



Shire of Northam
Heritage, Commerce and Lifestyle

Shire of Northam

Minutes

Bush Fire Advisory Committee

5 October 2021

UNCONFIRMED

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1. DECLARATION OF OPENING

The Presiding Member, Cr T M Little declared the meeting open at 5:35pm.

Mr Chris Marris entered the meeting at 5:35pm.

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

The Presiding Member, Cr T M Little acknowledged 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
Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade
Clackline Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigade
Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade
Irishtown Bush Fire Brigade
Southern Brook Bush Fire Brigade
Northam Central Bush Fire Brigade
Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service

Terry Little
Chris Marris
Nic Dewar
Blair Wilding
Kris Brown
Angus Cooke
Terry Hasson
Paul Antonio at 5:56pm
Luke Hagan
Greg Montgomery

Staff:

Chief Executive Officer
Executive Manager Development Services
Executive Assistant - CEO

Jason Whiteaker
Chadd Hunt
Alysha McCall

3.1 APOLOGIES

Community Emergency Service Manager
Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer

Brendon Rutter
Neil Diamond

Gallery

Clackline Muresk Bushfire Brigade

Volunteer Bushfire Association
Bakers Hill Bushfire Brigade

Joe Marasco
Bob Stockman
Alex Espey
Ulo Rumjantsev
Patricia Rumjantsev

Bryan Petersen

3.2 APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil.

3.3 ABSENT

Voting Committee:

Councillor – Shire of Northam

Carl Della

Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer

Simon Peters

Jennapullin Bush Fire Brigade

Aaron Smith

Wundowie Bush Fire Brigade

Mathew Macqueen

Wundowie Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service

Jeffrey Roberts

Non Voting

District Officer Northam

Darrel Krammer

Department of Parks and Wildlife (Wheatbelt)

Graeme Keals

Department of Parks and Wildlife (Perth Hills)

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 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 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Appointment of Chief Bushfire Control Officer, Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer and Senior Bushfire Control Officer | 6.3 | Mr Chris Marris | Financial | Mr Marris is the current as well as nominated CBFCO which is paid an honorarium. This would be impacted if not renominated for the role. |
| Management Of Bush Fire Brigades | 7.3 | Mr Chris Marris | Financial | If BFB's shifted to be under DFES control it may impact on the position of CBFCO which Mr Marris currently holds. This position is paid an honorarium. |

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

5.1 COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2021

RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.252

Moved: Mr Kris Brown

Seconded: Mr Greg Montgomery

That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory meeting held on 15 June 2021 be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting.

CARRIED 9/0

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr Paul Antonio entered the meeting at 5:56pm.

6.1 DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| File Reference: | 5.1.3.1 |
| Reporting Officer: | Brendon Rutter, Community Emergency Services Manager & Chadd Hunt, Executive Manager Development Services |
| Responsible Officer: | Jason Whiteaker, Chief Executive Officer |
| 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 and Executive Manager Development Services.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Open BFAC Decisions.
Attachment 2: Drive Operate Appliance Process.
Attachment 3: Membership Skills Refresher.
Attachment 4: DFES General Circular No: 157/2021.

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 | Additional safety measures will have some impact on Council resources | High Risk Medium(3) x Likely (4) | Ensure necessary financial capacity in the LGGS and/or Council Budget |
| Health & Safety | Significant risk to volunteers regarding ongoing health and safety issues | High Risk High (4)x Possible (3) | Ensure a documented and clear process is undertaken for mitigating most of the major health and safety risk |
| Reputation | Significant risk to reputation if serious incident was to occur | Moderate Risk Medium (3) x Possible (3) | Ensure processes are clear and are documented |
| Service Interruption | Limited potential for service interruption | Moderate Risk Medium (3) x Unlikely (2) | Undertake necessary training and development as required |
| Compliance | Risk of not complying with current and proposed legislation | Moderate Risk Medium (3)x Possible (3) | Ensure risks are documented and processes put in place to address |
| Property | Significant risk to property if required training and experience is not developed | Moderate Risk Medium (3) x Possible (3) | Undertake necessary training and development |
| Environment | Moderate risk to environment if training and experience is not developed | High Risk High (4)x Possible (3) | Undertake training and development as required |

C. OFFICER'S COMMENT

The 2021/22 season is fast approaching and there are some challenges that we will all face as we approach the season, with some significant reform coming into effect in January with the implementation of the Work Health Safety Regulations as part of the Work Health & Safety Act 2020.

1. OHS Issues

Staff recently received a presentation from the WA Local Govt. Association (WALGA) and the Local Government Insurer LGIS as well as other stakeholders including DFES.

The Webinar provided important information relating to the pending WHS Act and the impact this will have on volunteers.

The webinar is available to the public, the link to the recording is provided below.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uL9griYH1uA&feature=youtu.be&ab_c_hannel=WALGA

Staff encourage all volunteers to watch the webinar to inform themselves of some of these changes and how these changes will affect how operations will evolve in the very near future.

In order to deal with the number of issues that have arisen it is proposed that a workshop be undertaken with the aim of identifying the relevant issues and areas of concern and providing input to allow Shire of Northam staff to develop actions to ensure compliance and more importantly a safe working environment for our volunteers.

According to LGIS (the Shire of Northam's Insurer and Risk assessor) Key elements of the WHS Act for local governments to be aware of include:

- The new term 'Person conducting a business or undertaking' or PCBU expands the old concept of 'employer'. It's a broad term used to describe all forms of modern working arrangements, which we commonly refer to as business.
- A person who works for a PCBU is considered a worker. The definition of a worker has been expanded and now covers and includes all forms of paid and unpaid work, including volunteers and bushfire volunteers.
- PCBU responsibilities include: providing a safe place of work, providing for safe systems of work; provide Information, instruction, training and supervision on how to deal with hazards; monitoring the health and safety of workers; and provide for the safe use of plant, substances and structures.

As the PCBU, the Shire of Northam ultimately needs to satisfy itself that adequate measures have been put in place to ensure volunteers are afforded the same level of safe working environment and necessary training as full time employees. However rather than simply determine this, the view is that consultation with our volunteers potentially impacted by the proposed changes is critical.

The issues to be covered include –

1.1 Pre-Season Core Skills Assessment

To ensure that there is documented evidence of members being able to demonstrate basic core skills the suggestion is that a pre season core skills assessment process be implemented.

Attached is a draft example of the assessment that can be adapted/modified to meet our specific needs (this is based on a similar assessment that is undertaken in another adjoining local authority).

Given the timeframes involved with the current season it is proposed that this be progressively implemented following the workshop mentioned above.

1.2 Hazard Reduction Burning

There has been recent concerns raised with regards to the process of conducting prescribed burning, both by private contractors and at Brigade level.

There has been some suggested training that could assist with mitigating the risk of Brigades undertaking prescribed burning. In addition the workshop can focus on practical solutions to the issues raised.

The formal training courses that have been identified are Assist with Planned Burning, Fire Weather 1 and Basic Prescribed Burning.

1 - Assist with Planned Burning

A competent result in this course would enable eligible volunteers to participate in hazard reduction burns under the guidance of a burn controller.

2- Fire Weather 1 – This is part of a pathway designed to develop volunteers into qualified burn controllers for basic prescribed burns within their local communities.

Fire Weather 1 provides the basic knowledge required to enable a volunteer to comprehensively understand and interpret weather forecast information which is vital when writing the basic burn prescriptions, without this foundation skill it would be difficult for a burn prescription to be developed without the required information.

3- Basic Prescribed Burning – This training product is the last step in developing burn controllers to provide them the skills to write a basic prescribed burn plan which aligns to the requirements of ISO31000:2009 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines. This is to ensure compliance with SOP3.5.17 – Prescribed Burning.

Again given the timeframes involved with the coming season and the need to balance the community safety versus insurance/legislative requirements it is also proposed that this be implemented progressively.

1.3 Driver Training

All Bushfire Appliances are designated as approved Emergency Vehicles in accordance with the requirements specified in the Road Traffic (Vehicles) Regulations 2014 and the Road Traffic Code 2000.

A requirement of this Emergency Vehicle Status (EVS) is for all drivers undertaking in emergency driving (lights & Sirens) are required to have completed formal training on an approved driver training course. Emergency driving carries significant risks to both the organisation and the drivers themselves.

The legislation specifies that all drivers of appliances operating under emergency conditions should have completed a minimum training of level of PUAVEH001 – Drive under Operational Conditions achieving a level of competent.

Staff have approached the Department of Transport and confirmed DFES0470 – On-Road Driving is determined as an approved training course, as such any volunteers that have completed either of these courses are covered by the legislation.

In the past 2-3 years Staff have provided significant opportunities for volunteers to undertake the training which has been readily embraced by our members which has delivered formal training for a large portion of our appliance drivers, with a few courses still bring run into November 2021 to ensure further opportunities for more drivers to come online.

The next step in this process is ensuring that all qualified drivers are then endorsed on each appliance type on station via the Drive Operate Appliance (DOA) process.

This process ensures that all drivers have the capabilities to safely and effectively operate the brigade appliance both on and off the fire ground.

The aim is to work with appliance drivers over the next 12 months to ensure that our volunteers are provided the best protections to allow them to complete the task of supporting our communities.

1.4 HAZMAT Incidents

On the 16th May 2021, brigades were mobilised to a rubbish fire in Wundowie.

Upon arrival crews were actively involved in suppression of what was a small fire burning in benign conditions.

Upon the arrival of VFRS members it was ascertained that the fire was burning in an asbestos contaminated area, and the first arriving crew had been exposed to asbestos fibres without protection during their suppression activities.

The Wundowie VFRS members assumed control of the incident as this was now deemed a HAZMAT fire and carried out suppression as determined by requirements of the incident and relevant SOP's.

After suppression, the Wundowie VFRS members assisted the 2 BFB personnel with a formal decontamination procedure for the appliance, PPC, PPE and the clothing of the members in question.

After a safety investigation into this incident, it is recommended that the following options be discussed-

- 1- HAZMAT awareness training (informal) is being developed in consultation with DFES & the RFD to assist our members with the accurate identification of HAZMAT incidents, and what procedures are to be followed if members have been exposed.
- 2- Practical Drills - Staff in consultation with each brigades training officer will deliver an on-station drill outlining the process of appropriate decontamination of personnel and equipment that would be completed on site in accordance with the relevant SOP.
- 3- Additional Physical Resources - In addition to the above practical training sessions, all appliances will be provided with the following items;

- i) Large clear bags for appropriate isolation of contaminated PPC, and contaminated hazard labels to affix to the bag.
 - ii) Large heavy-duty storage tubs, with lids will be delivered to each station to allow contaminated PPC to be sent away for specialist Industrial decontamination by a DFES approved contractor that is experienced in HAZMAT de-con procedures.
 - iii) Staff are investigating the practicality of supplying decontamination kits to all support vehicles to ensure that onsite de-con can occur within short timeframes to reduce the length of exposure, in the event a volunteer has been exposed to a hazardous substance.
- 4- As much as practicable, volunteers need to remain downwind and out of all smoke as a rule of thumb. It is paramount that all volunteers who attend an incident such as a rubbish fire that a P2 mask is worn as a minimum, although ideally a full-face respirator with the appropriate filters should be worn, to achieve a higher level of protection. Once an incident is determined to be a HAZMAT, all members should immediately remove themselves from the area, ascertain if de-contamination procedures are required to be followed, and report the contamination to Comcen for recording.
- 5- As discussed at a recent Operational Command Meeting it is proposed that the mobilisation matrix be modified to include the call out of the VFRS for all rubbish fires.

Staff will be in contact with brigade training officers to start locking in some dates for these suggested training sessions to be implemented as a priority.

1.5 PPC Hygiene

Given the increasing risk to exposure to harmful pathogens and unknown carcinogenic contaminants, PPC hygiene is becoming more important moving forward. To minimise the risk to our volunteers, their families and to align with the expectations of the community that ensures our volunteers are provided the best protections possible, all stations are being fitted with washing machines to facilitate regular washing of supplied PPC.

Additional to this a procedure is proposed to be established whereby as frequently as required, but ideally a min once per year, all PPC is sent off for professional laundering with a DFES approved contractor who is familiar with the laundering requirements of fire fighter PPC.

This is designed to not only extend the working life of the PPC but ensure that as much as reasonably practicable we are minimising the accumulative exposures to these unknown carcinogens on our volunteer personnel.

1.6 PPC Storage

Additional to the above PPC Hygiene measures, Staff are ensuring that each station is provided with PPC storage via lockers as advice is that it is no longer appropriate that contaminated PPC is taken off station and stored in private vehicles & homes. With all the research into the accumulative effects of smoke particulate exposure the days of taking PPC off station are rightfully behind us.

The requirement for PPC to remain on station is designed to reduce the risk/likelihood of potential carcinogenic compounds entering the vehicles & homes of all personnel, and therefore mitigating the risk that our families are being unknowingly exposed to these harmful compounds.

1.7 Station & Appliance Hygiene

As part of the Shire's ongoing commitment to providing a safe workplace for all volunteers, it is proposed that Staff, in consultation with Brigade Captains, will be undertaken initial inspections of all stations to ensure compliance with required health and safety standards.

Inspections will initially focus on facilities to bring each station up to the required standard, attention will then focus on the appliances to ensure they are compliant with manufacturer recommendations, and that equipment checks are being carried out appropriately. Again, it is expected that these improvement will be undertaken in a staged manner in consultation with the Brigades.

It is proposed that the results of each inspection will be published in future BFAC agendas as a record of continuous improvement in workplace safety.

1.8 Minimum Training Standards

A number of questions have been raised with respect to the required minimum training requirements for senior brigade members. This includes the motion passed at the last BFAC meeting. Given the complexities of the issues raised and the potential impacts that this has for the majority of our volunteers it is recommended that this be included in the proposed workshop.

2 General Updates - CESM

2.1 Appliance Audio/Visual recording (Dash Cams)

All appliances have received authorisation from DFES for the supply and installation of dash cameras as an added safety feature for our emergency services fleet, to complement the existing vehicle monitoring hardware and safety systems.

This roll-out is occurring across large areas of the state over the next few years in an effort to improve safety to our volunteer personnel but also provide irrefutable critical video intelligence information during a post incident review

2.2 Comprehensive Crew Protection Training

Through discussions at brigade level, it has become apparent that there is some confusion around correct procedures during the event of a burn over.

This confusion has been raised as a safety concern by some of our volunteers who do not feel confident that if they were to be caught in a burn-over situation that they could adequately follow the procedures that have been developed to provide the highest chance of survivability.

Part of fulfilling their duty of care obligations under the WHS Act 2020, Council must ensure wherever reasonably practicable that volunteers and staff are appropriately trained to conduct each activity or task safely and competently they are assigned, this means implementing pre-season drills, run at brigade training sessions specifically around the use and function of these critical life protection systems. This is to ensure that all volunteers are able to attend the incident ground, comfortable that they have received the best possible training that will assist them in the event of an incident we hope to never have occur.

It is requested that the annual pre-season CCP training drills are delivered by the brigade training coordinator, supported by the CESM or a qualified volunteer trainer assessor to sign off on each members assessment.

2.3 COVID-19

Attached to the agenda is General Circular No: 157/2021. This announcement is regarding the implementation of an infection prevention policy that has been endorsed by the WA Chief Health Officer.

To summarise, any volunteer who interacts on a DFES controlled fireground, including on operational deployments, will be required by

December 1st 2021 to have received their first vaccination for COVID-19.

Any volunteer or staff that are yet to receive their first dose by that date will be legally required to adhere to the requirements of the Infection Prevention Policy whilst on duty.

At this point in time the policy is with the representative organisations for comment before being released to the general population for implementation..

While at this stage the mandate will not affect BFS volunteers while at LG incidents, it is likely there will be further announcements in this space as the deadline approaches.

2.4 Training Calendar 2022/23

In order for the region to start planning Leadership Level training courses for next year, brigades are asked to supply staff with a required list of higher level courses for brigade members that want to develop into leadership roles.

The courses that the region will be targeting next year are the following:

- Leadership Fundamentals
- AIIMS2017
- IC Level 1
- Sector Commander
- Mental Health First Aid

Regional staff are trying to gauge how many personnel are at the above level and supported by the brigades so that planning can commence with appropriate number of courses and locations.

Additional locally run course occurrences for consideration are

- Operate Under Operational Conditions - 1 day - External Course
- Operate 4WD - 0.5 day - External Course
- First Aid (New version being released) – 1 Day External
- Advanced Bush & Crew Leader - 2 Day Course
- WAERN – Basic & Advanced - 0.5 day each
- Ground Controller – Half Day
- Machine Supervision – 1 Day
- Fire Weather 1 – 2 days
- Assist Planned Burning – 2 Day

Staff will be contacting Brigades with a request to provide identified personnel and courses required, and suggestions on timing of the training over the coming months.

Other brigade profile specific courses will continue to be programmed into the calendar to fulfil identified needs

2.5 Volunteer Trainer Assessors

Since 2019 the CESM Officer has been working with select volunteers who have expressed an interest in becoming a DFES Regional – Volunteer Trainer Assessor.

Staff have been working with a small cadre of pre identified volunteers to assist them through this process which has resulted in 2 volunteers receiving endorsement to attend a DFES Workplace Trainer Assessor course in October.

With an additional volunteer undertaking the DFES RCC - skills recognition process to facilitate up-skilling to further develop an existing skillset, this process commenced in 2020 by course delivery assistance, partnering up with experienced trainer assessors.

This year (2021) it is anticipated we will have 2 volunteer trainer assessors up & running and will be able to assist with the co-delivery of Bush Fire Safety Awareness & Fire Fighting Skills as the 2 foundation courses required prior to attending an active incident.

2.6 Flexible Training Delivery Options

As part of the extensive re-development of the foundation training courses, the Bush Fire Centre of Excellence has approved a pilot delivery model that is currently being trialled at Northam Central BFB for their new members.

This process relies on senior, experienced members or brigade training officer to deliver the course content in accordance with the approved lesson plan, at a flexible pace, on station, generally on a normal training night to maximise the benefit training provides, and reducing any negative impact to a volunteer members time as much as practicable.

Once the “trainer”, and the new member feel confident that the skillset has been learnt and the knowledge has been developed, an assessor (including volunteer Trainer Assessors) attends to complete any formal theory & practical assessments and signs off the volunteer if they determine a level of competency.

This process will drastically improve the volunteer on boarding, by allowing brigade volunteers the opportunity to deliver the course content, and impart their extensive knowledge to their newly signed brigade members, which starts that all important relationship building, and allows each new member to learn their new skillset on their brigade appliance, using brigade equipment, from the very people they will be working with.

At this stage this process is being run in the early stages only at Northam Central, to allow us to work with the volunteers to ensure that the delivery model works as expected, and ensures the process followed delivers the outcome of faster, local & more convenient training that promotes a flexible training option to get our volunteers prepared for the fire ground in a shorter timeframe.

The CESM Officer is working closely with the delivery team to ensure that any feedback about this delivery model is considered for future roll-out at all brigades. It is anticipated that all brigades will be able to offer this model to their new members by December 1st 2021.

2.7 Pre Season Training

Thermal Imaging Camera's

The DFES Commissioner made a recent announcement regarding the supply of FLIR K2 Thermal Imaging Camera's (TIC) to bushfire brigades. Camera's have been supplied for the primary appliance of brigades that didn't already have a TIC on their appliance.

These have been supplied with the appropriate cradle and battery charger and the installation will commence in the before the end of September.

All brigades that previously had TIC's, the same cradle and battery charger have been purchased and will have these fitted as part of this rollout.

There is training required for these TICS, which can be delivered pre season by the brigade training officer with the support of the CESM.

Vehicle Tablets

Staff have procured the supply of ruggedized 8" Samsung - android based tablets for all appliances. As soon as the lockable cradles arrive, these will be fitted to each appliance, with training delivered as part of our pre season training.

The appliances will have all standard apps that we use including but not limited to BART (additional features for appliance), GIS mapping, Communications plans, relevant SOP's and important navigation

software & weather forecast data. Each appliance will also have 4g sim capability meaning that information can be remotely pushed to each device for updated mapping, instant messaging etc.

2.8 ICT Upgrades – All stations

All stations PC's have recently been sent away for a half-life upgrade of hard drives and onboard memory. This has been completed to replace the existing mechanical storage drives with faster more efficient technology, to improve the PC's performance and extend their service life.

As part of this rollout each station is being fitted with a high resolution web camera that will connect their TV's and PC's to provide online meeting capabilities, with future scope to deliver more online based training as the courses are developed.

It is hoped that this technology roll-out will allow the current platform in how meetings are managed to evolve to be more inclusive, and less reliant on volunteer travel into a central location such as our current practice.

This could potentially mean that BFAC's, Operations Command Team meetings, etc can be held online, with volunteers only needing to travel to their station to dial in.

It also has the benefit of brigade specific meetings to be held online, to allow more members to dial or video in via each brigades MS Teams applications to allow further collaboration in our ever changing world.

COVID-19 has made significant change necessary in recent years to how we conduct business as usual so this is an important step in keeping capabilities available to our membership.

A 5 min training session will be done with members on station on how to use MS Teams, and the hardware on station.

2.9 Mobile Phone Repeater (CELFI) – Clackline Station

Due to a successful 2021/22 LGGS grant application Clackline has recently had a CELFI unit installed on station, as well as additional ICT equipment to improve WIFI data capabilities.

This has been done as a result of the station being in an extremely poor reception area, often meaning the volunteers on station were unable to make or receive a call once on station which is obviously less than ideal.

The installation of the unit has now addressed this issue with reception on station now drastically improved, providing a safer workplace for the volunteers.

2.10 NBN Installations

The past 18 months staff have been working with NBN Co & our provider TPG to have many of our facilities eligible for NBN fixed wireless. As a result of this ongoing work, the following stations now have NBN availability on station.

Inkpen BFB
Bakers Hill BFB
Clackline BFB
Northam Central BFB
Grass Valley BFB

Unfortunately Irishtown & Southern Brook are still utilising the 4G Broadband due to these areas being too far from a mobile tower at this point. Staff are continuing to work with our partners to provide a more reliable solution into the future.

2.11 Emergency Water Tanks

Council was successful in a funding application for 50kl water tanks to be supplied and installed at each station.

These tanks are harvesting the rain water from each station's roof, and will provide an additional emergency water supply in the event we have water failure during an incident as a result of pipeline failure.

All tanks are fitted with the following couplings, contained within a lockable cage to prevent vandalism.

64mm BIC
3" Camlock
4" Stortz

The Bushfire appliances should only use the BIC for gravity feed, or 3" Camlock for filling from a hard suction line. The 4" Stortz is designed for VFRS/CFRS appliances only as these appliances do not use camlock fittings at this point in time.

All appliances should have the required couplings on their appliances already, staff encourage all members to familiarise themselves with the new equipment and provide feedback via the CESM if an additional adapter is required to suit the brigade specific appliance.

Staff are currently working with the supplier to remedy a few identified issues with these tanks, and some of the hardware such as the cage

design, however the tanks are currently commissioned and available for emergency use only as required.

RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.253

Moved: Mr Kris Brown

Seconded: Mr Nic Dewar

That Council:

- 1. Receive the Community Emergency Services Manager / Executive Manager Development Services Report as provided.**
- 2. Requests the Chief Executive Officer to facilitate a specific workshop session with Brigade leadership teams, representatives from DFES and Local Government Insurance Services to assist in developing appropriate actions to address identified concerns emanating from the impending changes to the OHS legislation.**

CARRIED 10/0

Clarification was sought in relation to:

- The date of the workshop. The Chief Executive Officer advised that this will be held in the next 3-4 weeks.
- Concerns were raised around the consultation process and the position of the Shire in the agenda item relating to OSH. The Chief Executive Officer confirmed that this is a starting point for discussion purposes at the workshop.
- Whether the matters relating to OSH in the general section of the report (e.g. item 2.2) would be included in the workshop. The Chief Executive Officer confirmed that all items relating to the OSH legislation will be included in the workshop.
- Whether the Shire has a position on item 2.3 relating to COVID-19. The Chief Executive Officer advised that the Shire does not have a position and does not intend to develop a position around vaccinations at this point, unless it is a directive from the state government.
- It was raised that the sector commander training needs to be held on weeknights.
- It was raised that there are issues in relation to the emergency water tanks. Inkpen does not have any water in theirs and there is also an issue relating to the overflow.
- It was raised that the comment for item 3 in Council decision C.4100 is incorrect as there was no Operational Command meeting held in July and it was not included on the agenda for the August meeting.
- An update was requested in relation to a location for the Wundowie Bush Fire Brigade. The Executive Manager Development Services advised that

Officers are having discussions with the Brigade with respect to a temporary location at the Wundowie Shire Depot.

UNCONFIRMED



Attachment 1

| Date | Motion No | Item No | Subject | Motion | Action By | Comment |
|-----------|-----------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 16-Dec-20 | C.4100 | 11.3 | BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2020 | That Council: 1. Notes the Community Emergency Services Manager Report as provided. 2. Notes the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Report as provided. 3. Approve the matter of extending the leadership positions of Bush Fire Control Officers, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer to a two year term is included as part of the discussions at the next Bush Fires Manual workshop, is brought to the brigades for comment, and is then presented to the next Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting. | CESM | Update 15/09/2021 1. No Action Required. 2.No Action Required 3. no action to date, meeting being held in July with Operational Command team to discuss, further discussions with LGIS representative Update 15/09/2021 3. No outcome from Operational Command Meeting in July or no feedback received from the brigades as requested. |
| 21-Apr-21 | C.4186 | 12.1 | BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2021 | That Council authorise the Chief Executive Officer to explore the location of a suitable site for a bush fire brigade building within the district of Wundowie. | CESM | 8/06/2021- Sill awaiting outcome 7/07/2021 - Pending LGGS Grant application. Outcome expected in late July/ early August. 18/08/2021 - Still awaiting outcome of LGGS Grant application. Expected end of August. 15/09/2021 - Application unsuccessful, staff looking at other options. |
| 21-Jul-21 | C.4267 | 12.2 | BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2021 | That Council: 1. Note the Community Emergency Services Manager Report as provided and notes the revised process for the selection of the CBFCO, DCBFCO and Senior BFCO positions as outlined in this report. 2. Note the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Report as provided. 3. Appoints the following Fire Control Officers | CESM | 1. No action required. 2. No action required. 3. No action required. 4. No action required. To be included with Rates notice. 5. To be provided at the next BFAC meeting in September. |

for the 2021/22 Season in accordance with the criteria set in section 5 of the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Manual:

Wundowie BFB

Mathew Macqueen

Jason Cacic (approved for appointment subject to meeting minimum training requirements prior to the start of the 2021/22 season)

Wundowie VFRS

Jeffrey Roberts (approved for appointment subject to meeting minimum training requirements prior to the start of the 2021/22 season)

Inkpen BFB

Neil Diamond

Nic Dewar

Bakers Hill

Kris Brown

Simon Peters (approved for appointment subject to meeting minimum training requirements prior to the start of the 2021/22 season)

Tristan Davey

Clackline BFB

Blair Wilding (approved for appointment subject to meeting minimum training requirements prior to the start of the 2021/22 season)

Matthew Letch (approved for appointment subject to meeting minimum training

requirements prior to the start of the 2021/22 season)

Richard Welch (approved for appointment subject to meeting minimum training requirements prior to the start of the 2021/22 season)

Northam Central BFB

Luke Hagan (approved for appointment subject to meeting minimum training requirements prior to the start of the 2021/22 season)

Northam VFRS

Greg Montgomery

Irishtown BFB

Murray McGregor (approved for appointment subject to meeting minimum training requirements prior to the start of the 2021/22 season)

Rob Herzer

Southern Brook BFB

Paul Antonio (approved for appointment subject to meeting minimum training requirements prior to the start of the 2021/22 season)

Grass Valley BFB

Chris Marris

Phil Lloyd

Mark Littlefair (approved for appointment subject to meeting minimum training requirements prior to the start of the 2021/22 season)

Paul Reynolds (approved for appointment subject to meeting minimum training requirements prior to the start of the 2021/22 season)

4. Endorse the Shire of Northam Fire Break and Fuel load notice as provided in Attachment 1.

5. Review the training requirements for the BFB leadership group, as determined by the Bush Fire Service Training Program, and provide feedback to the brigades in relation to the following:

- What is Council's view and action if a member does not attain the recommended Training Qualifications?
- If Lieutenants/Captains do not attain the qualifications for the courses AIMS 2017 and Incident Controller Level 1 – what is Council's position and direction to the related Brigade?
- How does the Council view Captains who prefer to provide good management and leadership roles in preference to being an Incident Controller and are more likely to attend fires in the capacity of a Fire Fighter only?
- Whether the Council will consider prior experience as acceptable qualification to holding a Captain / Lieutenant role.

Attachment 2



Government of Western Australia
Department of Fire & Emergency Services



Drive Operate Appliance (DOA) Process

A DOA is required;

- for initial qualification on an appliance type, or
- when that appliance is superseded or has a cab/chassis variation.

The Student must meet the pre-requisites before commencing the DOA process.

The pre-requisites for the drive assessment are:

- Current Western Australian Driver's License considering any license conditions and restrictions, indicating qualification to drive the class of vehicle, and
- DFES0470 On-Road Driving; and
- DFES0017 Off-Road Driving (where appliance has off-road capabilities).

Assessments can be conducted by District Officers, Area Officers, Community Emergency Services Managers, Station Officers (in consultation with Senior Firefighters if required e.g. CLP) or a Brigade/Group/Unit operational officer, subject to them holding the DOA qualification for the appliance.

The DOA assessment process should only commence after an appropriate period of familiarisation training for both driving and operating an appliance.

For the Drive assessment, the Drive Appliance Familiarisation Form must be completed in full and submitted to the regional office for processing.

For the Operate assessment, the practical and verbal checklist found in the relevant Drive Operate Resource Manual (DORM) must be completed in full and submitted to the regional office for processing.

Drive Operate codes are attached to this document.

Drive Operate Resource Manuals (DORMS) are currently being updated to include the 'operate' practical assessment which will include verbal questions. A theory assessment will no longer be required for most appliances. If an assessment is not available, contact academy@dfes.wa.gov.au

| Light Appliance C (not greater than 4,500 kg GVM) / LR (up to 8,000 kg GVM) | Code |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Drive Light Tanker | DOA0001 |
| Operate Light Tanker | DOA0002 |
| Drive Rural Tanker 1.4 | DOA0003 |
| Operate Rural Tanker 1.4 | DOA0004 |
| Drive Vertical Rescue Vehicle | DOA0005 |
| Operate Vertical Rescue Vehicle | DOA0006 |
| Drive All Terrain Vehicle | DOA0007 |
| Medium Appliance MR (over 8,000 kg GVM) | Code |
| Drive Broadacre 2.4 | DOA0101 |
| Operate Broadacre 2.4 | DOA0102 |
| Drive Urban Tanker 2.4 | DOA0103 |
| Operate Urban Tanker 2.4 | DOA0104 |
| Drive Rural Tanker 2.4 | DOA0105 |
| Operate Rural Tanker 2.4 | DOA0106 |
| Drive Urban Tanker 3.4 | DOA0107 |
| Operate Urban Tanker 3.4 | DOA0108 |
| Drive Rural Tanker 4.4 | DOA0109 |
| Operate Rural Tanker 4.4 | DOA0110 |
| Drive Broadacre 4.4 | DOA0111 |
| Operate Broadacre 4.4 | DOA0112 |
| Drive Urban Pump Type 1 | DOA0113 |
| Operate Urban Pump Type 1 | DOA0114 |
| Drive Perth 1 st Pump – Special Qualification | DOA0115 |
| Drive Perth 2 nd Pump – Special Qualification | DOA0116 |
| Drive Urban Pump Type 2 (Country Pump) | DOA0117 |
| Operate Urban Pump Type 2 (Country Pump) | DOA0118 |
| Drive Urban Pump Type 3 (HSR) | DOA0119 |
| Operate Urban Pump Type 3 (HSR) | DOA0120 |
| Drive POD Carrier (Isuzu) | DOA0121 |
| Operate POD Carrier (Isuzu) | DOA0122 |
| Drive Specialised Mover | DOA0123 |
| Operate Specialised Mover | DOA0124 |
| Drive Road Crash Rescue Tender | DOA0125 |
| Operate Road Crash Rescue Tender | DOA0126 |

| Heavy Appliance HR (over 8,000 kg GVM with three or more axles) | Code |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Drive Combination Ladder Platform 3, 4, 5, 6 | DOA0201 |
| Operate Combination Ladder Platform 3, 4, 5, 6 | DOA0202 |
| Drive Specialised Equipment Tender | DOA0203 |
| Operate Specialised Equipment Tender | DOA0204 |
| Drive Incident Control Vehicle | DOA0205 |
| Operate Incident Control Vehicle | DOA0206 |
| Drive Bulk Water Tanker 12.2 | DOA0207 |
| Operate Bulk Water Tanker 12.2 | DOA0208 |
| Drive Combination Ladder Platform 2 | DOA0209 |
| Operate Combination Ladder Platform 2 | DOA0210 |
| Operate Special Equipment | Code |
| Operate Bulk Foam Concentrate Trailer | OSE0001 |
| Operate Portable Pump Waterous E604* | OSE0004 |
| Operate Portable Pump* and Trailer | OSE0005 |
| Operate Rescue Trailer | OSE0006 |
| Operate Collar Tank Trailer | OSE0007 |
| Operate Rapid Deployment Trailer | OSE0008 |

Attachment 3



TRAINING

Member Skills Refresher

Amendment List

| No. | Date | Details | BFAC Reference | By |
|-----|------|------------------|----------------|------|
| 1 | | Initial Adoption | | CESM |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Review -

Responsible Officer: CESM

Date For Review: + 5 years of adoption date

Purpose

To define the minimum standard of preseason preparation for firefighting Brigade members.

Context

The 'Member Skills Refresher' is referred to within this Directive as 'Refresher'.

There are two different Refreshers; one for Avon & Districts Support Brigade and one for each of the Primary Response Bush Fire Brigades.

Brigade members operate in a complex and high-risk environment, and to ensure that they are best prepared, individuals need to maintain minimum skills.

The Training Officers shall review and forward the Refreshers to the CESM prior to the 30th June each year. The CESM will ensure that each Refresher is compliant with current standards and will provide a copy to the relevant Brigades by the 31st July of each year.

The Refresher is a necessary step in meeting duty of care obligations to all volunteers by ensuring that any member on the fire ground maintain currency in the basic skills necessary to keep themselves and their crew safe.

Annual Skills Refresher to be completed prior to the 1st November of each year.

Where a member does not complete the Refresher by the due date, the Captain will require the consent of a local government, in writing, to enable the member to complete the Refresher.

Members who are unable to complete the Refresher by the due date will become 'inactive firefighting' members and are unable to attend an emergency incident. Participation in all other Normal Brigade Activities is permitted until the Refresher is completed.

The skills are to be demonstrated to the Brigade Captain, Training Officer or a Lieutenant who endorses the member.

The Brigade will maintain an accurate Brigade Membership list which must include each member's Refresher status. The list shall be forwarded to the local government by the end of the second week of November each year. If any amendments are made after the second week of November, the updated list will need to be forwarded to the local government within two weeks of the amendment.

A copy of the Refresher is to be retained by the Brigade for 7 Years in accordance with State Records Act 2000 and is to be presented upon request to the Shire.

A sample version of a Refresher is in Appendix A.



APPENDIX A



Member Skills Refresher 20 __ (Year)

Completion Due Date: 1st Nov Annually

Member Name: _____ Brigade: _____

Note: Members are to read and understand the following, then sign below prior to commencing the Member Skills Refresher.

1. The brigade Training Officer shall review and forward the refreshers to the Local Government prior to the 30th June each year. The CESM will ensure that each refresher is compliant with current standards and will provide a copy to the relevant Brigades by the 31st July of each year.
2. The Refresher is a compulsory requirement for all firefighting members to complete prior to the 1st November of each year.
3. Where a member does not complete the Refresher by the due date, the Captain will require the consent of the Local Government, in writing, to enable the member to complete the Refresher.
4. Members who are unable to complete the Refresher by the due date will become 'inactive firefighting' members and are unable to attend an emergency incident. Participation in all other Normal Brigade Activities is permitted until the Refresher is completed.
5. The skills are to be demonstrated to the Brigade Captain, Training Officer or a Lieutenant who endorses the member.
6. The Brigade will maintain an accurate Brigade Membership list which must include each member's Refresher status. The list shall be forwarded to the CESM by the end of the second week of November each year. If any amendments are made after the second week of November, the updated list will need to be forwarded to the CESM within two weeks of the amendment.
7. A copy of the Refresher is to be retained by the Brigade for 7 Years in accordance with State Records Act 2000 and is to be presented upon request to the Shire.

I have read and understand the above information: Signature: _____ Date: _____

| Fire Ground Safety Skills | Satisfactory | Comments |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| What is a Red Flag Warning? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Explain the term LACES. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Explain and demonstrate the Burnover procedure. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Explain "The Dead Man Zone." | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

| Appliance Skills * (for each brigade appliance) | Satisfactory | Comments |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Show water at the branch. * | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> LT <input type="checkbox"/> 1.4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3.4 <input type="checkbox"/> 4.4 (Tick applicable) |
| Demonstrate drafting. * | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> LT <input type="checkbox"/> 1.4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3.4 <input type="checkbox"/> 4.4 (Tick applicable) |
| Start/stop each pump. * | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> LT <input type="checkbox"/> 1.4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3.4 <input type="checkbox"/> 4.4 (Tick applicable) |
| Demonstrate the use of foam. * | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> LT <input type="checkbox"/> 1.4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3.4 <input type="checkbox"/> 4.4 (Tick applicable) |
| Set up a stand pipe & fill hose. Stow when complete. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Use a map in the appliance to locate an incident. (assessor to provide a map reference). | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> SSD <input type="checkbox"/> UBD <input type="checkbox"/> ESD <input type="checkbox"/> Other (tick applicable) |
| On each brigade appliance and locate the following items - | Satisfactory | Comments |
| First aid kit. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Lay flat hoses. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| TCards. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Incident Management Board. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Hand held radio/s. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

| Communication Skills | Satisfactory | Comments |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The following items apply to both the TAIT Single Band (Black) and TAIT Dual Band (Green or Yellow) Radios. | | |
| Change a channel. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Green / Yellow Radio |
| Adjust the volume. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Green / Yellow Radio |
| Send a message via radio, e.g. turning out from station to an incident. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| The following items apply to the TAIT Dual Band (Green or Yellow) Radios. | | |
| Change the band. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Activate/deactivate dual band receive. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Demonstrate changing foreground & background channels in dual receive/transmit mode. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Show the GPS function. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| The following items apply to Vertex Portable Radios. | | |
| Change a channel. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Adjust the volume. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Operate the Keypad Lock function. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Other essential communications skills. | | |
| Explain the Prowords: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over. • Out. • Roger. • Wilco. • Emergency Emergency Emergency | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| What are the arrival codes and their meaning? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> 44 <input type="checkbox"/> 66 <input type="checkbox"/> 88 <input type="checkbox"/> 90 |
| What are the incident classifications and their meaning? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st <input type="checkbox"/> 2 nd <input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd <input type="checkbox"/> 4 th |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Explain the term PAFTACS. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Complete a T Card (and attach). | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

| Brigade Administration Items ONLY. | Checked | Comments |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Drivers Licence Currency Check.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> A current driver's licence is not required to satisfactorily complete this Pre Season Refresher - it is simply to check currency of those with a driver's licence.</p> <p>A current driver's licence is essential to drive any Brigade appliance.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <p>Holds a Licence: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Licence Number: _____</p> <p>Expiry Date: _____</p> <p>Classes: _____</p> <p>Probationary: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Notes: _____</p> |
| <p>PPC/PPE Check.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Each member is required to check their PPC/PPE for serviceability for the fire season. If any item requires replacement it should be replaced from brigade stock or ordered from the Shire of Mundaring to ensure all items are suitably serviceable.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <p>Items replaced/ordered: _____</p> |

Member Endorsement for 20__ (Year)

Brigade Officer Comments:

I can confirm that the above member skills refresher tasks have been satisfactorily/unsatisfactorily completed.

(Cross out not applicable)

Brigade Officer Name: _____ DFES Number: _____

Brigade Officer Position: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

=====

Member Comments:

Member Name: _____ DFES Number: _____

Member Signature: _____ Date: _____

Attachment 4



FOR A SAFER STATE

DFES General Circular No: 157/2021

File: D15793

FACING THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

To all staff and volunteers

The health and safety of all DFES staff and volunteers is of the highest priority. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present challenges to how we deliver emergency services in the event of an outbreak.

To ensure we maintain emergency services and core business delivery, new measures will be introduced that will help keep staff and volunteers safe and help us to protect the communities we serve.

From 1 December 2021, all DFES staff and volunteers will be required to have received at least their first COVID-19 vaccination with the intention to become fully vaccinated or become subject to infection control measures.

These measures will be outlined in an Infection Prevention Policy that is being developed in consultation with all relevant stakeholders including Associations for all services, unions and WALGA.

The Policy will be communicated to everyone and will clearly outline the infection control measures that will be in place for staff and volunteers who choose not to get vaccinated and may include the wearing of masks, regular testing or redeployment to alternative locations.

Western Australia's Chief Health Officer Dr Andrew Robertson provided me with health advice on Friday that supports both the continued encouragement of vaccinations for emergency services and the use of infection control measures.

A comprehensive list of Frequently Asked Questions can be accessed on the [Volunteer Hub](#) and [Intranet](#).

I strongly encourage all DFES personnel to get vaccinated as it is our best defence against the spread of COVID-19.

In responding to emergencies, we have a duty of care to ensure we are protecting both the community and our people. Vaccination plays a vital role in reducing the risk of spread during these interactions.

The protection of our most vulnerable people in the community, including those in residential care facilities and remote communities, is one of utmost importance.

We must not put our community at greater risk because we have not taken the necessary precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19.



FOR A SAFER STATE

Gathering COVID-19 vaccination status information

We have begun the process of requesting information about vaccination status from all staff and volunteers as we lead into the high-threat season, no matter what your role is.

DFES is setting up systems to accurately and securely record vaccination status of staff and volunteers.

Only information pertinent to business continuity and operational purpose will be gathered.

As an emergency services agency we are required to collect this information to ensure our capability to maintain emergency services delivery and inform our decision-making in incident response. You can be assured the information gathered will only be used for these purposes.

Staff who participate in the State Duty Roster or a Pre-Formed Team will have received a text message this week requesting information about their vaccination status. This information will assist in DFES' planning for incident response and identify operational and business areas that could be impacted in the event of an outbreak.

One of the measures that has been implemented is that any staff member or volunteer who has not been fully vaccinated will not be eligible to be deployed interstate or internationally to provide emergency services response.

More information about the COVID-19 vaccine

Information about the vaccines is readily available on the [WA Health website](#) and [Australian Government Department of Health website](#).

For further information about COVID-19 vaccination program and the rollout for emergency services personnel, visit the COVID-19 information pages on the [Intranet](#) and [Volunteer Hub](#) that will continue to be updated regularly.

If you have any further questions you can direct them to our COVID-19 Incident Response Team through covid19@dfes.wa.gov.au.

Help protect yourself, your colleagues and your loved ones by getting vaccinated, always using good hygiene, stay at home if you are unwell and get tested if you have symptoms and check in using the SafeWA App.

DARREN KLEMM AFSM
COMMISSIONER

6.2 CHIEF BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER (CBFCO) REPORT

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| File Reference: | 5.1.3.1 |
| Reporting Officer: | Chris Marris, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer |
| Responsible Officer: | Chris Marris, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer |
| 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 CBFCO.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

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

Leadership positions

I would firstly like to thank Brigades and the Shire for the opportunity to be your Chief over the past 12 months and before. While it can be a very challenging role, the opportunities it presents to get to know volunteers from across all Brigades and to assist the community are highlights of the role. I would also like to acknowledge the multiple people who put their hand up for nomination for the Chief, Deputies and Senior FCO's roles – your interest in wanting to serve our service and the community is very commendable. I wish you luck in your nominations.

I was disappointed to see the rush in the nominations and voting process for these leadership roles. It is a big decision for someone to put their hand up for one of these roles, and some time should be given to allow people to consider their intentions. We also need to allow Brigades a more streamlined and less rushed process to vote on their preferred leaders. I encourage the successful leadership team to review and consult on this nomination and voting process and report back to BFAC in time for next year's voting because in my opinion, it has to improve.

BFAC

In combination with the above rushed voting, I along with a number of Brigades were disappointed at the delay to this BFAC meeting, without a strong rationale given. Certainly, we need to be adaptable to changing circumstances, but I do encourage the Shire to consult on such decisions and keep in mind that should an additional BFAC need to be called to deal with a major issue, then this may be a sustainable option.

On a different note, I believe it is incumbent on all of us to get BFAC working harder in the interest of our service and the community. I am pleased that there are a number of agenda items for this meeting and encourage Brigades to continue to be proactive in this space. I for one have suggested that mitigation

be added as a standing agenda item for all BFAC's to increase the awareness of what is currently been done while putting a focus on opportunities for us to be proactive in this space.

Training

I am pleased to see a large range of our members undertake training during the current off-season, including a number of our nominated FCO's who have now undertake the necessary training to become active. I encourage all members to continue to build their capabilities through training courses, on-station training, and hands-on learning.

As we see the new WHS legislation introduced, we are likely to see growing and changing training expectations put upon us as volunteers. I do hope that these changes are measured, acknowledge experience, and understand that training must be provided in a way which is conducive to our volunteers. To that end, I have and continue to encourage DFES to do more to consider alternative training arrangements such as courses being delivered on weeknights, theoretical content having the option to being delivered online, and more than one course (tends to be the more senior course) being offered in a region per season, to help volunteers whom have varied non-brigade commitments.

After much pushing, it does seem that we will be able to have an FCO course delivered in October across two weeknights to help allow some FCO's to do and/or refresh (given the 5 year current requirement) their training. I think it would be highly beneficial to try to also squeeze in a Sector Commander course across a number of weeknights this year given this is the most required course for FCO's needing to do additional training. Unfortunately, the appetite for this by those providing the training does not seem to be there.

I do believe that volunteer trainer accessors are an opportunity for us to improve the frequency of introductory courses and the onboarding/relationship building with our new volunteers. Several individuals from within the Shire have expressed interest in doing the trainer accessor course (thanks Nic for canvassing brigades), although unfortunately, DFES seems to be restricting this to only two per local government despite previously stating four. While this is better than none, it does put a heavy reliance on very few people and seems to be unnecessarily restrictive to volunteers who are willingly putting their hand forward. The trial at Northam Central for training to be delivered in-house, but assessed externally is a positive step.

Wundowie BFB

Some may have seen or heard about challenges that Wundowie BFB has been having re their Station. Their current Station is not a suitable or safe location, but unfortunately, they were again unsuccessful in getting funding for a new station from DFES. This issue was then raised at the September Shire of Northam

Council meeting where there had been a motion by a Councilor to disband the Brigade until a solution could be found. Thankfully this motion was withdrawn, but it certainly did bring to light the urgent need to sort a short to medium term solution, while a long-term solution must also be pursued. I welcome State-based politicians who have taken an interest in this issue. I am pleased to see the Shire now actively engaging with the Brigade to find a suitable temporary location.

We collectively supported the establishment of Wundowie BFB given the growing risk identified by our Risk to Resource review, and it is so pleasing to have seen the Brigade grow its membership and experience in response. It is now time again that we continue to show our collective support of Wundowie BFB to ensure that have a safe and ongoing future.

Shire

Many will know that I along with a number of Brigades have been becoming increasingly frustrated with a lack of action, communication and consultation on some matters by the Shire concerning our service. The Shire is in a tough situation with a growing workload and limited resources, but the challenges that we face as Brigades and volunteers is also growing, so we must find a sustainable path forward where we work collaboratively for the best outcome for our service and our community.

Numerous meetings and discussions in this regard have taken place over the past month, with a number of processes identified to be put in place to try to address these challenges. Hopefully, as we head into a high fuel load season, we will collectively start to see some positive outcomes from these changes, although there is much work to do.

Pre-season

Like normal, I hope to see a number of pre-season activities take place. At the time of writing this, I am still waiting to hear back from the Shire re their planned exercise with neighbouring shires and a date to do a tour down to the DFES Communications Centre in Cockburn. Once these are known we'll look to schedule another scenario evening and a bus tour of a couple of our Brigade districts. I hope time does not beat us.

I have also been pursuing updates on the joint Brigade mitigation burns which have been spoken about by the Shire as part of the mitigation funding for the past 18 months or so. We are still waiting on detail but am mindful of how close the season is getting again (they did not go ahead last year as they were left too late). Not only do these burns reduce fuel loads in a controlled setting, but they also provide a great opportunity to both new and existing volunteers to get some hands-on experience heading into the season.

While there is more that is and has been happening, I'll leave it at that for the moment. Here's hoping for a gradual start to the season.

RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.254

Moved: Mr Chris Marris

Seconded: Mr Terry Hasson

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

CARRIED 10/0

The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer provided an overview of the report.

Mr Chris Marris declared a "Financial" interest in item 6.3 - Appointment of Chief Bushfire Control Officer, Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer and Senior Bushfire Control Officer as Mr Marris is the current as well as nominated CBFCO which is paid an honorarium. This would be impacted if not renominated for the role.

The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and Chief Executive Officer left the meeting at 6:24pm.

6.3 APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF BUSHFIRE CONTROL OFFICER, DEPUTY CHIEF BUSHFIRE CONTROL OFFICER AND SENIOR BUSHFIRE CONTROL OFFICER

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| File Reference: | 5.1.3.1 |
| Reporting Officer: | Chadd Hunt, Executive Manager Development Services |
| Responsible Officer: | Chadd Hunt, Executive Manager Development Services |
| Officer Declaration of Interest: | Nil. |
| Voting Requirement: | Simple Majority |
| Press release to be issued: | No |

BRIEF

Upon appointment of the Fire Control Officer's for the 2021/22 year, Council is required to appoint a Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO), Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer's (DCBFCO) and a Senior Bush Fire Control Officer (SBFCO)

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Training Matrix of nominated BFCO's.
Attachment 2: Brigade Voting Summary (will be available for viewing at the meeting).

A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

At the BFAC meeting held on 15th June 2021 it was resolved to note the revised appointment process for the CBFCO, DCBFCO and Senior BFCO positions as contained in the report. The report references following the same process that was followed for the 2020-21 season.

Nominated BFCO's for the 2021-22 season were asked to nominate for each of the positions of CBFCO, DCBFCO and SBFCO. As a result, the following

nominations were received and forwarded to Brigades for consideration and voting-

CBFCO

Chris Marris
Neil Diamond

DCBFCO

Neil Diamond
Kris Brown
Simon Peters

Senior FCO

Kris Brown
Luke Hagen

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

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

Section 5.1B of the Bush Fire Manual states the following –

5.1B Criteria of a Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

- *Knowledge of managing a volunteer organisation.*

- Knowledge of all Fire Response Plans in the Shire
- Working Knowledge of the Local Emergency Management Arrangements
- Knowledge of the Bush Fires Act 1954 and Bush Fires Regulations 1954
- Knowledge of the State Emergency Management Policy No 4.8 (Traffic Management During Emergencies)
- Ability to attend further fire and emergency management training.
- Effective Interpersonal Skills.
- Good Written and Verbal Communication Skills.
- Leadership Skills.
- Management Skills.
- Experience in managing operations.
- Ability to perform under stressful conditions.
- Current appointment as Fire Control Officer.
- Experienced in firefighting operations within the Shire.
- Currently holds all of the preferred qualifications of the Fire Control Officer.
- Be a member of the DOAC, BFAC and LEMC

Section 5.1C of the Bush Fires manual states the following:

5.1C Qualifications of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

“Completion of the DFES training core modules and a minimum of 3 years as a BFCO and 5 years firefighting experience in the last 3 years preferably as an executive officer within a brigade of the Shire of Northam.

Persons currently holding the CBFCO's position will have until 2020 to comply with the below training requirements. Any persons newly appointed must hold the below training certifications prior to 31s October each year”.

Completion of required courses are:

- AllMS Awareness
- Introduction to Fire Fighting
- Bush Fire Fighting
- Machine Supervision
- Structural Fire Fighting
- Advanced Bush Fire Fighting
- Crew Leader
- Ground Controller
- Sector Commander
- AllMS 4 or 2017
- Incident Controller Level 1
- Fire Control Officer (in the Last 5 Years)

In addition with respect to the DCBFCO position the manual states the following:

5.2B Criteria of a Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

- Knowledge of managing a volunteer organisation.
- Knowledge of all Fire Response Plans in the Shire
- Working knowledge of the Local Emergency Management Arrangements
- Knowledge of the Bush Fires Act 1954 and Bush Fires Regulations 1954
- Knowledge of the State Emergency Management Policy No 4.8 (Traffic Management During Emergencies)
- Ability to attend further fire and emergency management training.
- Effective Interpersonal Skills.
- Good written and verbal communication skills.
- Leadership skills.
- Management skills.
- Experience in managing operations.
- Ability to perform under stressful conditions.
- Current appointment as Fire Control Officer.
- Experienced in firefighting operations within the Shire.
- Holds all of the preferred qualifications of the Fire Control Officer.
- Be a member of the DOAC, BFAC and LEMC

5.2C Qualifications of a Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Completion of the DFES training core modules and a minimum of 3 years as a BFCO and 5 years firefighting experience in the last 3 years preferably as an executive officer within a brigade within the Shire of Northam.

Persons currently holding the CBFCO's position will have until 2020 to comply with the below training requirements. Any persons newly appointed must hold the below training certifications prior to 31st October each year.

Completion of required courses are:

- AIMS Awareness
- Introduction to Fire Fighting
- Bush Fire Fighting
- Machine Supervision
- Structural Fire Fighting
- Advanced Bush Fire Fighting

- Crew Leader
- Ground Controller
- Sector Commander
- AIMS 4 or 2017
- Incident Controller Level 1
- Fire Control Officer (in the Last 5 Years)

B.5 Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation

Nominated BFCO and Brigades have been involved in the nomination and voting process.

B.6 Risk Implications

| Risk Category | Description | Rating (consequence x likelihood) | Mitigation Action |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Financial | Person appointed may have unexpected financial costs | Low Risk (1) Low (1) x Rare(1) | Council has endorsed an honorarium for the CBFCO and DCBFCO positions |
| Health & Safety | The health and safety of volunteer brigade members in an operational perspective | High Risk (10) Extreme (5) x Unlikely (2) | The use of two experienced CBFCO's in major events |
| Reputation | Council must consider the all options to ensure the best outcome is delivered in line with community expectations. | High Risk (10) Extreme (5) x Unlikely (2) | Council has endorsed the minimum training standards for the position of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer. Additional training and mentoring to be provided to any applicant that doesn't meet the criteria. |
| Service Interruption | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Compliance | Council must appoint a CBFCO | Moderate (8) | Staff have provided options |

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | as per the obligations under s38 Bush Fires Act 1954 Council must consider potential for legal ramifications based on decision to appoint. | High (4) x Unlikely (2) | for Council to consider. Council has endorsed the minimum training standards for the position of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer. |
| Property | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Environment | N/A | N/A | N/A |

C. OFFICER'S COMMENT

Following the nomination and voting from each of the Brigades that have been provided to staff it is recommended that BFAC recommend, and Council appoint, the positions of CBFCO, two DBFCO's and a Senior BFCO for the 2021/22 season. In collating the results of the voting a "first past the post" method was used for each of the positions.

It is recognised that some of those nominated and subsequently recommended for the positions do not fully meet the minimum training/experience requirements as stipulated in the manual. Based on the fact that the training required to be completed is one unit for one of the nominated DCBFCO's it is recommended that they be appointed with the understanding that the courses will be completed when available locally. It is further recommended that prior to the 2022/23 season that all nominated positions must hold the necessary training requirements (or being enrolled in the required course or providing a commitment in writing to do so) before being nominated. Similarly with respect to the experience requirements for one DCBFCO nominated (not having been a BFCO for a minimum of 3 seasons) based on their recent experience and training it is recommended that they be appointed for the coming season.

RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.255

Moved: Mr Nic Dewar

Seconded: Mr Luke Hagan

That the Bushfire Advisory Committee recommends to Council to formally appoint the following qualified Bush Fire Control Officers to the position of Chief and Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers for the 2021/22 fires season:

- 1. Chief Bush Fire Control Officer – Chris Marris**
- 2. Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers – Simon Peters and Neil Diamond**
- 3. Senior Bush Fire Control Officer- Luke Hagen**

CARRIED 9/0

Attachment 1



Shire of Northam Volunteer Bushfire Control Officers 2020/21

Active FCO's to have completed FCO & Sector Commander or FCO & Advanced Bush/Crew Leader within 5 yrs. All must have completed, Intro, Bushfire & Structural to be eligible. / minimum level of training required

| | | | | | | | | | Additional qualifications for Chief & Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| | INTRODUCTION TO FIREFIGHTING / Bushfire Safety Awareness (Date) | BUSHFIRE FIGHTING / Firefighting Skills (Date) | STRUCTURAL FIRE FIGHTING (Date) | CREW LEADER (Date) | ADVANCED BUSH (Date) | SECTOR COMMANDER (Date) | FIRE CONTROL OFFICER (Date) | Compliance with minimum training criteria YES/NO | Machine Supervision (Date) | Ground Controller | AIIMS 2017 | Incident Controller Level 1 | Mental Health First Aid CBFCO/DCBFCO Req'd | Leadership Fundamentals CBFCO/DCBFCO Req'd |
| Kristofer Brown | 2014 | 2015 | 2015 | 2014 | 2014 | 2017 | Aug 20 | YES | 2017 | 2015 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | |
| Simon Peters | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2011 | 2005 | 2015 | 2015 | No | 2020 | 2020 | 2020 | | | |
| Chris Harris | 2017 | 2017 | 2017 | 2020 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 | YES | 2017 | 2019 | 2019 | 2020 | | |
| Neil Diamond | 2010 | 2015 | 2012 | 2020 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | YES | 2019 | 2020 | 2020 | 2015 | | NUOC |
| Luke Hagen | 2008 | 2020 | 2020 | 2020 | 2020 | 2021 | 2021 | YES | | | | | | |

NOTE: The Introduction to Firefighting and Bushfire Firefighting competencies were superseded 01/01/2020 – New competency is Firefighting Skills and Bushfire Safety Awareness (Anyone with both the previous competencies has been awarded the new competencies as at 2020. (Current as at 23/08/2021)

The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and Chief Executive Officer returned to the meeting at 6:31pm.

7. MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

7.1 FARMER RESPONDERS INSURANCE COVER

BACKGROUND

Farmer first responders (spontaneous volunteers) are the key difference between containing a fire quickly. There has been considerable uncertainty about what the insurance position is for these first responders. A number of scenarios have been developed to capture the potential cases that could occur at a fire.

A request was made to get the Shire of Northam to seek a written legal opinion on these scenarios on 20 May 2021. Subsequent emails and phone discussions with the Executive Manager Development Services and the CESM have led to a stalemate with no progress being made.

There is an urgent need to get a ruling on this, as the answers will give the Operations Group, Captains and our farmer members direction on how 'spontaneous volunteers' respond in the coming season.

See Attachment 1.

MOTION

That Council obtain a written legal opinion on the scenarios presented in the attached document concerning famer turnout to bush fire in the Shire of Northam.

MOTION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.256

Moved: Mr Nic Dewar

Seconded: Mr Terry Hasson

That Council, on behalf of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee, request the Volunteer Bush Fire Association to obtain a written legal opinion on the scenarios presented in the attached document concerning famer turnout to bush fire in the Shire of Northam.

CARRIED 10/0

Reason for change to motion

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee felt that that this matter should be referred to the WA Volunteer Bushfire Association as they are currently seeking a legal opinion on a range of scenarios.

OFFICERS COMMENT

Staff appreciate the complexities surrounding the implementation of the WHS Regulations in January 2021. Staff have been making enquiries with WALGA & LGIS for advice with nothing definitive that we can share at this point in time.

The information tabled has since been tabled with a senior risk assessor within LGIS and we are awaiting formal advice that can then be passed on at the next Operations Command Meeting for further dissemination to brigades and the wider volunteer community.

Staff appreciate there is some concern surrounding the issues raised and are of the opinion that this concern would be shared by a number of other local governments in a similar position, hence the desire for a coordinated response from WALGA/LGIS. As soon as further information is available it will be passed on to the leadership team.

Staff do not support obtaining independent legal advice on this matter, which is estimated to cost between \$5,000 and \$10,000, when this is an Industry wide matter which will no doubt be dealt with at that level.

Attachment 1

Gillian and Jack were checking sheep in their ute with a firefighting unit on the back and notice smoke coming from a neighbour's property. They proceed to the source of the smoke and start putting out the fire using hoses out the windows of their ute. Their ute gets engulfed in flames and both Gillian and Jack get serious burns to their arms requiring hospitalisation and the ute sustains serious damage (probably a write off). As spontaneous responders what is their insurance situation given the following scenarios?

| Scenario | Communication | | | | | Bushfire Brigade Membership | | | Clothing | | | | Are they covered or not? |
|----------|---------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Call 000 | Can't call 000 as no reception | They have used UHF channel 5 to make contact with BFB members giving a situation report before attempting to put the fire out | They call up on UHF channel 5 to give a situation report but there is no response so they start putting out the fire | They have no UHF radio and continue to put the fire out but make contact with an incoming BFB unit when going out for water | Both active members of their local Bush Fire Brigade (BFB) | Jack was an active member of his BFB 10 years ago but has not been active since. Gillian has never been a member. | Both have never been members of a BFB | Wearing shorts, tee shirts and elastic sided boots | Wearing long sleeve shirt, jeans and elastic sided boots | Member (including ex member) wearing BFB PPE, non-member not wearing PPE | Member (including ex member) wearing BFB PPE but no gloves and helmet, non-member not wearing PPE | |
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7.2 FIREBREAK REQUIREMENTS 2021/22

BACKGROUND

2021 has been one of the wettest seasons on records, with areas in September still inaccessible to vehicles due to boggy conditions. We are aware of numerous farmers from across the Shire getting bogged while trying to do their fire breaks, which they have been working on for months. We are also mindful that high soil moisture is likely to see regrowth continue to occur for a number of months yet, with some areas likely to still be green come the 1st of November.

Given this, we want fire break inspectors to take into consideration the seasonal conditions faced by broadacre landholders when inspecting firebreaks. While there should be a genuine attempt made by all broadacre landowners, the infringement book should not be the first choice for those broadacre landowners who have clearly made genuine attempts to maintain firebreaks but have been restricted in areas due to seasonal conditions.

Should paperwork be necessary by the firebreak inspectors, then we urge the Shire to first issue a request to fix, without a fine, for those broadacre landholders who have made a genuine attempt.

MOTION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.257

Moved: Mr Angus Cooke

Seconded: Mr Terry Hasson

That Council take into consideration the season when inspecting broadacre firebreaks and acknowledge where genuine attempts have been made to comply with firebreak requirements for 2021/22 season.

CARRIED 10/0

OFFICERS COMMENT

Staff can confirm that a common sense approach is taken when it comes to fire break inspections within the Shire of Northam.

It is rare that an infringement is issued upon first inspection, as most firebreaks require minor works to achieve compliance. Generally, if it can be determined that a genuine attempt has been made to install the required firebreak a "works order" is generally issued rather than imposing an infringement – this gives the landowner 14 days to comply with the requirements.

Staff will continue to monitor and work with residents to ensure compliance can be achieved with the Fire break & Fuel Load notice.

UNCONFIRMED



Mr Chris Marris declared a "Financial" interest in item 7.3 - Management Of Bush Fire Brigades as if BFB's shifted to be under DFES control it may impact on the position of CBFCO which Mr Marris currently holds. This position is paid an honorarium.

The Chief Bushfire Control Officer left the meeting at 6:37pm.

7.3 MANAGEMENT OF BUSH FIRE BRIGADES

BACKGROUND

There has been a push by a small number of people to see Bush Fire Brigades management be transferred from the Shire of Northam (Local Government) to be managed directly by DFES.

This saw the DFES Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner attend a meeting with Brigades and the Shire in June of this year, to discuss how and what this change would look like.

As noted by the Commissioner at this meeting, this is not something that DFES is pushing for, and would need to be requested by Brigades. It is a decision for Brigades. The Commissioner also noted that any future changes to the legislation are just that; future changes. Trying to predict what these changes might be, when they might occur, and what this would result in, is not possible. The Commissioner also noted that DFES would only accept the whole Shire, not individual BFB's within the Shire.

It was said at the meeting that it is now up to Brigades to make a decision on a path forward.

While no model is perfect, Grass Valley BFB believes the current local government model is the better of the two. It is a model that retains vital local knowledge and has accountability via ratepayers to the Shire. It is the model used by every local government outside of the Pilbara, with the exception of The City of Rockingham.

MOTION / COMMITTEE DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.258

Moved: Mr Angus Cooke

Seconded: Mr Terry Hasson

That Council acknowledge that the Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade is opposed to Shire of Northam Bush Fire Brigades being transferred to DFES management, and instead supports the Brigades remaining under the Local Government.

CARRIED 9/0

OFFICERS COMMENT

Staff acknowledge the position of the Grass Valley BFB and openly encourage further informed discussion into the future.

DFES has made a recent announcement via a General Circular that the consolidated emergency services acts, has now received official drafting time from the Parliamentary Counsel's Office to prepare the draft Bill for the next stage of the legislative process.

The Consolidated Emergency Services Act (CES Act) was first drafted in 2012 after extensive, documented consultation across the state.

This has seen some minor reworking since 2012 and is now ready to move onto the next step with a draft Bill submitted to Parliament in the near future.

The CES Act will see the amalgamation of the Fire Brigades Act 1942, The Bush Fires Act 1954 & The Fire & Emergency Services Act 1998 providing for a streamlined singular piece of legislation that will provide efficiencies with emergency response across WA, bringing us in line with other states and territories in Australia.

Brigade members seeking further additional information are encouraged to seek further information from the CESM who is in contact with the project manager.

The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer returned to the meeting at 6:38pm.

7.4 WOOROLOO BUSH FIRE REVIEW - SUBMISSION

BACKGROUND

In February of 2021, a devastating bushfire occurred on our doorstep with a fire starting in neighbouring Wooroloo, just kilometres from our Shire boundary. Some 10,000 hectares and 86 houses were burnt.

Many Shire of Northam Brigades and personnel worked tirelessly to assist over multiple days with the fire.

Subsequent to the fire, numerous issues and concerns with the fire and its management have been raised by Brigades and personnel, such as delays in being requested to mobilise (some 6 hours despite numerous requests and the fact Shire of Northam brigades were some of the closest to the starting location of the fire), logistics, tasking and the like. There had also been frustration at the lack of opportunity for a debrief.

On 13 August 2021, the WA Government announced an inquiry into the fire, with submission open from 20 August 2021 until 24 September 2021.

While some Brigades and individuals from the Shire may have made submissions independently, Grass Valley BFB is of the view that a Shire wide submission via BFAC would add weight to some of the issues/concerns being raised.

MOTION

That Council make a submission to the 2021 Wooroloo Bushfire Review to raise issues and concerns of the Northam Bush Fire Brigades.

MOTION / COUNCIL DECISION

Minute No: BFAC.259

Moved: Mr Angus Cooke

Seconded: Mr Luke Hagan

That Council, support submissions made by the Shire of Northam Brigades to the 2021 Wooroloo Bushfire Review to raise issues and concerns of the Northam Bush Fire Brigades.

CARRIED 10/0

Reason for change to motion

The next Ordinary Council Meeting will be held after the submission due date. The Shire of Northam Officers will assist with collating the Brigades concerns and will submit this on behalf of the brigades. It was noted that the WA Volunteer Bushfire Association is also receiving submissions.

OFFICERS COMMENT

Staff have previously been provided with feedback from individual brigades that were discussed at the regional review into the Goldfields Midlands response to this incident which is the most appropriate course of action as this then feeds into the state level post incident review.

Staff acknowledge that brigades may wish to make further submissions and they are able to do so directly to the agency conducting the review (AFAC) by COB October 8th 2021

<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/independent-review-of-the-2021-wooroloo-bushfire/lodging-your-submission-the-independent-review-of-the-2021-wooroloo-bushfire>

8. URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY DECISION

Nil.

9. GENERAL BUSINESS

9.1 WUNDOWIE FIRE PROSECUTION

Clarification was sought in relation to what legal action has been taken against the individual. The Chief Executive Officer took the question on notice.

9.2 CHANGE OF MEETING DATE

The committee expressed dissatisfaction with postponing the committee meeting.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14 December 2021 at 5:30pm.

11. DECLARATION OF CLOSURE

The Presiding Member Cr Terry Little declared the meeting closed at 6:52pm.

"I certify that the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee, held on Tuesday 5 October 2021 have been confirmed as a true and correct record."

_____ Presiding Member

_____ Date