade activities. The position is required to provide both operational and administrative support to the Captain in managing the Brigade. The position reports to the Captain on all matters pertinent to the functioning of the Brigade and/or personnel whom they are supervising.

### **4.7B Duties and Responsibilities of a Lieutenant**

Duties and responsibilities of a Brigade Lieutenant include:

- Provide support to the Captain and assist with the management of the Brigade.
- demonstrate positive leadership and mentor Brigade Members.
- In the absence of the Captain, administer all powers and responsibilities of the Bush Fires Act. (Bush Fires Act 1954, Part iv Section 44(1)).
- Command and manage fire fighters during emergencies and other Brigade related activities.
- Maintain a personal logbook with a record of events that occur during all incidents;
- Conduct briefings during and after incidents and maintain open lines of two-way communications between fire fighters and management;
- Encourage positive interaction and teamwork between Fire Fighters.
- Ensure relevant Shire, DFES and Brigade standing operating procedures are adhered to at Brigade activities.
- Ensure Fire Fighters engaged in fire-fighting activities hold competencies relevant to the task.
- Work cohesively with the Brigade Training Officer to conduct training activities for Fire Fighters; and
- To ensure the behaviour of Fire Fighters is in accordance with the Shire and DFES codes of conduct.

### **4.7C Criteria of a Lieutenant**

Effective Interpersonal Skills

- Good written and verbal communication skills
- Leadership skills

- Management skills
- Experience in managing operations
- Ability to perform under stressful conditions

**EXPERIENCED FIREFIGHTERS WHO DO NOT HOLD A COMPETENCY ARE ELLIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR RECOGNITION OF CURRENT COMPETENCY.**

**To be eligible for election, prospective Lieutenants must meet the following pre-requisite competencies.**

- Bushfire Safety Awareness (Or Equivalent)
- Firefighting Skills (Or Equivalent)
- 2 years active firefighting experience
- AllMS Awareness

**Within 12 Months of appointment, it is desirable that newly elected Lieutenants achieve the following competencies in descending order at a minimum rate of 1 per 12-month period.\***

- Advanced Bush Firefighting + Crew Leader (within 6 months)
- Sector Commander
- Leadership fundamentals
- Mental Health First Aid

**Desirable**

- AllMS 2017
- Fire Control Officer
- Incident Controller Level 1

\*Compliance subject to course availability.

#### **4.7D Appliance Driver**

All drivers operating appliances under emergency conditions must meet the following.

Driving under normal road conditions.

1. A full unrestricted driver's licence for the class of vehicle they are driving.

Driving under emergency conditions

1. A full unrestricted driver's licence for the class of vehicle they are driving.
2. Successful completion of the DFES On road driving course, or
3. Successful completion of a nationally recognized competency of Driving Under Operational Conditions, or
4. Successful completion of the DFES Emergency Driver Training competency.

Driving Off Road

1. A full unrestricted driver's licence for the class of vehicle they are driving.

It is strongly encouraged that members also undertake the following training.

2. DFES Off road driving course, or
3. A national competency for off road driving.

\*Compliance subject to course availability.

**EXPERIENCED APPLIANCE DRIVERS WHO DO NOT HOLD A COMPETENCY MAY BE  
ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR RECOGNITION OF CURRENT COMPETENCY.**

## **4.8 Equipment Officer**

### **4.8A Role**

The Equipment Officer is responsible for the custody, care and maintenance of all protective clothing, equipment, and appliances within the brigade.

### **4.8B Duties and Responsibilities**

Duties and responsibilities of a Brigade Equipment Officer include:

- Ensure vehicle and equipment checks are being conducted as per VBFB Schedule of Checks.
- Report any damaged or lost equipment to the CESM.
- Report any damage or mechanical failure of appliance/s to the CESM.
- Maintain records of Brigade personal protective equipment.
- Ensure inspections of Brigade Members PPE is done to confirm no damage or wear and tear and that it is correctly worn.
- Store all additional equipment of the Bush Fire Brigade at a place approved by the Captain (the Station), keep a record of the equipment and ensure it is secure.

### **4.8C Criteria of an Equipment Officer**

- Knowledge of firefighting equipment, appliances and PPE.
- Records keeping and administration.
- Effective Interpersonal skills.
- Good written and verbal communication skills.

## **4.9 Secretary**

### **4.9A Role of a Secretary**

The Secretary is to manage administrative matters of the Brigade. The position is not required to perform active operational duties and may be inclusive to an operational position held within the Brigade. The position reports to the Captain on administrative matters pertinent to the Brigade.

### **4.9B Duties and Responsibilities of a Secretary**

The Secretary shall perform the following functions:

- Ensure members receive notification of Brigade meetings in accordance with this procedure manual.
- Prepare an agenda for Brigade meetings and distribute to members.

- Attend at all meetings and keep a correct minute and account of the proceedings of the Bush Fire Brigade which shall be open for inspection by Brigade Members at any reasonable time.
- Ensure Minutes of Brigade Meetings are recorded and distributed to all members and the Shire within fourteen (14) days.

Note: The position of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined.

#### **4.9C Qualifications of a Secretary**

- An understanding of meeting procedure and Minute taking
- Highly Developed Computer skills

#### **4.10 Treasurer**

##### **4.10A Role of a Treasurer**

The role of the treasurer is to manage and report to the Brigade on all financial matters. The position is not required to perform active operational duties and may be inclusive to an operational position held within the Brigade. The position reports to the Captain on financial matters pertinent to the Brigade.

##### **4.10B Duties and Responsibilities of a Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall perform the following functions:

- Manage financial affairs of the Brigade.
- Maintain Brigade financial records and provide a detailed report of income and expenditure, keep a record of all monies received and payments made, maintain the accounts and prepare the balance sheet for each financial year.
- Ensure that the Brigade financial records are audited.
- Ensure the Secretary provides the Shire with AGM minutes including financial statements of Brigade income and expenditure.
- Work cohesively with Shire Management and Administration Staff on matters pertinent to Brigade financial matters.
- Receive donations and deposits from the Secretary and deposit all monies to the credit of the Bush Fire Brigade's bank account.

#### **4.11 Bush Fire Fighter**

##### **4.11A Role of a Bush Fire Fighter**

The Bush Fire Fighter is aged 16 or over and is able to follow instructions from their direct leader in the chain of command on the fire ground unless they deem it to be unsafe. They must make sure that the personal protective equipment issued to them is of good condition and is in working order.

Make sure they are fit for the task at hand and let your direct leader know if they are not comfortable with an operation or you feel they are fatigued. Look after their own wellbeing and health by remaining hydrated and rested. Look after their fellow fire fighters and report any "near misses" or incidents up the chain of command.

##### **4.11B Duties and Responsibilities**



Duties and responsibilities of a Bush Fire Fighter include:

- Attend training and brigade events where possible.
- Wear all necessary PPC/E when undertaking training and front line activities.
- Report any "near miss" or incident to your supervisor and fill in the incident "near miss" form on return to the Station.
- Follow instructions from the chain of command unless you believe them to be unsafe.
- Maintain a personal logbook with a record of events that occur during all incidents;

#### **4.11C Criteria of a Bush Fire Fighter**

- Over the age of 16 years.
- Ability to attend further Fire and Emergency Management training.
- Effective interpersonal skills.
- Good written and verbal communication skills.
- Motivated.
- Volunteer personal and work time (speak to employer about releasing you from work in the event of an emergency); and
- Ability to perform under stressful conditions.

#### **4.11D Qualifications of Bush Fire Fighter**

Completion of required courses or the recognition of current competency process are:

- AllMS Awareness
- Bushfire Safety Awareness
- Fire Fighting Skills

#### **EXPERIENCED FIREFIGHTERS WHO DO NOT HOLD A COMPETENCY ARE ELLIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR RECOGNITION OF CURRENT COMPETENCY.**

It is desirable for highly active members to complete the advanced bushfire and crew leader competencies.

To ensure continual improvement it is a requirement for all volunteers to maintain competency and currency with the training and skills commensurate to the position they hold within the brigade.

PART 5 FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS

When a Bush Fire Control Officer is present at a fire burning within the Shire of Northam and the members of a bush fire brigade have command of the fire under the Act, a Shire of Northam Fire Control Officer may assume full control over other persons fighting the fire and is to issue instructions as to the methods to be adopted by the fire fighters.

## 5.1 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO)

### 5.1A Role of a Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

The role of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer is that of a leader, decision maker, planner and manager of the Bush Fire Organisation in the Shire and not as a 'hands on' fire fighter. The CBFCO is to assist in ensuring that the organisation is functioning to a standard commensurate to the risks within the Shire and is to ensure that the following tasks are achieved.

- During wildfire incidents, assist with the management of fire resources of the Shire and Brigades and when necessary, act as the Incident Controller in accordance with Legislation.
- Provide community awareness and advice in relation Harvest Vehicle Movement Bans, hot works bans, and permits to burn in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Provide timely community messaging/warnings/alerts.
- Promote the AIMS Incident Management system to all BFCO's, Brigades and volunteer fire fighters within the Shire and ensure an Incident Controller is appointed for all Incident Levels.
- Encourage BFCO's, Brigade Officers volunteers to be trained to a standard that meets the Bush Fire Manual
- Mentor all fire control officers and brigade Captains to achieve high levels of personal and professional development.
- Promote Community fire prevention as a priority, to identify and reduce fire hazards.
- Promote the use of Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines, minimum training standards, identify hazards and assess risk to prevent injury to volunteers and implement the principals of Workplace Health and Safety for volunteers to develop a safe working environment for fire fighters and members.
- Establish and maintain effective communication and liaison with the Shire, BFCO's and Brigades.
- Delegate specific tasks to DCBFCO'S, BFCO's or Brigades.
- Liaise with the Shire of Northam, DFES and other agencies concerning fire prevention / suppression matters and directions to be issued by the Shire of Northam to bush fire control officers, bush fire brigades or brigade.
- Maintain a record of events and decisions during an incident in a personal incident diary.
- Seek advice and make decisions from appropriate personnel and systems on the need for the imposition and lifting of bans within the Shire of Northam as well as the adjustment of restricted and prohibitive burning periods as required.
- Identify, develop and implement succession planning to the leadership positions within the Bush Fire Service.

### 5.1B Criteria of a Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

- Knowledge of managing a volunteer organisation
- Knowledge of all Fire Response Plans in the Shire
- Working knowledge of the Local Emergency Management Arrangements
- Knowledge of the Bush Fires Act 1954 and Bush Fires Regulations 1954
- Knowledge of the State Emergency Management Policy No 4.8 (Traffic Management During Emergencies)
- Ability to attend further fire and emergency management training
- Effective interpersonal Skills
- Good written and verbal communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Management skills
- Experience in managing operations
- Ability to perform under stressful conditions
- Current appointment as Fire Control Officer
- Experienced in firefighting operations within the Shire
- Be a member of the District Operations Advisory Committee, Bush Fire Advisory Committee and Local Emergency Management Committee, or arrange a proxy to attend on their behalf.
- Attend the majority of Bush Fire Advisory Committee meetings
- Attend a range of Brigade meetings and/or training/activities across the entire Shire.
- In the event a nominated candidate to a leadership role is a sitting Captain, they must vacate their captaincy within 3 months of Council endorsement.

### 5.1C Qualifications of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Eligibility for appointment to the Office of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer requires the attainment of the following pre-requisites:

- Minimum 3 years of service as a Shire of Northam Bush Fire Control Officer
- Minimum 5 years of firefighting experience
- Bush Fire Safety Awareness
- Firefighting Skills
- Advanced Bushfire
- Crew Leader
- Sector Commander
- AIMS 2017
- Fire Control Officer
- On Road Driving
- Incident Controller Level 1

On successful appointment by Council incumbent Chief Bush Fire Control Officers are required to achieve the following desirable competencies at a rate of 1 per 12 months in descending order:\*

- Off Road Driving
- Leadership Fundamentals
- Mental Health First Aid

It is desirable that Chief Bush Fire Control Officers attain the following additional competencies at a rate of their discretion:

- Pump Operations
- Ground Controller
- Advanced WAERN
- Structural Firefighting
- Machine Supervision

\*Compliance subject to course availability.

## 5.2 Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (DCBFCO)

### 5.2A Role of a Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

- The role of Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer is that of a leader, decision maker, and planner and assists the CBFCO in managing the Bush Fire Organisation.
- The Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer may deputise in the absence of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.
- Demonstrate positive leadership and mentor BFCOs, Captains and Brigade members.
- During wildfire incidents, assist with the management of fire resources of the Shire and Brigades and when necessary, act as the Incident Controller in accordance with Legislation.
- The Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer is responsible to the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.
- Maintain a record of events and decisions during an incident in a personal incident diary.
- Attend the majority of Bush Fire Advisory Committee meetings.
- May provide advice to the CBFCO as to when harvest vehicle movement and or hot works bans should be applied.
- Attend a range of Brigade meetings and/or training/activities across the entire Shire.
- In the event a nominated candidate to a leadership role is a sitting Captain, they must vacate their captaincy within 3 months of Council endorsement.

### 5.2B Criteria of a Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

- Knowledge of managing a volunteer organisation
- Knowledge of all Fire Response Plans in the Shire
- Working knowledge of the Local Emergency Management Arrangements
- Knowledge of the Bush Fires Act 1954 and Bush Fires Regulations 1954
- Knowledge of the State Emergency Management Policy No 4.8 (Traffic Management During Emergencies)
- Ability to attend further fire and emergency management training
- Effective Interpersonal Skills
- Good written and verbal communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Management skills
- Experience in managing operations.
- Ability to perform under stressful conditions.

- Current appointment as Fire Control Officer
- Experienced in firefighting operations within the Shire

Eligibility for appointment to the Office of the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer requires the attainment of the following pre-requisites:

- Minimum 3 years of service as a Shire of Northam Bush Fire Control Officer
- Minimum 5 years of firefighting experience
- Bush Fire Safety Awareness
- Firefighting Skills
- Advanced Bushfire
- Crew Leader
- Sector Commander
- Fire Control Officer

On successful appointment by council incumbent Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers are required to achieve the following desirable competencies at a rate of 2 per 12 months in descending order:\*

- Ground Controller
- AIMS 2017
- Incident Controller Level 1
- On Road Driving
- Off Road Driving
- Machine Supervision
- Structural Firefighting

It is desirable that Chief Bush Fire Control Officers attain the following additional competencies at a rate of their discretion:

- Pump Operations
- Leadership Fundamentals
- Mental Health First Aid
- Advanced WAERN

\*Compliance subject to course availability.

## **5.2 Senior Bush Fire Control Officer (SBFCO)**

### **5.2A Role of a Senior Bush Fire Control Officer**

- The role of Senior Bush Fire Control Officer is that of a leader, decision maker, and planner and assists the CBFCO and DCBFCO(s) in managing the Bush Fire Organisation.
- Demonstrate positive leadership and mentor BFCOs and Brigade members.
- During wildfire incidents, assist with the management of fire resources of the Shire and Brigades and when necessary, act as the Incident Controller in accordance with Legislation.
- The Senior Bush Fire Control Officer is responsible to the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.
- Maintain a record of events and decisions during an incident in a personal incident diary.

- Authorise permits for hazard reduction burns within the Shire in accordance with the Bush Fires Act 1954.
- Perform duties prescribed by the Bush Fires Act 1954 and authorised by Local Government.
- May provide advice to the CBFCO as to when harvest vehicle movement and or hot works bans should be applied.
- Take active steps in developing relationships with all Bush Fire Brigades across the Shire.

#### 5.2B Criteria of a Senior Bush Fire Control Officer

- Knowledge of managing a volunteer organisation
- Knowledge of the Bush Fires Act 1954 and Bush Fires Regulations 1954
- Ability to attend further fire and emergency management training
- Effective Interpersonal Skills
- Good written and verbal communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Management skills
- Experience in managing operations.
- Ability to perform under stressful conditions.
- Current appointment as Fire Control Officer
- Experienced in firefighting operations within the Shire

Eligibility for appointment to the Office of the Senior Bush Fire Control Officer requires the attainment of the following pre-requisites:\*

- Current Bush Fire Control Officer Appointment
- Minimum 2 years of service as a Shire of Northam Bush Fire Control Officer
- Minimum 4 years of firefighting experience

Those appointed to the Senior Bush Fire Control Officer should work towards meeting the minimum training standards of a Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer at the minimum rate of one competency per 12 months.

\*Compliance subject to course availability.

### 5.3 Bush Fire Control Officer (BFCO)

#### 5.3A Role of a Bush Fire Control Officer

A Bush Fire Control Officer is a delegated representative of the Local Government responsible for the administration of provisions within the Bush Fires Act 1954. The person in this position is required to perform active operational duties in relation to both firefighting and fire prevention strategies within the local community.

A Bush Fire Control Officer must be able to demonstrate experience in bush fire behaviour, AIMS and knowledge of the area. The person in this position must be able to interpret provisions of the Bush Fires Act 1954 and the Bush Fires Regulations 1954 and be confident with communication skills.

This position reports to the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer on all matters pertinent to bush fire management.

A Bushfire Fire Control Officer may hold jointly any other position within a brigade.

#### 5.3B Duties and Responsibilities of a Bush Fire Control Officer

Duties and responsibilities of the Bush Fire Control Officer are to:

- Authorise permits for hazard reduction burns within the Shire in accordance with the Bush Fires Act 1954.
- Identify and conduct risk assessments of fire hazards
- Perform duties prescribed by the Bush Fires Act 1954 and authorised by Local Government.
- Take control, command and manage resources during a fire or hazard reduction burns within the Brigade area they are appointed.
- To take control of firefighting operations at a wildfire outside their Brigade area where no local Fire Control Officer is present.
- Demonstrate positive leadership and mentor brigade members.
- May provide advice to the CBFCO as to when harvest vehicle movement and or hot works bans should be applied.
- Maintain a record of events and decisions during an incident in a personal incident diary.

#### 5.3C Criteria of Bush Fire Control Officer

- Knowledge of managing a volunteer organisation
- Knowledge of the Bush Fires Act 1954
- Ability to attend further fire and emergency management training.
- Effective interpersonal skills
- Good written and verbal communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Management skills
- Experience in managing operations.
- Ability to perform under stressful conditions.

#### 5.3D First year appointment as Bush Fire Control Officer

Removed

#### 5.3E Qualifications of Bush Fire Control Officer

Eligibility for appointment to the Office of Bush Fire Control Officer requires the attainment of the following pre-requisites:

- Fire Control Officer
- Minimum 3 years of firefighting experience
- Bush Fire Safety Awareness
- Firefighting Skills
- Advanced Bushfire
- Crew Leader



- Sector Commander

On successful appointment by council incumbent Bush Fire Control Officers are required to achieve the following desirable competencies at a rate of 2 per 12 months in descending order:\*

- Ground Controller
- Machine Supervision
- Structural Firefighting
- 
- It is desirable that Bush Fire Control Officers attain the following additional competencies at a rate of their discretion:
  - Pump Operations
  - Advanced WAERN
  - AIIMS 2017
  - Incident Controller Level 1
  - Leadership Fundamentals
  - Mental Health First Aid
  - On Road Driving
  - Off Road Driving

\*Compliance subject to course availability.

## 5.6 Appointment Process

All of the above positions will go through the following process prior to appointment.

### 5.6A Bushfire Brigades to Nominate Officers

Fire Control Appointments including leadership positions are held for a term of 2 years with the below process undertaken in every even year: Example: 2024, 2026, 2028.

1. Nominations open from brigades for Fire Control Officer Positions on the first business day of February.
2. Nominations close the last business day of February.
3. Nominations meeting prescribed criteria submitted to March BFAC for endorsement.
4. Endorsed candidates to the next Ordinary Council Meeting for endorsement by Council.
5. Nominations to be called from Northam Shire Council endorsed BFCO's immediately following their endorsement. The nomination period is to close 14 days after being called.
6. Nominated leadership candidates meeting prescribed criteria submitted to Special BFAC voting no later than 31<sup>st</sup> of May.
7. Elected candidates to be put forward to the June Ordinary Council Meeting for endorsement.
8. In the event of any leadership positions being uncontested, candidates are to go to the next Ordinary Council Meeting (skipping step 6 above).
9. After Council endorsement, the CBFCO is to determine who is to be appointed DCBFC1 and who is DCBFCO2 from the endorsed candidates (assuming two

Deputies have been endorsed) as well as appoint a Senior BFCO from the endorsed BFCO's. Consideration should be given to experience, capability, and demonstration of being able to perform the required tasks.

10. BFCO nominations can be received out of the above timeframes, and will be considered at the next appropriate BFAC and Ordinary Council Meeting. Such nominations are not to delay the appointment of any leadership positions.

#### 5.6B Brigade Voting

Where a decision is to be made by the Bush Fire Brigade, then the decision may be made by a resolution passed by a Simple Majority of the Brigade Members who are present in person or by proxy at the meeting.

#### 5.6C Number of Bush Fire Control Officers

Council reserves the right to endorse, adjust, or remove Bush Fire Control Officers as it deems necessary to effectively manage bush fires within the Shire.

#### 5.6D Endorsement by Bush Fire Advisory Committee and Council

The BFAC brigade representatives will vote as directed by their Brigade.

Candidates receiving a simple majority shall be recommended to Council for appointment.

#### 5.6E CBFCO and DCBFCO

THIS SECTION HAS BEEN REMOVED - DUPLICATION

#### 5.6F Local Government to have regard to Nominees

When considering persons for the position of a Bush Fire Control Officer, the nominees must meet the minimum training standard as described in the Bushfire Service Training Program (as amended). The Council is to have regard to those persons nominated by the Bush Fire Advisory Committee but is not bound to appoint the persons nominated.

### 5.7 Ancillary Items

#### 5.7B WAERN Radios issued to BFCO's

Historically Bush Fire Control Officers were issued by WAERN radios by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

Many WAERN radios remain in circulation within the Shire, however the sourcing and allocation of additional radios from DFES are now considered not guaranteed.

If an BFCO in possession of a radio resigns, retires, or is terminated, they are required to contact the CESM so suitable arrangements can be made for its removal. Non-

compliance with this instruction may result in the Shire undertaking recovery proceedings.

Available radios will be allocated to requiring BFCO's in descending order as determined by the CBFCO. BFCO's who do not meet the requirements of the role may have their WAERN removed and reallocated.

#### 5.7C Bush Fire Control Officer Radio Call signs

In the Shire of Northam, the radio call signs for BFCO's will be:

- Northam Chief
- Northam Deputy 1
- Northam Deputy 2
- CESM Northam

All other BFCO's on the Northam network will be:

- Northam FCO and their Surname - example "Northam FCO Bloggs"

#### 5.7E Fire Support Vehicle

The Shire of Northam may provide a vehicle to the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or their delegate to support the execution of their duties only.

Allocations of this vehicle and its use are at the discretion of the local government and may be withdrawn at any time.

Drivers of the vehicle must hold a valid and relevant Western Australian drivers license and accept responsibility for any traffic infringements incurred during its use.

#### 5.7F Mobile Phones and Tools of the Trade

The CBFCO and DCBFCO(s) for the Shire of Northam may be issued with equipment relevant to the role including but not limited to:

- WAERN radio(s)
- Mobile Phone or Sim Card
- Laptop/Tablet
- Printer
- Other equipment as agreed

Each BFCO will receive:

- a PAX folder with aide memoirs
- a Bushfire Service dress shirt and epaulettes (for official functions)

Where a BFCO retires or is terminated, all property owned by the Shire of Northam shall be returned to the Shire administration personnel within fourteen (14) days of giving notice. Failure to meet these conditions may require the Shire to seek reimbursement of costs against the member.

#### 5.7G Permits to Set Fire to the Bush

Applications for fire permits are to be entered onto Shire's permit application system. The application shall be issued to the resident after authorisation by the relevant BFCO. All permits issued must comply with the relevant SOPs and achieve compliance with the Bushfires Act 1954.

All permits are to be issued using the standard template and conditions for permits as set by the shire and in consultation with the CBFCO. The CBFCO or CESM may cancel a permit or ask the BFCO to re-evaluate the conditions on the permit to ensure a consistent and professional approach.

CBFCO and CESM are exempt from the above conditions for permits that may require deviation from the above.

Should a BFCO receive two (2) official written warnings from the Shire of Northam's Chief Executive Officer for violations in regard to the issuing of permits or any inappropriate use of power of a BFCO permit officer, they may be terminated from the position as per the termination process outlined in this document.

## 7.4 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Report

<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Chris Marris (Chief Bush Fire Control Officer)
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Jacky Jurmann (Acting Executive Manager Development Services)
<b>Officer Declaration of Interest:</b>	Nil
<b>Voting Requirement:</b>	Simple Majority
<b>Press release to be issued:</b>	No

### **BRIEF**

For the Committee to receive and note the update provided by the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil

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### **A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS**

This report is to provide the Committee an update on the current issues and actions of the Officer.

### **B. CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **B.1 Strategic Community / Corporate Business Plan**

Performance Area: Planet.

Outcome 5: A resilient community.

Objective 5.1: Build community resilience to cope with natural disasters and emergencies, including pandemics, storms, flooding and fire.

Priority Action 5.1.7: Provide a review of the Local Laws and Bushfire Brigades Manual.

#### **B.2 Financial / Resource Implications**

Nil.

#### **B.3 Legislative Compliance**

Nil.

#### **B.4 Policy Implications**

Nil.

**B.5 Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation**

Nil.

**B.6 Risk Implications**

Refer to Risk Matrix [here](#).

<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Rating (likelihood x consequence)</b>	<b>Mitigation Action</b>
Financial	Nil.	Nil	Nil
Health & Safety	Nil.	Nil	Nil
Reputation	Nil.	Nil	Nil
Service Interruption	Nil.	Nil	Nil
Compliance	Nil.	Nil	Nil
Property	Nil.	Nil	Nil
Environment	Nil.	Nil	Nil

**B.7 Natural Environment Considerations**

Nil.

**C. OFFICER'S COMMENT**

I would like to start by taking a moment to acknowledge the late Mark Littlefair, a member of this forum, an active Bush Fire Control Officer, the Training Officer for Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade, a fellow Firefighter, a gentleman and a friend, who was lost recently in a tragic accident on his property. Mark will be sorely missed by all who knew him. I thank Brigades and members who assisted Grass Valley during their open day immediately following Mark's passing and those who helped form a guard of honour at Mark's funeral.

While time takes too many who have given endlessly to our service, a special mention is also warranted for Eric Fox who was laid to rest in late October. Among many things Eric gave to his community and our fire service was the establishment of a comprehensive and well-run radio network that enabled effective early communication during countless incidents. The impact of this communication would be immeasurable; lives, houses and livelihoods saved. While we benefit from mobile phones today, most of us would still love to see such a strong radio network in place today to assist with fire response. It is underappreciated by those who do not understand the essential need for private response in our incident response in rural areas.

Some progress has been made over the past 12 months regarding getting WAERN radios back into BFCO vehicles, with four radios having been



installed/reinstalled in BFCO vehicles. It has been a battle, so thank you to those involved in making this happen.

The 2023/24 fire season has started with some gusto with some 13 incidents so far for October, including an incident that burnt some 30ha of bush in Throssell and another incident in Bakers Hill that went to Emergency Warning due to an immediate threat to nearby housing. Thankfully firefighters were able to stop both of these incidents before they escalated further.

On October 11, we held our annual BFCO pre-season forum, followed by a leadership team (BFCO and Captain) scenario evening in Northam. The pre-season discussed a refined process to assist with managing private response; an essential element to fire response in rural areas. One of the scenarios became a little too close to reality, with the Throssell job occurring in a patch of bush that one of the scenarios finished in.

The East Brigade scenario evening had to be postponed unfortunately due to the Throssell incident, however, the West Brigade scenario evening progressed as planned on October 25 and was attended by over 20 members from Wundowie, Inkpen, Bakers Hill and Clackline brigades. Thanks to all who attended, including a number of new members.

Jumping back some time, in late July I attended the first Chief's Forum at the Bushfire Centre of Excellence, with some eighty chiefs from around the State gathering. It was an interesting few days, with some good networking and a chance to raise some of the pressing issues challenging our service.

In August and again in September, Alex and I went to DFES in Cockburn to try to initiate an updated mobilisation procedure; a legacy action item for the previous CESM from an Operational Commanders meeting. We are now at the point where this change should be implemented sometime in November 2023 and will see a default mobilisation of local brigades prior to the initiation of the Group Call. It is hoped in some instances this may speed the initial mobilisation of Brigades by one to a few minutes.

In September, I was fortunate to attend the WA Fire and Emergency Services Conference in Perth along with a number of other Shire of Northam volunteers and witness our CESM win the Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services Individual Achievement Award. Well done Alex.

Also in September, following consultation with Captains, I took a motion to the Northam DOAC for the development of three new DFES courses including:

1. Introduction to Incident Controller Level 1
2. AIMS for new Level 1 Incident Controllers
3. Hazmat and Hazard Identification and Initial Actions for BFB's

This was supported unanimously by DOAC and is now going to the Volunteer Bush Fire Service Training Advisory Group meeting scheduled for November 4 which I sit on. I'll provide an update on the outcome of this during BFAC.

Over the past 12 months and in particular, in the last few months, Alex and I have been meeting regularly to progress the Bush Fire Manual Review. This has taken many many days of review, but I believe we are close to achieving the right balance of how descriptive we are to Brigades in their running, along with acknowledging that training for leadership positions is something that can be managed as a process to help ensure the right candidates step forward and that their training is matched with experience. A workshop on the proposed new manual was held on October 24 to discuss the key elements of the Manual with a range of Brigade stakeholders. If adopted, it will be important for there to be a transition period for the new training requirements of the Manual so as to allow currently elected members to meet any new training requirements in a fair manner.

I am pleased to be heading into the forthcoming season with a number of areas of progress having been made, however, there are still many areas that need attention. The ability to get training, including the ability to deliver training courses ourselves, is still far from optimal and needs ongoing work. Volunteer retention and recruitment also needs to be a focus, after a number of years of challenges in this space with Covid 19 and WHS impacts. I acknowledge the high level of commitment and dedication being given by our regulars across the service.

Finally, on behalf of the whole leadership team, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members and staff for their service in 2023. We wish you all a safe Christmas and look forward to working with you in 2024. Merry Christmas.

**RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION**

**Minute No: BFAC.317**

**Moved: Mr Nic Dewar**

**Seconded: Mrs Carla Millar**

**That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee endorses the following recommendation being presented to Council:**

- 1. That Council notes the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Report as provided.**

**CARRIED 10/0**



**For:** Mr Chris Marris, Mr Kris Brown, Mr Attila Mencshelyi, Mrs Carla Millar (Proxy), Mr Blair Wilding, Mr Bruce Devereoux, Mr Nic Dewar, Terry Hasson (Proxy), Mr Paul Antonio and Mr Aaron Smith.

**Against:** Nil.

Discussion

Mr Chris Marris acknowledged the late Mr Mark Littlefair of the Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade and thanked the various volunteers who have assisted the Brigade and the Littlefair family during this time of hardship.

Mr Chris Marris also acknowledged the late Mr Eric Fox and his contributions to the service.

Mr Chris Marris reported that there had been several incidents since the writing of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer report including the Wootatting Fire that required 70 personnel and was of concern for 9-10 hours.

The incident of a car fire resulting from a crash at Grass Valley on the Great Eastern Highway was also brought to the BFACs attention.

AllMS for new Level 1 Incident Controllers, Introduction to Incident Controller Level 1 and Hazmat and Hazard Identification and Initial Actions for BFB's was broadly supported through the recent Volunteer Bush Fire Service Training Advisory Group.

## 7.5 Festive Season Harvest Vehicle Movement Ban

<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Alex Espey (Community Emergency Services Manager)
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Jacky Jurmann (Acting Executive Manager Development Services)
<b>Officer Declaration of Interest:</b>	NIL
<b>Voting Requirement:</b>	Simple Majority
<b>Press release to be issued:</b>	No

### **BRIEF**

The current harvest is set to be below average this year with an earlier than usual start to harvest.

While Harvest Vehicle Movement Bans are designed to manage fire risk, and availability of resources to respond to incidents, we must balance this risk with the cost and impost on industry and the community more broadly.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil

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## **A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS**

Historically a policy was in place to manage this risk which has subsequently been repealed, however a risk management strategy is still required taking advice from the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.

## **B. CONSIDERATIONS**

### **B.1 Strategic Community / Corporate Business Plan**

Performance Area: Planet.

Outcome 5: A resilient community.

Objective 5.1: Build community resilience to cope with natural disasters and emergencies, including pandemics, storms, flooding and fire.

Priority Action: Nil.

### **B.2 Financial / Resource Implications**

NIL

### **B.3 Legislative Compliance**

NIL

**B.4 Policy Implications**

NIL

**B.5 Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation**

NIL

**B.6 Risk Implications**

Refer to Risk Matrix [here](#).

<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Rating (likelihood x consequence)</b>	<b>Mitigation Action</b>
Financial	N/A	N/A	N/A
Health & Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputation	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Interruption	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A

**B.7 Natural Environment Considerations**

NIL

**C. OFFICER'S COMMENT**

It is proposed to have a Harvest, Vehicle Movement and Hot Works Ban for the following dates and times:

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>TIME:</b>
Sunday 24 December 2023	1200hrs to 2400hrs
Monday 25 December 2023	Full 24 hours
Tuesday 26 December 2023	Full 24 hours
Sunday 31 December 2023	1200hrs to 2400hrs
Monday 01 January 2024	Full 24 hours
Friday 26 January 2024	Full 24 hours
Saturday 27 January 2024	0900hrs to 1800hrs
Sunday 28 January 2024	0900hrs to 1800hrs



**RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION**

**Minute No: BFAC.318**

**Moved: Cr Attila Mencshelyi**

**Seconded: Mr Blair Wilding**

**That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee endorses the following recommendation being presented to Council:**

- 1. That Council impose a Harvest, Vehicle Movement and Hot Works Ban for the following dates/times.**
  - a. 24 December 2023 - 1200hrs to 2400hrs.**
  - b. 25 December 2023 - Full 24 hours.**
  - c. 26 December 2023 - Full 24 hours.**
  - d. 31 December 2023 - 1200hrs to 2400hrs.**
  - e. 01 January 2024 - Full 24 hours.**
  - f. 26 January 2024 - Full 24 hours.**
  - g. 27 January 2024 - 0900hrs to 1800hrs.**
  - h. 28 January 2024 - 0900hrs to 1800hrs.**

**CARRIED 10/0**

**For:** Mr Chris Marris, Mr Kris Brown, Mr Attila Mencshelyi, Mrs Carla Millar (Proxy), Mr Blair Wilding, Mr Bruce Devereoux, Mr Nic Dewar, Terry Hasson (Proxy), Mr Paul Antonio and Mr Aaron Smith.

**Against:** Nil.

Discussion

The Shire of Northam will investigate the rescinding of Policy 8.1 relating to Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Bans, and the status of the Standard Operating Procedures relating to this matter, noting it is understood that the Policy was replaced with a Standard Operating Procedure.

The Committee members noted the need for the Shire to communicate planned Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Bans to the community.

## **8 URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY DECISION**

### **8.1 WORKING GROUPS**

Mr Chris Marris outlined a proposal to establish working groups for the purpose of reviewing a number of Council policies relating to bushfire matters.

Following advice from staff regarding the additional resources required to manage working groups, it was considered that it would be a more flexible, effective and appropriate approach for the policy reviews to be workshopped without administrative assistance and presented to BFAC for recommendation to Council. This would follow the same process used for the review of the Bush Fire Manual.

Mr Chris Marris and the Community Emergency Services Manager will discuss further.

## **9 GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **9.1 INKPEN FIRE SHED**

#### **DISCUSSION**

Mr Nic Dewar enquired about the Inkpen Fire Shed and its proposed commissioning. The Community Emergency Services Manager advised that the contractors are yet to provide an estimated time of completion.

It was noted for future projects that work on Emergency Services facilities and equipment should not happen during fire season as it affects the operation of the brigades.

Cr Atilla Mencshelyi asked if any imposed penalties are in place for the late delivery of the project? This question was taken on notice.

### **9.2 EMERGENCY TANKS**

#### **DISCUSSION**

Mr Nic Dewar raised the issues around access to emergency water tanks and the dangers of using these currently. Mr Joe Marasco advised that Clackline is in a similar situation, and other Committee members also raised their concerns.

It was agreed that the Community Emergency Services Manager would organise for the Building and Maintenance Supervisor to meet Brigade members on-site to investigate options for improvements at Bakers Hill, Grass Valley, Clackline and Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade Sheds.

### **9.3 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **DISCUSSION**

Mr Blair Wilding mentioned that the changes to the Terms of Reference for BFAC were changed by Council without notice or explanation and the members would like the changes explained.

The Community Emergency Services Manager explained that the minor changes made by Council to reflect the structure of the committee and to correct the number of votes permitted relating to the VFRS brigades and DFES.

### **10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Proposed meeting dates:

- 26 March 2024
- 28 May 2024
- 08 October 2024

### **11 DECLARATION OF CLOSURE**

There being no further business, the Presiding Member, Mr Chris Marris, declared the meeting closed at 8.08pm.

"I certify that the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 14 November 2023 have been confirmed as a true and correct record."

\_\_\_\_\_ Presiding Member

\_\_\_\_\_ Date