



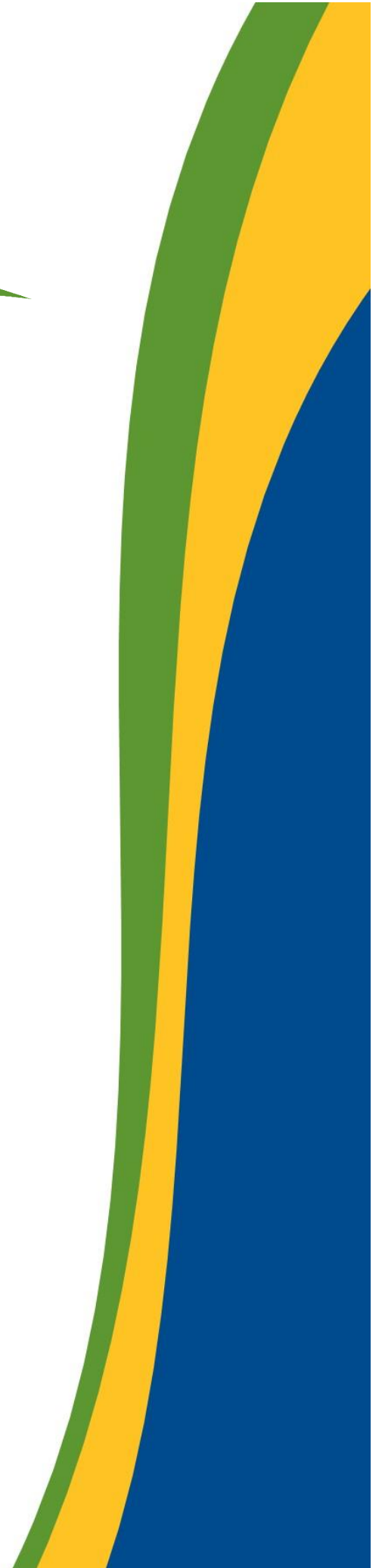
Shire of Northam
Heritage, Commerce and Lifestyle

Shire of Northam

Minutes

Bush Fire Advisory Committee

26 March 2024



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1 DECLARATION OF OPENING

The Presiding Member, Mr C Marris, declared the meeting open at 5:31 pm.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Presiding Member, Mr C Marris, acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, the Ballardong and Whadjuk people of the Nyoongar nation and paid our respects to Elders, past present and emerging.

3 ATTENDANCE

3.1 ATTENDEES

Voting Committee:

Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Councillor – Shire of Northam
Councillor – Shire of Northam
Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigade
Clackline Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade
Irishtown Bush Fire Brigade
Jennapullin Bush Fire Brigade
Southern Brook Bush Fire Brigade

Chris Marris
Maria Girak
Attila Mencshelyi
Carla Millar
Blair Wilding
Soren Nielsen
Rob Herzer
Aaron Smith
Paul Antonio

Staff:

Chief Executive Officer
Executive Manager Development Services
Community Emergency Services Manager
Bush Fire Mitigation Coordinator
Governance Officer

Debbie Terelinck
Chadd Hunt
Alex Espey
Siobhan Bishop
Tamika Van Beek

Gallery:

Avon & Districts ICV Unit
Irishtown Bush Fire Brigade
Wundowie Bush Fire Brigade

Ulo Rumjantsen
Digby Hasson
Chris Hudson

3.2 APOLOGIES

Voting Committee:

Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer
Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade

Kris Brown
Nic Dewar

3.3 APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil.

3.4 ABSENT

Voting Committee:

Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer
Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade
Northam Central Bush Fire Brigade
Wundowie Bush Fire Brigade
District Officer Northam - DFES

Simon Peters
Bruce Devereaux
Jamie Wilkerson
Mathew Macqueen
Drew Graham

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)

Jeffery Roberts
Greg Montgomery
Graeme Keals
Michael Pasotti

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 clause 22 of the Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021, 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
Fire Control Officer Nominations	6.4	Aaron Smith	Impartiality	Mr Smith is a current Fire Control Officer.
		Blair Wilding	Impartiality	Mr Wilding is the voting member for Clackline Bush Fire Brigade and is currently a Fire Control Officer.
		Chris Marris	Impartiality	Mr Marris is nominated as one of the Bush Fire Control Officers.
		Paul Antonio	Impartiality	Mr Antonio is currently a Fire Control Officer.
		Robert Herzer	Impartiality	Mr Herzer is a Fire Control Officer being nominated in item 6.4.

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

5.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM THE BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 14 NOVEMBER 2023

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mr R Herzer
Seconded: Ms C Millar

That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 14 November 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting.

LOST 0/9

For: Nil.

Against: Mr C Marris, Cr A J Mencshelyi, Cr M I Girak, Ms C Millar, Mr A Smith, Mr B Wilding, Mr P Antonio, Mr R Herzer and Mr S Nielsen.

Two members of the gallery, Mr D Hasson and Mr C Hudson, entered the meeting at 5:37pm.

ALTERNATIVE MOTION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.319

Moved: Mr C Marris
Seconded: Mr A Smith

That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 14 November 2023 be brought back to the next Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting.

CARRIED 9/0

Reason for change to the Officer's Recommendation

The committee formed the view that the minutes from the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 14 November 2023 could not be confirmed as the amended version of the minutes had not been redistributed to the committee.

For: Mr C Marris, Cr A J Mencshelyi, Cr M I Girak, Ms C Millar, Mr A Smith, Mr B Wilding, Mr P Antonio, Mr R Herzer and Mr S Nielsen.

Against: Nil.

6 OFFICER REPORTS

6.1 Community Emergency Services Manager Report

File Reference:	5.1.3.1
Reporting Officer:	Alex Espey (Community Emergency Services Manager)
Responsible Officer:	Chadd Hunt (Executive Manager Development Services)
Officer Declaration of Interest:	Nil
Voting Requirement:	Simple Majority
Press release to be issued:	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](#).

Risk Category	Description	Rating (likelihood x consequence)	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

B.7 Natural Environment Considerations

Nil

C. OFFICER'S COMMENT

Fire Danger Rating Signs

To provide community clarity following some confusion and after consulting with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Rural Fire Division it is the officers recommendation that, until otherwise advised, the Digital and Analogue Fire Danger Rating (FDR) signs will display the rating published on the publicly available media such as [Emergencywa.gov.au](https://www.emergencywa.gov.au)

In the case of the Shire of Northam this remains the "Avon Fire Weather District".

Whilst staff support the notion of utilising sub weather fire districts within the FDR signs as this gives a more accurate local weather description, until this

system is changed with the main publicly available information, staff believe the current situation should remain.

HVMB/TFB Breach Online Reporting

An instrument has been implemented allowing personnel to report activities in breach of an imposed Harvest, Vehicle, Movement and Hot Works Ban.

On submission it will automatically advise a suite of personnel who will respond to the alert. It will also be logged against a property forming an ongoing history and provide the person submitting an opportunity to be provided with feedback in relation to the submission.

The form can be located at the below QR code.



Adjustments to Prohibited and Restricted Burning Periods

The Shire of Northam reminds the committee that any change to the Restricted Burning Periods or Prohibited Burning Periods requires the joint approval of the Shire of Northam President and the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer as outlined in the Shire of Northam's Delegated Authority Register.

RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.320

Moved: Mr B Wilding

Seconded: Mr A Smith

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee endorse the following recommendations being presented to Council:

- 1. That Council note the Community Emergency Services Manager Report**
- 2. That Council note the Shire of Northam Fire Danger Rating signs will continue to display the rating of the Avon Fire Weather District**

CARRIED 9/0

For: Mr C Marris, Cr A J Mencshelyi, Cr M I Girak, Ms C Millar, Mr A Smith, Mr B Wilding, Mr P Antonio, Mr R Herzer and Mr S Nielsen.

Against: Nil.

Discussion:

The Community Emergency Services Manager, Mr A Espey, spoke towards the provided report.

Discussion was held surrounding the information that should be publicly provided on the fire danger rating signs and the reasons for this remaining the "Avon Fire Weather District".

The Community Emergency Services Manager also spoke towards the implementation of a QR Code linked to a submission form that will allow personnel to report any breach of an imposed Harvest, Vehicle, Movement and Hot Works Ban.

6.2 Bush Fire Risk Mitigation Coordinator Report

File Reference:	5.1.3.1
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Bishop (Bush Fire Risk Management Coordinator)
Responsible Officer:	Chadd Hunt (Executive Manager Development Services)
Officer Declaration of Interest:	Nil.
Voting Requirement:	Simple Majority
Press release to be issued:	No

BRIEF

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

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

The Bush Fire Risk Management 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 (MAF).

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 being undertaken with funding from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services Mitigation Activity Funding (MAF).

B.3 Legislative Compliance

Nil.

B.4 Policy Implications

N/A

B.5 Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation

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

B.6 Risk Implications

Refer to Risk Matrix [here](#).

Risk Category	Description	Rating (likelihood x consequence)	Mitigation Action
Financial	Value of works exceed funding	Insignificant (1) x Unlikely (2) = Low (2)	Contractor works are to be managed to ensure minimal variations
Health & Safety	N/A		
Reputation	N/A		
Service Interruption	N/A		
Compliance	N/A		
Property	Damage to adjoining private properties by contractor	Medium (3) x Possible(3) = Moderate (9)	Contractors are required to demonstrate experience in working in similar work as part of tender assessment process. Monitoring of work by staff.
Environment	Damage to natural environment by inappropriate treatments/methodology	Medium (3) x Possible(3) = Moderate (9)	All works are approved by staff after reviewing environmental factors. Contractors are required to conform with works specification in the contract.

B.7 Natural Environment Considerations

Approved works have considered impact on the natural environment as part of the approved works when applying for the funding round.

C. OFFICER'S COMMENT

The Shire of Northam's MAF 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 treatments 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.

Listed below are the treatment types and locations. The highlighted works have been completed.

Treatment ID	Treatment Type	Treatment Objective	Primary Asset Name
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.	Clarke 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	Benrura 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 adjoining 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.321

Moved: Cr A J Mencshelyi

Seconded: Ms C Millar

That the Committee notes the Bushfire Risk Mitigation Coordinator Report as provided.

CARRIED 9/0

For: Mr C Marris, Cr A J Mencshelyi, Cr M I Girak, Ms C Millar, Mr A Smith, Mr B Wilding, Mr P Antonio, Mr R Herzer and Mr S Nielsen.

Against: Nil.

Discussion:

The Bush Fire Risk Mitigation Coordinator, Ms S Bishop, spoke towards to provided report.

Discussion was held regarding the current mitigation funding programs being yearly and an upcoming Department of Fire & Emergency Services trail for a 3 year funding program, noting potential benefits and risks of this program.

6.3 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Report

File Reference:	5.1.3.1
Reporting Officer:	Chris Marris (Chief Bush Fire Control Officer)
Responsible Officer:	Chadd Hunt (Executive Manager Development Services)
Officer Declaration of Interest:	Nil
Voting Requirement:	Simple Majority
Press release to be issued:	No

BRIEF

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. BFAC CBFCO Report March 2024 [**6.3.1** - 3 pages]

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](#).

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

B.7 Natural Environment Considerations

Nil.

C. OFFICER'S COMMENT

Nil.

RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.322

Moved: Mr P Antonio

Seconded: Mr R Herzer

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

CARRIED 9/0

For: Mr C Marris, Cr A J Mencshelyi, Cr M I Girak, Ms C Millar, Mr A Smith, Mr B Wilding, Mr P Antonio, Mr R Herzer and Mr S Nielsen.

Against: Nil.

Discussion:

The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Mr C Marris, spoke to the provided report.

A verbal updated was provided on outcomes from the District Operations Advisory Committee (DOAC) meeting that took place on 12 March 2024, including information around Shire of Northam requested agenda items; truck pumps cutting off at low fuel, telecommunication outages during power outages and the inconsistencies regarding information available for the fire danger ratings.

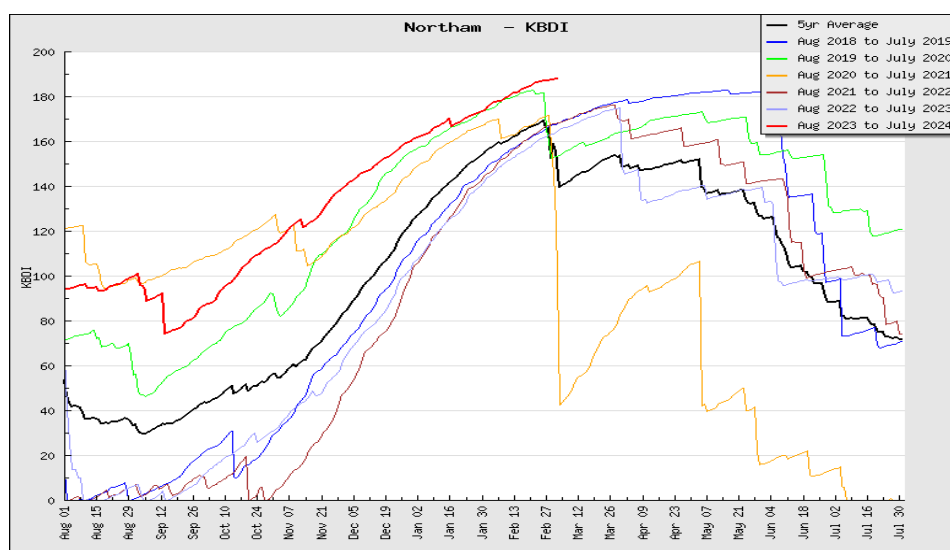
Further discussion was held by the committee regarding the issues surrounding the truck pumps cutting off and telecommunication outages during power cuts.

A question was asked in relation to what contingencies are in place regarding the WA Emergency Radio Network tower to ensure it works during power outages, i.e. generators. The Community Emergency Services Manager took this question on notice.

March 2024 CBFCO Report

The 2023/24 fire season has been a season of contrasts, with the first half being extremely busy and the back half being more settled (to date). This has been despite a continuing dry period through to February and some consistently high temperatures.

Considering this, the BFCOs recommended delaying the restricted burning period from 1 March to 15 March. As we head into the restricted period, extreme caution will still be required in areas adjoining bushland. The below gives an indication of the underlying dryness within Northam:



(retrieved 03/03/2024)

Work has been occurring behind the scenes to try to ensure that fuel loads in the State Fuel Editor, which drives localised fire behaviour index (FBIs) and fire danger ratings (FDRs) reflects conditions on the ground. It is disappointing to see, two years in, that the system and technology behind the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) are still not adjusting fuel loads as the season progresses, with it seemingly assuming that grassland fuel loads remain relatively static from December through to March in contrast to reality.

The Northam District Operations Advisory Committee (DOAC) is due to meet on 12 March 2024, with DCBFC1 Kris Brown scheduled to attend. The Shire of Northam has requested the following items to be added to the agenda:

- Pump cut off at low fuel
- Telecommunication outages during power cuts
- Total fire bans, FDRs and permit suspensions – inconsistency as to whether fire weather district (FWD) or local government district are used and the confusion this may create.

A verbal update on the outcome of the discussions will be provided at this BFAC meeting.

On 1 December 2023 DFES Wellness Branch did a formal visit to the Grass Valley BFB station, following the brigade's attendance to a local fatality, the recent loss of a valued member and other local challenges. All members are reminded of the free, confidential support that is provided by DFES to them and their families, and are encouraged to make use of the support as required.

On 20 December 2023 Northam Central 3.4U was involved in a roll over on route to an incident in Toodyay. All five occupants were conveyed to Northam Hospital, but thankfully no major physical injuries occurred. I would like to acknowledge all those who came to Northam Central's assistance, both in the immediate aftermath and since then. Thank you also to Northam Central members who supported each other during this challenging time. While a new permanent appliance is being sourced, DFES has kindly made available to Northam Central a high season 2.4.

Following raising concerns via email on 30 November 2023 regarding pumps on some appliances stopping without warning during incidents, a response was received from DFES on 21 December 2023. Despite it not being previously widely communicated, DFES confirmed that the pump on new appliances with an auxiliary diesel-powered pump will stop, without warning, when the appliance fuel level reaches $\frac{1}{4}$ with no ability to override. On that basis, the following was sent to all Captains also on 21 December and again included here given the significant risks posed by this specification:

"Afternoon Captains

As you can see from the email trail below, late last month, I wrote to Alex expressing my concern at reports of Shire of Northam appliances (those which are relatively new) having their pumps stop without warning, seemingly when their appliance fuel level reached approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of a tank (which is impacted depending on influences of the terrain). This came about from some of our extended-duration incidents in November.

My concern around this is that a) I do not believe this specification is widely known/communicated, and b) there is no ability to override this, nor warnings, and as such, the pump may stop during active firefighting activities putting the crew in immediate danger.

As you can see by the response received this morning, DFES has confirmed this is the specification apparently for all tankers with pumps driven by auxiliary diesel engines.

I welcome feedback on this specification by impacted Brigades, as I think there may be merit in pursuing this matter further (i.e. DOAC).

In the interim, for those affected appliances, I think it would be appropriate to:

- Ensure fuel levels between incidents remain at or above $\frac{3}{4}$ of a tank, and*
- During an incident, prioritise the refuelling of the appliance once the appliance reaches $\frac{1}{2}$ tank.*

Can I request that you please make all crew, and particularly those who are appliance drivers, aware of this if your Brigade has one of the affected appliances.

Regards
Chris"

As noted already, this item is planned to be raised at the next DOAC. It also underpins the need to have diesel available on the fireground during extended duration incidents.

On 6 December 2023, I participated in a Local Emergency Management Committee scenario workshop on an ammonium nitrate incident within the Shire of Northam. This was a multi-agency scenario exploring, in particular, the evacuation aspects of such an incident. Again, this highlights the need for bush fire brigades to have access to a training course like "Hazmat and Hazard Identification and Initial Actions for BFB's" like discussed in my last CBFCO report.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge those who put their hand up to be involved in one of the three recently established BFAC working groups. Thank you also to Brigades, BFCOs and others who have contributed feedback to these working groups. The three working groups include:

- Rules and Regulations Working Group
- R2R Working Group
- Bush Fire Manual Training Working Group

The Bush Fire Manual Training Working Group will operate over 18 months to coincide with the implementation period of the new training requirements of the Bush Fire Manual adopted by the Council in December 2023.

The other two of these working groups had short durations, aimed at providing a report to this BFAC. However, considering the significant body of work and the magnitude of recommendations emanating from these two working groups, it was felt that their report and recommendations would be better considered at a special meeting of BFAC to occur in April. This would also enable additional communication and consultation within Brigades to occur.

Regards

Chris Marris

Mr A Smith declared an “Impartiality” interest in item 6.4 Fire Control Officer Nominations, as Mr Smith is a current Fire Control Officer.

Mr B Wilding declared an “Impartiality” interest in item 6.4 Fire Control Officer Nominations, as Mr Wilding is the voting member for Clackline Bush Fire Brigade and is currently a Fire Control Officer.

Mr C Marris declared an “Impartiality” interest in item 6.4 Fire Control Officer Nominations, as Mr Marris is nominated as one of the Bush Fire Control Officers.

Mr P Antonio declared an “Impartiality” interest in item 6.4 Fire Control Officer Nominations, as Mr Antonio is currently a Fire Control Officer.

Mr R Herzer declared an “Impartiality” interest in item 6.4 Fire Control Officer Nominations, as Mr Herzer is a Fire Control Officer being nominated in item 6.4.

6.4 Fire Control Officer Nominations

File Reference:	5.1.3.1
Reporting Officer:	Alex Espey
Responsible Officer:	Chadd Hunt (Executive Manager Development Services)
Officer Declaration of Interest:	Nil
Voting Requirement:	Simple Majority
Press release to be issued:	No

BRIEF

For the committee to recommend to Council the appointment of Bushfire Control Officers (BFCO) for the 2-year term for the 2024/2025 and 2025/26 fire seasons.

ATTACHMENTS

1. CRITERIA [6.4.1 - 1 page]

A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

Council resolved in its Ordinary Council Meeting held 20 December 2023 to adopt the revised versions of Part 4, and Part 5 of the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Manual to replace the previously adopted 2018 versions.

Council also approved 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 position to meet any training gaps while continuing to fill those roles. This includes those current FCO's not meeting the prescribed criteria for appointment as a Fire Control Officer. This relates primarily to one course being Sector Commander.

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

Section 38 (1) Bush Fire Act 1954 which states as follows: 38. Local government may appoint Bush fire control officer (1) A local government may from time to time appoint such persons as it thinks necessary to be its Bush fire control officers under and for the purposes of this Act, and of those officers shall subject to section 38A(2) appoint 2 as the Chief Bush fire Control Officer and the Deputy Chief Bush fire Control Officer who shall be first and second in seniority of those officers, and subject thereto may determine the respective seniority of the other Bush fire control officers appointed by it.

B.4 Policy Implications

The Shire of Northam Bush Fire Manual Part 5 reviewed 20 December 2023 and subsequently endorsed (Resolution C.4909) outlines all components of Fire Control Officer nomination, endorsement, appointment and criteria.

Section 5.5C states 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.

Section 4.4G has subsequently been reviewed, adjusted and adopted by council indicating that Fire Control Officers will now sit a term of 2 years.

B.5 Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation

Shire of Northam Bush Fire Brigades
The Department of Fire and Emergency Services

B.6

Refer to Risk Matrix [here](#).

Risk Category	Description	Rating (likelihood x consequence)	Mitigation Action
Financial	N/A	N/A	N/A
Health & Safety	Appointing volunteers that do not meet the minimum training standards as identified in the Bushfire Service Training Program may result in significant health and safety issues for volunteers and the general public.	Likely (4) x Major (4) = High (16)	Officers recommend Council to appoint members who meet the minimum level of training qualifications as defined by the Bushfire Manual recognising the 18 month training requirement.
Reputation	BFCO's do not have the ability run incidents resulting in a loss of confidence by the public, community expectations for a critical emergency service not being met.	Likely (4) x Medium (3) = High (12)	Same as above.
Service Interruption	Inability to provide essential service at local level without external support.	Minor (2) x Likely (4) = Moderate (8)	Same as above.
Compliance	BFCO do not hold the required level of competency based training as identified in the Bushfire Service Training Program.	Major (4) x Likely (4) = High (16)	Same as above.
Property	Significant risk to property could arise without having skilled and experienced BFCO's in controlling incidents.	Possible (3) x Major (4) = High (12)	Same as above.

Environment	Significant risk to property could arise without having skilled and experienced BFCO's in controlling incidents	Possible (3) x Major (4) = High (12)	Same as above.
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B.7 Natural Environment Considerations

NIL

C. OFFICER'S COMMENT

The Shire of Northam Bushfire Brigades have submitted the following nominations for individuals who have met the prescribed prerequisites for appointment as a Fire Control Officer.

Noting Fire Control Officers will now hold a term of two years.

Bakers Hill

Simon Peters
Tristan Davey
Kristafer Brown

Clackline/Muresk

Blair Wilding
Justin Fox
Matthew Letch

Grass Valley

Christopher Marris
Paul Reynolds
Phillip Lloyd

Inkpen

Nic Dewar

Irishtown

Robert Herzer

Jennapullen

Aaron Smith

Northam Central

Nil

Northam VFRS

Gregory Montgomery

Southern Brook

Paul Antonio

Wundowie

Matthew MacQueen

RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.323

Moved: Ms C Millar

Seconded: Mr S Neilsen

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

1. That Council appoints the following individuals as Bush Fire Control Officers for the Shire of Northam for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 Bush Fire Seasons:

- a. Simon Peters**
- b. Tristan Davey**
- c. Kristafer Brown**
- d. Blair Wilding**
- e. Justin Fox**
- f. Matthew Letch**
- g. Christopher Marris**
- h. Paul Reynolds**
- i. Phillip Lloyd**
- j. Nic Dewar**
- k. Robert Herzer**
- l. Aaron Smith**
- m. Gregory Montgomery**
- n. Paul Antonio**
- o. Matthew MacQueen**

CARRIED 9/0

For: Mr C Marris, Cr A J Mencshelyi, Cr M I Girak, Ms C Millar, Mr A Smith, Mr B Wilding, Mr P Antonio, Mr R Herzer and Mr S Nielsen.

Against: Nil.

RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.324

Moved: Cr M I Girak
Seconded: Mr B Wilding

That the Committee notes the approval on 20 December 2023 for persons not meeting the prescribed criteria to have 18 months to meet any training gaps while continuing to fulfill these roles per Council decision C.4909.

CARRIED 9/0

For: Mr C Marris, Cr A J Mencshelyi, Cr M I Girak, Ms C Millar, Mr A Smith, Mr B Wilding, Mr P Antonio, Mr R Herzer and Mr S Nielsen.

Against: Nil.

Discussion:

It was noted that there will be an additional nomination of Bushfire Control Officer from Irishtown to be considered at the next Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting.

Nominee	Fire Control Officer	Minimum 3 years experience	Bushfire Safety Awareness	Firefighting Skills	Advanced Bushfire	Crew Leader	Sector Commander
Simon Peters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tristan Davey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kristafer Brown	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blair Wilding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Justin Fox	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Christopher Marris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Phillip Lloyd	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paul Reynolds	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nic Dewar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gregory Montgomery	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Matthew MacQueen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Robert Herzer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paul Antonio	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Matthew Letch	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aaron Smith	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

6.5 Bush Fire Advisory Committee Nominations

File Reference:	5.1.3.1
Reporting Officer:	Alex Espey (Community Emergency Services Manager)
Responsible Officer:	Chadd Hunt (Executive Manager Development Services)
Officer Declaration of Interest:	Nil
Voting Requirement:	Simple Majority
Press release to be issued:	No

BRIEF

For the committee to recommend to Council the appointment of the nominated BFAC representatives listed below for the 2024/2025 Fire Season.

ATTACHMENTS

1. D S- T R-01 Bushfire Advisory Committee Terms of Reference 2023 - 2025 V 1 (002) [**6.5.1** - 5 pages]

A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

This report provides the details of the nominated individuals from each brigade, and where applicable a proxy nominee.

Bakers Hill Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade have advised they will submit their nominees at a later date.

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

The Terms of Reference for the BFAC states the following -

7. Tenure of Membership

Shall be in accordance with the Local Government Act 1995, section 5.11.

The Local Government Act 1995 states the following at Clause 5.11 -

- (2) Where a person is appointed as a member of a committee other than under section 5.10(4) or (5), the person's membership of the committee continues until —
- (a) the term of the person's appointment as a committee member expires; or
 - (b) the local government removes the person from the office of committee member or the office of committee member otherwise becomes vacant; or
 - (c) the committee is disbanded; or
 - (d) the next ordinary elections day,
- whichever happens first.

B.4 Policy Implications

The recently adopted Section of the Bushfire Manual (4.2E) requires a Senior Brigade member to be nominated to BFAC at the AGM of the Brigade. An additional brigade member is also to be nominated as a proxy.

B.5 Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation

Nil

B.6 Risk Implications

Refer to Risk Matrix [here](#).

Risk Category	Description	Rating (likelihood x consequence)	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

B.7 Natural Environment Considerations

Nil

C. OFFICER'S COMMENT

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) maintains a membership composition of one senior member per brigade with a proxy.
All nominated meet the prescribed criteria of senior membership.

The two DFES Nominees hold the rank of District Officer and represent the Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, and the Wundowie Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service.

Attachment 1 constitutes the brigade nominations for the 24/25 Financial year.

RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.325

Moved: Mr A Smith

Seconded: Mr P Antonio

That the Committee appoint the following Brigade members as delegate and proxy representatives for the Bush Fire Advisory Committee for the remaining 2023/24 and 2024/25 Bush Fire Seasons:

PRIMARY	PROXY	BRIGADE
1. Jamie Wilkinson	Glenn Hancock	Northam Central Bush Fire Brigade
2. Paul Antonio	John Denhollender	Southern Brook Bush Fire Brigade
3. Blair Wilding	Joe Marasco	Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
4. Nic Dewar	Dan Wilson	Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade
5. Bruce Devereaux	Garry Shepherdson	Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade
6. Matthew MacQueen	TBA	Wundowie Bush Fire Brigade
7. Robert Herzer	Digby Hasson	Irishtown Bush Fire Brigade
8. Aaron Smith	TBA	Jennapullin Bush Fire Brigade
9. TBA	TBA	Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigade
10. Sydney Davies	Phillip Hay	Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)

CARRIED 9/0

For: Mr C Marris, Cr A J Mencshelyi, Cr M I Girak, Ms C Millar, Mr A Smith, Mr B Wilding, Mr P Antonio, Mr R Herzer and Mr S Nielsen.

Against: Nil.

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 Department of Fire and Emergency Service
Northam District Officer

3.2 Non-voting

- Shire of Northam Community Emergency Services Manager
- One representative from Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service; and
- One representative from Wundowie Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service and;
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions representative.

4. Meetings

The committee shall meet at least three times annually.

Additional meetings shall be convened at the discretion of the chairperson.

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; and
- Develop and recommend to Council appropriate processes for bush fires.

7. Tenure of Membership

Shall be in accordance with the Local Government Act 1995, section 5.11.

8. Authority

Bushfires Act 1954, 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 Chairperson

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 may provide a brigade report to the meeting.

9.10 Working Groups

Bush Fire Advisory Committee Terms of Reference 2023 - 2025

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.

7 MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

Nil.

8 URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY DECISION

Nil.

9 GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade:

The Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade noted thier gratitude in relation to the extensions to the fire shed, especially for the fact that the generator is no longer located inside the shed. The trucks are now in the shed and the brigade have commenced operating out of it.

2. Voting for Bush Fire Advisory Committee Members:

Discussion was held to seek clarification on the term for representation on the Bush Fire Advisory Committee. It was noted that the terms are in alignment with the Local Government election cycle as all Committees of Council end when a Local Government election is held and need to be reinstated by Council, in accordance with the Local Government Act. Nominations within the Brigades for their representatives to the Bushfire Advisory Committee will stand, however it is recommended that the Brigade representatives should be reconfirmed at the first Bushfire Advisory Committee meeting following the Local Government elections.

3. Fire Station Vegetation Requirements:

Discussion was held regarding concerns that the fire stations are not meeting our own requirements in relation to the Building Protection Zone. It was noted that the requirements are mainly in relation to the management of vegetation and not the removal, however through the Bush Fire Regulations it does allow retrospective clearing of up to 20 meters.

4. Working Groups:

Discussion was held in relation to the feedback provided through the working groups, it was noted that the feedback received was significant and would need additional consideration.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Upcoming meetings:

- 28 May 2024 at 5:30 pm
- 08 October 2024 at 5:30 pm

11 DECLARATION OF CLOSURE

There being no further business, the Presiding Member, Mr C Marris, declared the meeting closed at 6:17 pm.

"I certify that the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 26 March 2024 have been confirmed as a true and correct record."

 Presiding Member

4/6/2024 Date