



## **Shire of Northam**

### **Agenda**

### **Bush Fire Advisory Committee**

**6 December 2022**

**NOTICE PAPER**

**Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting**

**6 December 2022**

Committee Members

I inform you that a Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting will be held in the Council Chambers, located at 395 Fitzgerald Street, Northam on 6 December 2022 at 5:30pm.

Yours faithfully



**Jason Whiteaker**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## **DISCLAIMER**

This agenda has yet to be dealt with by the Council. The Recommendations shown at the foot of each item have yet to be considered by the Council and are not to be interpreted as being the position of the Council. The minutes of the meeting held to discuss this agenda should be read to ascertain the decision of the Council.

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## **1. DECLARATION OF OPENING**

## **2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO 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.

## **3. ATTENDANCE**

### **Voting Committee:**

Councillor – Shire of Northam	Maria Girak
Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Chris Marris
Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer	Simon Peters
Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade	Nic Dewar
Clackline Muresk Bush Fire Brigade	Blair Wilding
Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigade	Kris Brown
Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade	Mark Littlefair
Irishtown Bush Fire Brigade	Rob Herzer
Jennapullin Bush Fire Brigade	Aaron Smith
Southern Brook Bush Fire Brigade	Paul Antonio
Wundowie Bush Fire Brigade	Mathew Macqueen
Northam Central Bush Fire Brigade	Kim Hampton
Wundowie Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service	Tristan Davey
Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service	Greg Montgomery

### **Non-Voting:**

Community Emergency Service Manager	Alex Espey
District Officer Northam	Drew Graham
Department of Parks and Wildlife (Wheatbelt)	Graeme Keals
Department of Parks and Wildlife (Perth Hills)	Michael Pasotti

### **Staff:**

Acting Executive Manager Development Services	Jacky Jurmann
Acting Governance Coordinator	Alysha McCall
Acting Governance Officer	Tamika Van Beek

### **3.1 APOLOGIES**

Nil.

### **3.2 APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Cr P T Curtis has been granted leave of absence from 19 September 2022 to 01 January 2023 (inclusive)

### **3.3 ABSENT**

Nil.

## **4. 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.*

Item Name	Item No.	Name	Type of Interest	Nature of Interest

## **5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

### **5.1 COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2022**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting held on 13 September 2022 be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting.**

## **6. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **6.1 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**

Attachment 1: Open BFAC Decisions.  
Attachment 2: Terms of Reference  
Attachment 3: WHS Progress

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

N/A.

#### **B. CONSIDERATIONS**

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

Theme Area 3: Safety and Security

Outcome 3.1: Shire of Northam residents are able to pursue the fullest life possible without fear of or hindrance from crime and disorder.

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

Nil.

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

Nil.

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



Nil.

## B.5 Stake Holder Engagement / Consultation

Nil.

## B.6 Risk Implications

Risk Category	Description	Rating (consequence x likelihood)	Mitigation Action
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

## C. OFFICER'S COMMENT

### INTRODUCTION:

Mr Espey is delighted to join the team at Northam, and is looking forward to the future as it further develops emergency services.

Mr Espey has been impressed with the levels of engagement he has witnessed in the last two weeks, which he believes will make his transition into the role as seamless as possible.

Mr Espey has met with the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Manager where expectations and strategic priorities were discussed and outlined. Of the highest priority is the building of relationships with the senior leadership groups with a view of achieving a mutually beneficial direction to our operational capability to the community.

It is Mr Espey's wish to express his deep appreciation to outgoing Community Emergency Service Manager, Brendon Rutter, for his comprehensive handover. Mr Espey thanks him for his contribution to the Northam community and wishes him well for his future endeavours.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE:

At the previous Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting it was advised that the committees Terms of Reference would be provided (see attachment 2) for the committee's information in response to the query related to the role of the Leadership Group and the Bush Fire Advisory Committee.

APPOINTMENT OF FIRE CONTROL OFFICER:

A nomination has been received from the Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service for Greg Montgomery to be appointed as a Fire Control Officer. Mr Montgomery meets the training requirements for the position and is recommended to be appointed as a Fire Control Officer.

WHS Update

With the introduction of the Workplace Health and Safety Act 2020 (WHS Act), there are changes to the workplace health and safety laws in Western Australia. Importantly the new legislation makes it clear that volunteers are provided the same level of protection as paid employees. More importantly it is the strong desire of the Shire of Northam to ensure that it has appropriate systems, processes, practices and safeguards in place to provide a safe working environment for all volunteers.

It is important to note that ultimately it is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer, as the primary PCBU (person Conducting a Business or Undertaking – as defined by the WHS Act) at the Shire of Northam to put policies, practices and procedures in place to be comfortable that a safe working environment is in place for all volunteers.

As volunteers would be aware there was a workshop held in December 2021, which was used to help inform the administration on perceived risks and potential mitigation actions to provide a safe volunteer work environment. Staff, in liaison with the Chief Bushfire Control Officer and leadership team have been working through the actions, although progress has not been as quick as anticipated.

Attachment 3 provides an update of the consolidated risk register, with detail on progress made. Possibly the most important element not complied with is around volunteer refreshers or inductions, which ideally would have occurred prior to the season. This obviously has not occurred, however the new CESM will be looking to work with individual brigades over the fire season in the area of training and competencies.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council**

- 1. Note the Community Emergency Services Manager Report as provided.**
- 2. Appoint Greg Montgomery as a Fire Control Officer for the 2022/2023 season in accordance with the criteria in section 5 of the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Manual.**

### Attachment 1 – Open BFAC Decisions

Decision Date	Motion No.	Item No	Subject	Motion	Action By	Comments
19/10/22	C.4579	12.1	BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2022	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the Community Emergency Services Manager Report as provided.</li> <li>2. Endorse the 2022-23 Firebreak and Fuel Load Notice as provided in Attachment 1, subject to the following amendments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Online registration being added under 6.9</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Note the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Report as provided.</li> <li>4. Review the burning permit process and include; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. That the FCO authorise permits only in their own geographic area, the permit in their name and signed by them. If the FCO is unable to carry this out, the FCO must be contacted first before approaching another FCO.</li> <li>b. As part of the review consideration be given to a paper based permit system run in parallel with the web based system used by the Shire. The local FCO could write out and issue the permit, take a photo of it on their phone and send this to the Shire thus allowing for an instant update of the Shires list of permits issued.</li> <li>c. That a database be developed by the Shire to record both paper based permits and online permits.</li> <li>d. Allow FCOs access to the database of all permits issued, run at the Shire by either records or the CESM to record any permits that are issued.</li> <li>e. Permits could have the facility to be revalidated by signature endorsement of the issuing FCO should prevailing conditions be acceptable for an extension.</li> <li>f. Facility on the permit for the permit holder to sign to acknowledge that they have read the conditions of the permit</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	Brendon Rutter	<p>04/11/2022</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. no action required.</li> <li>2. Completed</li> <li>3. Completed</li> <li>4. Unable to complete due to Council endorsed SOP, no motion has been endorsed to alter existing SOP</li> </ol>

## **Attachment 2 – Terms of Reference**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **SHIRE OF NORTHAM BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **1. Objectives of Bush Fire Advisory Committee**

Northam Bush Fire Advisory Committee is established pursuant to Section 5.8 of the Local Government Act 1995 and Section 67 of the Bush Fires Act 1954 within the local government boundaries of the Shire of Northam. The committee's objective is to provide efficient and responsive fire service and as a Committee to advise the Council on matters relating to bush fire, make recommendations and advise Council on all matters relating to bush fire planning, control, management and rehabilitation.

To liaise with other emergency organisations and relevant bodies with regard to Fire and Emergency Management within the Shire of Northam.

Reports from the committee will assist Council in discharging its legislative responsibilities of controlling the local government's affairs, determining the local government's policies and overseeing the allocation of the local government's finances and resources.

### **2. Powers of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee**

The committee is a formally appointed committee of Council and is responsible to that body. The committee does not have executive powers or authority to implement actions in areas over which the CEO has legislative responsibility and does not have any delegated financial responsibility. The committee does not have any management functions and cannot involve itself in management processes or procedures.

The committee is to report to Council and provide appropriate advice and recommendations on matters relevant to its term of reference in order to facilitate informed decision-making by Council in relation to the legislative functions and duties of the local government that have not been delegated to the CEO.

### **3. Membership**

#### **3.1 Full voting members**

- Chief Bush Fire Control Officer;
- Two (2) Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers;
- Two (2) Shire of Northam Elected Members;
- One (1) delegate or proxy representative from each of the registered Shire of Northam Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades listed below:

- Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigade;
- Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade;
- Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade;
- Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade;
- Irishtown Bush Fire Brigade;
- Jennapullin Bush Fire Brigade;
- Southern Brook Bush Fire Brigade;
- Northam Central Bush Fire Brigade; and
- Wundowie Bush Fire Brigade.
- One (1) delegate or proxy representative from Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service; and
- One (1) delegate or proxy representative from Wundowie Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service.

### **3.2 Non-voting**

- Shire of Northam Community Emergency Services Manager;
- Department of Fire and Emergency Service Northam District Officer; and
- Department of Parks and Wildlife Manager.

## **4. Meetings**

The committee shall meet at least two times annually.

Additional meetings shall be convened at the discretion of the presiding person.

## **5. Reporting**

Reports and recommendations of each committee meeting shall be presented to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

## **6. Duties and Responsibilities**

The committee is to facilitate:

- Preventing, controlling and extinguishing of bush fires
- The planning of the layout of fire-breaks in the district
- Prosecutions for breaches of the Bush Fire Act 1954
- The formation of bush fire brigades
- The ensuring of co-operation and co-ordination of bush fire brigades in their efforts and activities
- Any other matter relating to bush fire control whether of the same kind, as, or a different kind from, those specified
- Provide guidance and advise to Council to the carrying out the functions of the local government in relation to bush fires.
- Develop and recommend to Council appropriate processes for bush fires.

## **7. Tenure of Membership**

Shall be in accordance with the Local Government Act, section 5.11.

## **8. Authority**

Bushfires Act 1954, 22 January 2016  
Section 67, Advisory committees

A local government may at any time appoint such persons as it thinks fit as a bush fire advisory committee for the purpose of advising the local government regarding all matters relating to the preventing, controlling and extinguishing of bush fires, the planning of the layout of fire-breaks in the district, prosecutions for breaches of this Act, the formation of bush fire brigades and the grouping thereof under group brigade officers, the ensuring of co-operation and co-ordination of bush fire brigades in their efforts and activities, and any other matter relating to bush fire control whether of the same kind as, or a different kind from, those specified in this subsection.

## **9. Committee**

### **9.1 Chairperson**

The committee shall elect one of their number to be chairman thereof in accordance with the Local Government Act 1995, section 5.12

### **9.2 Secretary**

A Shire employee will fulfil the role of non-voting Secretary.

### **9.3 Quorum**

The quorum at any meeting shall be half plus one of the number of offices.

### **9.4 Voting**

Shall be in accordance with the Local Government Act, Section 5.21

### **9.5 Minutes**

Shall be in accordance with the Local Government Act, Section 5.22.

A copy of the unconfirmed minutes shall be forwarded to all members within fourteen (14) days of the meeting for endorsement at the next meeting.

Members are given at least 5 working days after the minutes of a BFAC meeting are circulated to comment or raise issues associated with the wording of the minutes, before the BFAC minutes are included in a Council agenda; and

Each draft document considered by BFAC is amended in accordance with BFAC resolutions and the amended version is circulated to BFAC members for at least 5 working days for comment before it is included in the Council agenda.

Recommendations arising from the minutes shall be presented to Council in the next available Council agenda for endorsement and/or action.

The person presiding at the meeting at which the minutes are confirmed is to sign the minutes and certify confirmation.

#### **9.6 Who Acts If No Presiding Member**

Shall be in accordance with the Local Government Act, Section 5.14.

#### **9.7 Meetings**

Meetings shall be generally open to the public pursuant to Section 5.23 of the Local Government Act and include question time for members of the pursuant to Section 5.24 of the Local Government Act.

#### **9.8 Members Interests to be Disclosed**

Members of the Committee are bound by the provisions of the Local Government Act Section 5.65 with respect to disclosure of financial, impartiality or proximity interests.

#### **9.9 Brigade Reports**

Each member brigade shall provide a brigade report to the meeting.

#### **9.10 Working Groups**

A working group can be established to carry out specific tasks. A working group will undertake only those duties specified by the committee.

#### **9.11 Deputations**

A person or organisation maybe invited to attend any meetings but such persons shall not be entitled to vote on any decision arising from such meetings.



### Attachment 3 – WHS Progress

Farmer Response							
	Identified Risk	Current mitigation acceptable	Future Actions Required		Timeframe		
1	Incorrect Uniform/PPE	Nil	Marketing to encourage farmers to have PPE in their vehicles in case of fire emergency		Dec-21	Information provided when response stickers are provided to farm response 2. Educate via social media – apply for sticker, with information provided – August, weekly campaign	1. Provided as part of response stickers, email to all brigades with process mid Oct. 2. developing for release by mid Oct.
2			Each PPE appliance to be provided with 1 spare sets of PPE.	Refer to Attachment "Outcomes - PPC" tab for more detailed information	Aug-22	(CESM) to request by Aug 1 <sup>st</sup> , Captains to inspect and report by end of August.	Reported as completed
3	Lack of Organisation / Education	Nil	Provide Rural Fire Safety course	Refer to Attachment "Outcomes - PPC" tab for more detailed information	Oct-22	2 courses for September – awaiting confirmation	1. no longer able to deliver to external recipients (DFES Advice), only registered volunteers, this course is obsolete for registered volunteers as BSA & FFS is minimum training required to attend fire ground. Potential for RFA for Jennapullin as farm response however not required at this stage due to high compliance level.
4			Promote use of CB/UHF 5		Dec-21	Refer point 1.	as per (1)
5	No effective coordination on the fireground		SC or IC actively record Private Units			Leadership team – refresher for SOP's part of pre season meeting prior Oct 31 <sup>st</sup> Post reminder on intranet July-Oct	Pre Season BFCO meeting booked Oct 20th Pre Season BFCO meeting booked Oct 20th
6			Seal off Fires Early			Post reminder on intranet Jul-Oct	Pre Season BFCO meeting booked Oct 20th
7	Poor quality of farmer units		Provide a pre-season one-off event for free farmer unit checks	Look at potential to offer a prize as incentive to have units checked	Oct-22	1. hold event Sep/Oct to provide operating private vehicles on fireground document with rural fire awareness course	Members to self certify against standards in "Operate Private Vehicle on Fire Ground" publication, as part of response sticker application.
8	Lack of young farmer members of brigades		Marketing campaign to promote young farmers/people join volunteer brigades		February 2022 – October 2022	1. Commenced April 22, 2. Specific social media campaign, paid adverts Sep–Dec 3. Tap into DFES regional campaign with local focus	1. Some brigades have held open days and community info session with support from SON & CESM 2. Northam BFS brigades featured in a paid advert promoting service, any leads (2) passed onto brigades. 3. Extensive Campaign run by DFES now concluded.
9			Investigate potential incentives for volunteers	Work with Volunteering WA to identify opportunities	Jun-22	Staff investigating viable opportunities, report Oct	No action to date
	Fire Stations, Appliances and Equipment						
	Mitigation Action	Current Status	Future Actions Required		Timeframe		
10	Undertake monthly workplace inspection	Nothing in Place	Brigades to undertake monthly workplace inspection during Fire Season.		Jan-22	1. All brigades provided with facility inspection form via intranet - Feb 22 - send again July 2022 2. Post message on intranet reminding to submit to records email for recording. 3. Provide brigade reports to SON OSH committee and BFAC	1. Complete, hard copies to be delivered to stations via pre season BFCO meeting. 2. To be completed 3. no action to date
11			Pre-season Safety inspection undertaken by Shire of Northam Safety Officer		Oct-22	Inspection undertaken on all facilities in June by CESM 2. OPS command meeting to discuss outcomes of inspection with remedial works	1. complete 2. outcomes (minimal) to be discussed at pre season BFCO meeting
12	Improved manual handling	Nil	Provide manual handling training to volunteers	Run training at each fire station	July – September 2022	1. speak to LGGs team re funding 2. manual handling for firefighters – refresher on core skills, and safe handling – informal training package to training officers 3. requirement for attendance records to be provided by training officers	1. no eligible for LGGs funding 2. no action to date, awaiting safety officer advice 3. no action to date
13	Vehicle Maintenance		Brigades to undertake weekly inspections of vehicles	Shire to provide check sheet		1. VPOWER form on intranet, DFES vol hub, and hard copies on station 2. Post on intranet reminding of requirements - August 2022 3. Reiterate requirement for vpower to be sent to records email - August 2022	1. complete 2. complete 3. part of pre season BFCO meeting
14			Preseason check of all vehicles to be coordinated by CESM		July/August	1. PO request raised for contractor, tentatively booked end of August 2. Appliance operational systems certification – annually - 3rd party contractor 3. Vehicle service – annual – local provider, complete by end of Aug 22	1. complete, all remediation works completed 2. complete 3. complete



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15			Provide vehicle report forms to ensure any damage or maintenance requirements are identified and rectified		Jan-22	1. VFR books in appliances 2. Staff to investigate making intranet public - access by exemption - volunteers. End of Aug	1. complete 2. Intranet available on station PC's & vehicle tablets only, seeking alternative options.
16	Driver experience / competence		Provide annual on road/off road vehicle training		July - November 2022	1. Offered in May, Wundowie & Bakers Hill looking at dates for volunteers. 2. Resend info in July for EOI 3. Promote to all members requirements for formal training to allow emergency driving, covered by exemption (Reg 280 & 281)	1. Bakers Hill & Wundowie only brigade to opt for course, Oct 29th 2. Course booked for 29th Oct 3. pre season training at brigade level, also discussion point at BFCA meeting
17			Require all drivers to observe the road rules and speed limits	Provide/update SOP and distribute	Jan-22	1. intranet message 2. CEO position - road rules apply in all circumstances, unless exemption applies due to formal training.	1. not yet completed 2. not yet completed
18	Provide adequate Personal Protective Equipment		Ensure equipment is fit for purpose and volunteers are aware of the respective manuals of each original equipment manufacturer	Refer to Attachment "Outcomes - PPC" tab for more detailed information	Jan-22	1. PPC/E must be purchased from DFES approved suppliers, and only for DFES approved PPC/E that have gone through R&D phase via DFES PAT team for operational endorsement - this is a requirement of funding body.	1. No action required.
19			Provide washing machines at all Fire Stations and encourage, recommending all PPE be washed on site	Refer to Attachment "Outcomes - PPC" tab for more detailed information	As soon as practicable	1. Complete for all stations, Wundowie & Inken outstanding due to facility issues	1. No change
20			Investigate costs and guidelines around providing volunteers with two sets of PPE	Refer to Attachment "Outcomes - PPC" tab for more detailed information	Aug-22	1. Active members offered additional sets of PPC with DFES approval since 2021, organic roll-out has occurred with requests approved based on incident attendance. 2. Invite active members to request additional ppc, speak to Captains/equipment officer, End August	1. currently in progress
<b>Training</b>							
	<b>Mitigation Action</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Future Actions Required</b>		<b>Timeframe</b>		
21	Member training not as up to date as it could be	Minimum training requirements in place	Review minimum training requirements with Captains to present to BFAC	Refer to Attachment "Outcomes - PPC" tab for more detailed information	October 2022	1. Ops command meeting prior to end of August - agenda item	1. completed, with Captains provided opportunity to query training records with feedback provided to Captains for dissemination.
22			Training registers up to date/maintained		Oct-22	1. Provide training register to all brigade training officers, all records updated live and held by DFES. 2. Members to inform training officer, to liaise with CESM for clarification of discrepancies 3. Members have until Dec 31 22, to identify and rectify training records	1. complete 2. Complete 3. No outstanding queries to date
23		SOP's in place			Immediate	1. all available via val hub, via intranet 2. Critical SOP's on appliances in Red PAX Folder	1. No action required. 2. complete
24			Advocate for additional training assessors to be approved through DFES	Refer to Attachment "Outcomes - Training" tab for further detailed information	Ongoing	1. Completed June 22, 4 vol T/A's 2. Bryan Petersen 3. Kris Brown 4. Mal Carter 5. Justin Fox 6. Caitlin Gray (development)	1. Complete
25			Promote flexible training arrangements, with a particular focus on weeknight training to suit volunteers	Refer to Attachment "Outcomes - Training" tab for further detailed information	Ongoing	1. Training Officer meeting - August to determine training needs unmet 2. Based on brigade feedback, timing of training guided to meet volunteer requirements	1. complete 2. complete
26	Minimum Training Requirements (Fireground and Positions)	Minimum training requirements in place	Settle on Minimum Training - minimum expectations for leadership team. Look at DFES requirements to ensure we align	Refer to Attachment "Outcomes - Training" tab for further detailed information	Oct-22	Refer point 21	1. Currently under review via BFM review process
27			Require Minimum Training before a volunteer can be active on the Fireground - Utilise DFES Guidelines	Refer to Attachment "Outcomes - Training" tab for further detailed information	Jan-22	1. September date TBC for AIMS awareness online, regional laptops 2. RCC process for basic courses by Oct 31 <sup>st</sup> 3. Already a pre requisite for new members. 4. RCC process approved by DFES in June, approved for brigade roll-out ASAP. 5. Mars 22 <sup>nd</sup> August @ Bakers Hill 6. Thus 1 <sup>st</sup> Sep @ Northam Co-location 7. Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> Sep @ Grass Valley 8. Identify volunteers (active) for RCC process Min 14 days, prior learners manual provided to volunteer Assessment - open book, assessment conditions Practical assessments to follow written	1. No action to date, no demand from members with opportunities provided 2. Complete 3. no change 4. complete, potential for additional course 5. Cancelled due to lack of interest 6. Moved to Southern Brook 7. Completed 8. Completed, positive initial response, many more required

# Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

## 06 December 2022

28	Maintain Skills		Require pre-season competency-based training / annual induction prior to fire season commencement		Dec-22	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Framework developed,</li> <li>2. Process developed, sent to EMDs</li> <li>3. Captains/brigade leadership team to deliver</li> <li>4. Requirement for active members prior to Oct 31<sup>st</sup>, to be provided to shire.</li> <li>5. New members prior to active duty</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Framework developed, not implemented without approval of CEO, LGIS is supportive</li> <li>2. Completed Nil feedback received.</li> <li>3. Requires formal direction from CEO</li> <li>4. No actioned, without formal direction from CEO</li> <li>5. new members must completed training packages in full.</li> </ol>
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## 6.2 CHIEF BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER (CBFCO) REPORT

<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Chris Marris, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Chris Marris, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
<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 CBFCO.

### ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

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### A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

N/A.

### B. CONSIDERATIONS

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

Theme Area 3: Safety and Security

Outcome 3.1: Shire of Northam residents are able to pursue the fullest life possible without fear of or hindrance from crime and disorder.

#### B.2 Financial / Resource Implications

Nil.

#### B.3 Legislative Compliance

Nil.

#### B.4 Policy Implications

Nil.

#### B.5 Stake Holder Engagement / Consultation

Nil.

#### B.6 Risk Implications

Risk Category	Description	Rating (consequence x likelihood)	Mitigation Action
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

### C. OFFICER'S COMMENT

It was pleasing to again see seasonal conditions allow for the restricted burning period to go unchanged this year, and again to the credit of the community, it appeared to be well respected. The weather has also seen no HVMB (at the time of writing) needing to be declared due to weather, which is pleasing, although the mild weather has delayed harvest.

It has been an extremely busy couple of months for the leadership team – thankfully not because of too many incidents but instead responding to changes in the Australian Fire Danger Rating System, pre-season activities and working with the Shire around proposed changes in policies and procedures.

With the implementation of the new fire danger rating system, apart from training and getting access to the new State Fuel Viewer, a number of procedures and processes have needed review and updating.

Firstly the leadership team has been working on a harvest, vehicle movement and hot works ban procedure to support the decisions around implementing harvest bans. While the legislation is clear as to when these must be applied, understanding when they should be applied and how (i.e. responsive or pre-emptively) has required consideration. This will be an evolving document as we understand how fire behaviour indexes look in a local context.

The leadership team has also reviewed and expanded the mobilisation matrix which is a document that helps supports the decisions around the initial mobilization of Brigades, FCO's/CESM and resources. The trigger point for this is the fire danger rating/fire behaviour index. This document has also been expanded to give better consideration to incidents like structure fires, national infrastructure, UXO etc.

Finally, the leadership team has tried to develop a decision support matrix to assist with making appropriate and informed decisions around the use of private response at incidents. This document is still in consultation with the Shire.

Much work to has been done to try to ensure that we are ready for the fire season.

A pre-season BFCO forum was held in mid-October and again was well attended.

The planned scenario night had to be cancelled only hours beforehand due to an incident at the time (much like this BFAC). The timing meant it was going to be difficult to reschedule before the season, so a date will be scheduled for the new year. Thank you to Kris Brown for his work preparing for this. The road scavenger hunt, a fun activity designed to build teamwork and problem solving also, unfortunately, did not proceed due to numbers.

### **New CESM**

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Alex to the role of CESM. My team and I are looking forward to a strong, productive and constructive working relationship with Alex and will look to support him as much as possible as he finds his feet in the role, clears any backlog, and gets stuck into the important tasks ahead. Welcome Alex.

### **Bush Fire Manual**

Work on this document has slowed largely due to the leadership's focus on some of the above pressing pre-season operational matters. I thank the Shire for its understanding and I look forward to progressing it more quickly as some of the urgent operational matters ease.

### **Brigades**

November 22/23rd saw five incidents occur within 24 hours, with additional incidents in neighbouring Shires. I thank members for their work during these trying hours – I know I saw some of the same members at three different incidents over those couple of days. It did, however, highlight that many brigades are currently experiencing pressure on the numbers of active volunteers, making it that more difficult to get full crews along with second and third shifts. There is obviously a range of reasons for this, but the circumstances will need understanding and support by all to keep and rebuild as much depth as possible.

### **Christmas Leave**

Finally, a reminder that I will be taking seven weeks' leave from mid-December. During this time, Northam Deputy 1 (Simon) will be the acting Chief and Northam Deputy 2 (Kris) will be acting Deputy 1. Kris will take responsibility for

implementing weather based HVMBs during this time. The BFCO team will be briefed on arrangements closer to the time, along with the DFES Office and neighbouring Shires.

So while I will not be here myself, on behalf of the leadership team, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members and staff for their service and dedication this year. We wish you all a calm (in terms of incidents) and a safe Christmas and look forward to working with you in the New Year. Merry Christmas.

Chris Marris

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council note the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Report as provided.**

## **7. MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN**

### **7.1 HARVEST, VEHICLE MOVEMENT AND HOT WORKS BAN 2022/2023**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The current harvest is set to again be above average combined with a delayed start to harvesting due to seasonal conditions. 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.

This festive season will again see Christmas and New Year's Day fall on a weekend, meaning that there are additional public holidays. Without adjustment to the Shire's policy on Harvest Vehicle Movement Bans for this season, it is felt by many that this balance of risk and impost may not be weighted correctly.

As such, an amendment to the policy for this season is proposed as follows:

<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Holiday</b>	<b>Shire Policy</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Saturday	24-Dec		HVMB	From 12noon	
Sunday	25-Dec	Christmas Day	HVMB	HVMB	HVMB
Monday	26-Dec	Boxing Day	HVMB	HVMB	HVMB
Tuesday	27-Dec	Christmas Day Public Holiday	HVMB		
Wednesday	28-Dec				
Thursday	29-Dec				
Friday	30-Dec				
Saturday	31-Dec		HVMB		
Sunday	1-Jan	New Year's Day	HVMB	HVMB	HVMB
Monday	2-Jan	New Year's Day Public Holiday	HVMB		
Thursday	26-Jan	Australia Day	HVMB	HVMB	HVMB

As can be seen by the above table, what is being proposed is in line with last season with one change. The rationale behind the Harvest Vehicle Movement Ban being applied this year from 12 noon on Christmas Eve is that, unlike last season, this year will see Christmas Eve being on a weekend. It is felt that this may reduce volunteer numbers earlier (i.e. they head out of region Friday evening after work). It was felt that the fire risk is reduced in the AM, and thus

appropriate for the community to continue their activities until mid-day when the fire risk increases.

### **MOTION**

**Moved: Chris Marris**

**That Council impose a Harvest, Vehicle Movement and Hot Works Ban for the following Public Holidays:**

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| - Saturday 24 December 2022 (Christmas Eve) | - From 12 noon to midnight. |
| - Sunday 25 December 2022 (Christmas)       | - Full day                  |
| - Monday 26 December 2022 (Boxing Day)      | - Full day                  |
| - Sunday 01 January 2023 (New Year's Day)   | - Full day                  |
| - Thursday 26 January 2023 (Australia Day)  | - Full day                  |

### **OFFICERS COMMENT**

Officers support the proposed motion.



## **7.2 FIRE MITIGATION STANDING AGENDA ITEM**

### **BACKGROUND**

As Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and presiding member of Bush Fire Advisory Committee I have been calling for the inclusion of mitigation as a standing agenda item for this meeting for over 12 months. Despite these ongoing requests, mitigation has not received more than passing mentions at this forum. I believe that more focus and engagement on mitigation is needed and by including this as an agenda item at this forum, Brigade delegates and the broader brigade membership will have a greater awareness of current and planned fire mitigation activity within the Shire of Northam.

Further to that, Brigades have a great understanding of their local Brigade districts and areas of risks within those districts. The periodic engagement and consultation on mitigation activities within their Brigade district will help ensure that no gaps are missed, as well as provide greater insight as to how the brigade may assist with any mitigation activity. With a new staff member dedicated to this mitigation space, the capacity for this consultation and engagement should hopefully be greater than it has perhaps been in the past.

### **MOTION**

**Moved: Chris Marris**

**That Council request the Chief Executive Officer to provide a fire mitigation update through a standing agenda item to each Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting, and that brigades are consulted and engaged with on fire mitigation within their districts.**

### **OFFICERS COMMENT**

The Bushfire Risk Management Coordinator role is a shared between two (2) other Local Government Authorities and reports to the Bushfire Risk Management Officer for the Goldfields Midlands Region. All brigade queries related to mitigation within Northam are required to be raised through the Community Emergency Services Manager.

The BRMC will attend BFAC where possible to provide an update on the projects and will also contact brigades, as needed, during planning and implementation stages.

### **7.3 IDENTIFIED WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTION ITEMS**

#### **BACKGROUND**

In late 2021, a Work Health and Safety (WHS) workshop was held with brigades to identify WHS risks and priorities for volunteer fire fighters within the Shire of Northam. While a number of areas were identified, two focus areas were identified and put to the December Bush Fire Advisory Committee. This was in addition to the Shire of Northam self-developed 'attachment 2'. Despite requests by the leadership team on multiple occasions since this time, updates on attachments 3 and 4 have not been provided, with only updates provided on the Shire's attachment 2.

As we are now in the next fire season, it would be highly appropriate for an update and consultation on these two Brigade led documents.

#### **MOTION**

**Moved: Chris Marris**

**That Council request the Chief Executive Officer to provide the Bush Fire Advisory Committee with a detailed update on the specific WHS action items identified in attachment 3 (PPE / PPC – Fire Fighters) and attachment 4 (training) as approved at the December 2021 BFAC.**

#### **OFFICERS COMMENT**

This has been provided already in the current Agenda.

## **7.4 PRIVATE FIREFIGHTER RESPONSE**

### **BACKGROUND**

The structure of firefighting response in Western Australia has been built on and continues to rely on private firefighting response in addition to formal brigades in rural and regional areas of Western Australia. While the importance of our trained volunteer fire fighters responding to fire incidents in both official and private appliances cannot be understated, this often works in consultation with non-member private firefighting response, particularly early in an incident, where distance means that official brigade response can be 30 or more minutes after an incident starts.

All fires start small and often private response is the difference between keeping a fire this way and not. On bad days there will never be enough fire resources, and experienced and well set-up private firefighting resources can play a pivotal role in supporting official appliances and members in protecting life and community infrastructure.

While we note the Shires need and focus on WHS of all volunteers including 'spontaneous volunteers' a suitable approach must be found where these private resources can be used safely rather than simply saying they cannot attend an incident and/or not be allowed to effectively help. Consideration must of course be given to the WHS of the 'spontaneous volunteer', but it must also be given to the risk that registered volunteers and the broader community will face as a result of bigger and more protracted incidents.

Recent social media posts by the Shire such as around vehicle response stickers (subsequently edited) and 'volunteer recognition' with the later noting "Historically we have had assistance from 'unregistered' volunteers on a fire site, however with recent changes to Work Place Health and Safety legislation in Western Australia this will no longer be possible. To be active on a fire ground you will need to be a registered volunteer" do not appear to meet this balance, particularly when implemented without warning or consultation, and during the fire season.

While most would be supportive of growing the membership of brigades with those who have traditionally being private response, this will not be suitable for all members of the community and indeed goes against recent pushes by the Shire to see members who were not active on official appliances removed from Brigade membership lists. Even if private response can be encouraged to join brigades and undertake training, this would take time, so immediate steps by the Shire to stop private response during a (high fuel load) season, would significantly impact upon the firefighting capability of the Shire.

## **MOTION**

**Moved: Chris Marris**

### **That Council**

- 1. Reconfirms the pivotal importance of private firefighting response to the Shire's ability to respond to bush fire incidents within the Shire of Northam and take steps to continue to support this firefighting resource.**
- 2. Acknowledge the impact of decisions made around policies, training etc, in regard to these private response, particularly when made with limited lead time and during the fire season.**

## **OFFICERS COMMENT**

The Shire administration acknowledges the importance and role farmer response plays in terms of fire response to the community, however it is the Shire's responsibility to manage risk in accordance with the recommendations of its insurer and it will continue to provide ongoing advice on its position as it comes to hand.

## **7.5 NOMINATION OF HARVEST BAN WEATHER OFFICER 2022/2023**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Inkpen Fire Brigade as one of the brigades that are on the western edge of the Northam Shire district has for many years provided a Fire Weather Officer. The Bushfire Manual under section 5.5 Harvest Ban Weather Officers provides some criteria for the appointment /nomination of a Weather Officer, including having undertaken the Fire Control Officer course or taken a refresher in the last 10 years, along with having local knowledge and involved in agricultural activities.

It is with this understanding that Sim Kuiper has been nominated, and has accepted the nomination by the Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade, to represent the Northam Shire and the Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade as a Harvest Ban Weather Officer for the 2022/23 Bush Fire Season.

### **MOTION**

**Moved: Chris Marris**

**That Council appoint Sim Kuiper as a Harvest Ban Weather Officer for the 2022/2023 bush fire season.**

### **OFFICERS COMMENT**

The nomination of Sim Kuiper is not supported due to his training not meeting the minimum requirement for appointment as required in the Shire of Northam Bushfire Manual. The appointment could be supported subject to training or RCC being undertaken.

**8. URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY DECISION**

**9. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

14 March 2023

13 June 2023

12 September 2023

14 November 2023

**11. DECLARATION OF CLOSURE**