



**SHIRE OF NORTHAM  
BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
MONDAY 12 MAY, 2008 at 6.30PM**

Shire of Northam Council Chambers, 395 Fitzgerald St, Northam

1. OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

Opening and announcement by Chadd Hunt.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

**Moved S Pollard and seconded L Smith that R Marris to be appointed as Chairperson for the Bush Fire Advisory Committee**

**Motion Carried 7/0**

3. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

R Marris	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade
P Gentle	Deputy CBFCO (East), Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade
G Ashman	Deputy CBFCO (West), Bakers Hill BFB
J Chitty	Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigade
R Russell	Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
S Kuiper	Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade
R McKenzie	Irishtown Bush Fire Brigade
L Smith	Jennapullin Bush Fire Brigade
P Antonio	Southern Brook Bush Fire Brigade
M Letch	Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
M Letch	Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
B Wilding	Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
P Reynolds	Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade
S Nielsen	Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade
R Hertzner	Irishtown Bush Fire Brigade
L Balcombe	Irishtoen Bush Fire Brigade
T Smith	Jennapullin Bush Fire Brigade
D Saunders	Southern Brook Bush Fire Brigade
P DuBoulay	Northam Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service
G Doye	Northam Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service
A Brucciani	Wundowie Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service
T Buckley	Wundowie Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service
L Mincherton	District Manager, FESA Northam
S Pollard	Shire President, Shire of Northam
C Hunt	Manager Planning & Development, Shire of Northam
S Billingham	Manager Finance & Administration, Shire of Northam
D Andrews	Ranger, Shire of Toodyay
A Knapp	Ranger, Shire of Toodyay
S McQuistan	Planning Administration, Shire of Northam

R Marris noted that there was no Delegate present for Southern Brook at the start of the meeting.

R Marris noted apologies received from Allen Stidworthy (Westnet Rail)

R Marris also confirmed that Kevin Pollack was not present

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

**Moved R Russel and seconded S Pollard that the minutes from the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 12 November 2007 be received.**

**Motion Carried 7/0**

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Proposed shed extension in Grass Valley  
**C Hunt confirmed that the Grass Valley shed extension has been included in the Shire's Budget Submission process as it is not considered to be applicable under ESL funding.**
- Proposed replacement of Inkpen BFB water tankers  
**L Mincherton advised that further investigation will need to take place into the proposal put forward by Inkpen to replace the water tankers they privately own.  
A letter was proposed to be sent to FESA regarding the provisions of a central water tanker to be kept within the Shire of Northam Depot.**

6. CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTING PAUL DU BOULAY AND ADINA BRUCCIANI AS VOTING DELEGATES ON THE BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Moved J Chitty and seconded S Pollard that the Bush Fire Advisory Committee appoints both the Wundowie and Northam VFRS as voting delegates.**

**Motion Lost 2/5**

**Moved R McKenzie seconded L Smith that the Wundowie and Northam VFRS become non-voting members of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee.**

**Motion Carried 7/0**

7. REPORTS

- CBFCO - R Marris

We were all fortunate that the 2007/2008 Fire Season (my first in this position) proved to be a quiet season. The Shire of Northam only sustained three fires of significance; those being the Mt Ommanney fire in November, the Hawke Avenue fire on Xmas Eve and the Cook Rd/Dival fire in February. An efficient response by the Bush Fire Brigades involved, as well as the Fire and Rescue in both Wundowie and Northam, resulted in minimal losses. It has been disturbing to note the number of deliberately lit fires that have occurred. Incidents were noted in the Clackline, Bakers Hill and Northam Town areas, as well as our close neighbour, Meckering.

I have attempted to foster a better working relationship and an understanding with various organisations such as Westnet Rail, the adjoining Shires, FESA, the Ranger Services, and the FRS etc. At this time, I think I have been reasonably successful as the initiative has been welcomed by all involved.

I have attended many fires in the role of CBFCO and although far from being totally accepted, I am encouraged to see how the Incident Management System is being implemented, gradually understood and accepted by the majority of fire-fighters.

I think that as FCO's and others become acquainted with the AIIMS System (Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System) and realise that outsiders are not trying to take over the running of fires but are attempting to put in place a command structure that is internationally, nationally and locally recognised and accepted, and will be led at the fire scene by the local FCO, (with the assistance of support personnel such as the Rangers, FESA staff, the Deputy CBFCO's or myself), they will be less worried and more acceptable of the system.

It is encouraging to see a greater participation in some brigades by people whom previously felt discouraged from being involved. It is very important that new members are encouraged, trained and allowed to have a voice in a brigade. They may become our leaders of the future. We are so often told that volunteers are hard to come by. Let's not discourage them when they do step forward.

I have been told many times over the years that we are all volunteers. Does this mean that we are not capable of being good at what we do? Or does it mean that if we fail in our duty of care to the general public or our mate's that we can be excused? I think not! If we are prepared to take on the role of a volunteer fire fighter then the community expect us to have a professional approach to our job. When we turn up at a fire, the observers expect us to do our job efficiently and effectively. Later they may thank us as volunteers.

Therefore, if we step forward to become a volunteer fire-fighter, remember that we are doing it to protect the community, not merely our little patch. Primarily we are there to support our local community but in any significant event, the home brigades equipment probably will not be able to cope, and therefore every fire within the Shire should be of interest to all Shire Brigades. We are all members of the one family, and we should be ready to support each other at the drop of a hat.

At one of the fires this season it became apparent that the local brigade FCO was reluctant to ask for assistance. The adjoining brigade area was ready to assist but was not asked. At times, it may be prudent to ask for assistance. If there is any risk of a fire escalating, or where assets may be at risk, ere on the side of caution. Do not allow pride or being worried about calling out volunteers needlessly, hinder your decision. Your neighbouring brigades are more than willing to assist.

I thoroughly endorse the extensive use of the SMS and paging systems in association with the radio network. In some local government areas, SMS and paging is the main method of primary callout. The system works well and has many advantages. The system is a low cost, convenient method, of informing a number of people quickly and efficiently of what is happening. Of course, the system has its problems. However, when used consistently and in conjunction with the radio network, it is a marked improvement on this network alone. Brigade members that are not near a radio or haven't got a radio can be informed of what is happening. If they wish they can then respond in any way they think necessary.

I wish you all well for the coming months.  
Richard Marris CBFCO.

- FESA – L Mincherton

L Mincherton advised that he has been working in Perth for a majority of the Bush Fire season, and he is thankful that it has not been as busy as the past seasons.

Thanks the Chief for his contribution this season.

Thanks the Shire for accepting the Bill Harris Report and its investigating its subsequent recommendations.

Good Luck to all Brigades for the upcoming season.

Also advises that FESA hope to assist in all ways possible this season.

Provided hand outs on what courses are on offer, and the content of each course.

Provided additional ESD maps, 10 were made available here tonight and there is also more at FESA if required.

- SHIRE OF NORTHAM – C Hunt

Issues that the Shire of Northam have been involved with include:

Caution Letters	203
Fire Break Inspections	1147
Fire Break Infringement Notices	33

#### ESL Expenditure

PPE and Vehicle Maintenance issues

Have written to FESA regarding over expenditure in certain areas

Looking at a more efficient method of managing PPE & Vehicle maintenance issues

#### ESL Budget

Current Budget for ESL \$57,800 (overspent)  
Requested additional funding to cover over expenditure  
Awaiting feedback from FESA  
Received indicative budget for 08/09  
Next Years Budget ESL \$56,450 (08/09)  
Vehicle Changeovers  
- Inkpen Light Tanker  
- Southern Brook Light Tanker

#### Bushfire Response Plan

Involved in process  
FESA will need to advise of current status – and where to from here

#### Bush Fire Organisation Review

A number of methods will require action following Council consideration from the Advisory Committee  
Recommendations

#### Firebreak Order

Consideration needs to be given to reviewing the order in light of the issue with the amalgamation of the Town & Shire. Trying to get some consistency between all different landowners and areas  
Some areas require 2m firebreaks others 4m.

#### Forward Planning

Need for review of strategic document with looks at the future equipment and infrastructure needs into the future.  
Previous reference document was 2004 Risk to Resource document.

- **DEC – No report available**

#### 8. BRIGADE REPORTS

BAKERS HILL - J Chitty

28 Call outs this season – some of which were deliberately lit  
Attended the Wundowie Fire (A Brucciani – Incident Controller) and that Bakers and Wundowie are working well together  
Have had some issues with training availability

CLACKLINE/MURESK – R Russell

19 Call outs this season – 8 were in non Clackline areas  
Have started training days once a month  
Vehicles require a few minor repairs

GRASS VALLEY – R Marris

6 Fires in their area – 3 on Railway and worked with Northam VFRS on these fires.

INKPEN – S Kuiper

No fires in the area – but attended fires outside their area in assistance  
Struggling to get active members that live in the area as a lot of the farmers in Inkpen are based in Perth.

IRISHTOWN – R McKenzie

3 fires in the area – but attended fires outside their area in assistance  
Good training exercises are being undertaken with Toodyay, Goomalling and Jennacubbine.  
Advised that we need to support and retain our private farmer volunteers

JENNAPULLIN – L Smith

Endorses farmers being involved in the Bush Fire Brigades

Also advised that volunteers are becoming disheartened with the lack of support and equipment they are receiving.

SOUTHERN BROOK – Unavailable (no delegate or representative present)

NORTHAM FRS – P DuBoulay

135 Incidents this year – 15 out of their District

Thanks the Bush Fires Brigades for their help during the year.

Wants the Bush Fire Brigades to not be afraid to ask for VFRS help.

WUNDOWIE FRS – A Brucciani

35 incidents this year – 15 out of their District

## 9. SHIRE OF NORTHAM BUSHFIRE ORGANISATION REVIEW

### BACKGROUND:

The Shire of Northam resolved at its meeting held on 19 September 2007 to commission a report on the ongoing operations of the Bush Fire Brigades.

Specifically it was resolved that,

Council appoint a suitably qualified and experienced consultant to undertake a review of the Shire of Northam Fire Prevention Procedures in accordance with the attached terms of reference.

That Council delegates the Chief Executive Officer to appoint a suitable consultant to undertake the review.

That a sum of \$8,000 be allocated for implementation of this project.”

Following the above resolution, Mr Bill Harris was appointed and the report submitted to Council. It is the intention of Council to obtain recommendations from this Committee in considering the Review.

A copy of the report has been forwarded to all Brigades, Fire Control Officers, Wundowie FRS, Northam FRS, Communications Officer, FESA and was available on Council's website.

The intention is for the Bush Fire Advisory Committee to consider the recommendations made within the view for consideration by Council. Council will then need to consider the review and resolutions from this Committee in implementing and of its recommendations.

Given the number of recommendations made within the review it is suggested that this committee deal with each of them separately and as succinctly as possible so that all representatives have an opportunity to comment.

Attached with the Agenda is a copy of the submissions made on the Review by Irishtown and Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigades (only ones received at the time of compiling this Agenda).

### 9.1 RECOMMENDATION 1

Note: Recommendation 1 has been dealt with – refer to (6.)

COMMITTEE PREVIOUSLY RESOLVED TO ALLOW VFRS TO BE DELEGATES – BUT NON VOTING

9.2 RECOMMENDATION 2

That procedures for the callout of backup resources be contained in the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Response Plan.

**Moved R Marris and Seconded S Pollard that there will be a back up procedure that be contained in the Bush Fire Response Plan and developed by the Bush Fire Advisory Committee.**

**Motion Carried 7/0**

9.3 RECOMMENDATION 3

- a) That CBFCO & DCBFCO positions can only be appointed for a period of 2 years and then be appointed for a further 2 years and they must have a break of 2 years before they can seek renomination.

**Moved S Pollard and seconded J Chitty that CBFCO and DCBFCO positions can only be appointed for a period of 12 months and then may be appointed for a maximum period of 4 consecutive years and then have a break of 2 years before they can seek renomination.**

**Motion Carried 6/1**

- b) That the current CBFCO and DCBFCO be appointed until April 2009.

**R Marris advised this has already occurred, the Chief and Deputy Chiefs appointments are already extended until April 2009.**

- c) Council should only appoint Harvest Ban Officers who are FCO's and have the necessary expertise and weather meter equipment on the same basis as the CBFCO and DCBFCO.

**Moved R McKenzie and seconded S Pollard that this matter be left on the table for discussion between the CBFCO, DCBFCO and Council staff.**

**Motion Carried 7/0**

9.4 RECOMMENDATION 4

That the Shire of Northam write to each FCO with a copy of the duties and responsibilities of FCO, training requirements and asking if they are prepared to take on the duties and responsibilities or just to be a permit issuing officer. Also are permit issuing officers prepared to assist with support roles during wildfire operation?

**Moved L Smith and seconded R Russell that the Shire of Northam write to each FCO with a copy of the duties and responsibilities of FCO, training requirements and asking if they are prepared to take on the duties and responsibilities or just to be a permit issuing officer.**

**Motion Lost 0/8**

9.5 RECOMMENDATION 5

That the Draft Training requirements, Roles & Responsibilities of CBFCO, DCBFCO and FCO's be adopted by Council Policy and that these officers attend Refresher Courses on a five yearly basis.

**Moved R Marris and seconded J Chitty that the CBFCO and DCBFCO's and FCO's attend the relevant refresher courses on a five yearly basis.**

**Motion Carried 8/0**

9.6 RECOMMENDATION 6

That where more than one FCO is appointment to a brigade, Council at the time of the appointment is to nominate the seniority of the FCO's. This would be done after Recommendation 4 is completed.

**R Marris advised recommendation lapsed**

9.7 RECOMMENDATION 7

That the Captain of a brigade be appointed as Fire Control Officer.

**Moved L Smith and seconded S Pollard that the Captain of a brigade be appointed as Fire Control Officer.**

**Motion Lost 0/8**

9.8 RECOMMENDATION 8

That the Draft Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting Rules is agreed top by the BFAC and recommend to Council that they are adopted and the previous rules repealed.

**Moved R McKenzie and seconded R Russell that this matter lay on the table**

**Motion Carried 8/0**

9.9 RECOMMENDATION 9

That the draft Brigade Constitution (See Appendix 3) be agreed to by all brigades.

**Moved R Russell and seconded S Kuiper that this matter lay on the table**

**Motion Carried 8/0**

9.10 RECOMMENDATION 10

That the BFAC recommend to Council that the Draft Brigade Constitution be approved by Councils and be adapted by all brigades.

**Moved R Russell and seconded S Kuiper that this matter lay on the table**

**Motion Carried 8/0**

9.11 RECOMMENDATION 11

That the BFAC and FESA review the boundaries of the, both Bushfire and FRS Brigade's, to ensure that they reflect the most effective brigade structures for the Shire of Northam. Recommendation 10 should be done in conjunction with Recommendation 11. The new boundaries would then be agreed to by Council and FESA Regional Office.

**Moved S Pollard and seconded R Russell that the BFAC and FESA review the boundaries of both the Bushfire and FRS Brigades to ensure that they reflect the most effective brigade structures for the Shire of Northam. The new boundaries would then be agreed to by Council and FESA Regional Office.**

**Motion Carried 8/0**

9.12 RECOMMENDATION 12

That FCO's and Brigade Officers undergo training in sectorisation of wildfires and that development of communication plans be instigated.

**Motion Lapsed**

9.13 RECOMMENDATION 13

That brigades identify areas where pagers and SMS system is not reliable and that FESA investigate the identified faulty areas to improve pager and SMS services.

**Moved R McKenzie and seconded S Kuiper that brigades identify areas where pagers and SMS system is not reliable and that FESA investigate the identified faulty areas to improve pager and SMS services.**

**Motion Carried 8/0**

9.14 RECOMMENDATION 14

That the Shire of Northam conducts an audit of who has Shire owned VHF radios, pagers and SMS, their location to ensure that some Shire owned are located in the most effective and workable area.

**Moved R Russell and seconded J Chitty that the Shire of Northam conducts an audit of who has Shire owned VHF radios, pagers and SMS, their location to ensure that some Shire owned are located in the most effective and workable area.**

**Motion Carried 8/0**

9.15 RECOMMENDATION 15

FESA and the Shire of Northam review the 2004 Resource to Risk Assessment for the Shire of Northam involving Brigades and the Bush Fire Advisory.

**Moved R Marris and seconded R Russell that FESA and the Shire of Northam review the 2004 Resource to Risk Assessment for the Shire of Northam involving Brigades and the Bush Fire Advisory.**

**Motion Carried 8/0**

9.16 RECOMMENDATION 16

Each brigade should prepare a prioritized Operational and Equipment Budget which should be collated by the Rangers into a Shire wide budget for consideration by the Bush Fire Advisory Committee. Items not covered by the ESL Operation Budget should have possible funding sources identified and grants applied for.

**Moved R Marris and seconded L Smith that each brigade should prepare a prioritized Operational and Equipment Budget which should be collated by Council staff into a Shire wide budget for consideration. Items not covered by the ESL Operation Budget should have possible funding sources identified and grants applied for by the Shire.**

**Motion Carried 8/0**

9.17 RECOMMENDATION 17

That FESA and the Shire of Northam conduct an information/training session on the Role & Duties of Brigades Training Officers, and that an annual meeting of Brigade Training Officers, FESA and Shire Representative be held to develop an annual training program for the Shire of Northam. This should include the FRS Brigades. This is to be initiated by the Shire of Northam.

**Moved J Chitty and seconded R Russell that FESA and the Shire of Northam conduct an information session on the Role and duties of Brigades Training Coordinators and that an annual meeting of Brigade Training Coordinators, FESA and Shire representatives be held to develop an annual training program for the Shire of Northam. This should include the VFRS Brigades. This is to be initiated by the Shire of Northam.**

**Motion Carried 8/0**

9.18 RECOMMENDATION 18

It is essential that Brigade Officers and mandatory for FCO's to attend training on AIIMS, Incident Management Teams, advanced levels of fire fighting and fire behaviour, use of aircraft and water bombers, sectorisation and the development of radio communication plans.

**Moved J Chitty and seconded S Kuiper that it is essential that Brigade Officers and desirable for FCO's to attend training on AIIMS, Incident Management Teams, advanced levels of fire fighting and fire behaviour, use of aircraft and water bombers, sectorisation and the development of radio communication plans.**

**Motion Carried 8/0**

9.19 RECOMMENDATION 19

That FESA and the Shire of Northam clearly define the purpose of the Bush Fire Response Plan that it is a strategic document supported by Standard Operating Procedures.

**Moved R Marris and seconded J Chitty that FESA and the Shire of Northam in conjunction with the Bush Fire Brigades clearly define the purpose of the Bush Fire Response Plan that it is a strategic document supported by Standard Operating Procedures.**

**Motion Carried 7/1**

9.20 RECOMMENDATION 20

That the Shire of Northam adopts the FESA Brigade callout protocol through the use of Pagers and SMS. This is being implemented from the 2007-2008 fire season.

**Moved R Marris and seconded J Chitty that the Shire of Northam adopts the FESA Brigade callout protocol through the use of Radios, Pagers and SMS. This is to be implemented from the 2007/2008 Fire Season.**

**Motion Carried 5/3**

9.21 RECOMMENDATION 21

That the Shire of Northam adopts as Policy the AIIMS Management System for the Management of Incidents within the Shire and direct all Bush Fire Brigades that they are to use AIIMS Management System to manage the control and extinguishment of wildfires. See also Bush Fire Control Officer Section 9.2 of Bush Fire Brigade Constitution.

**Moved R Marris and seconded J Chitty that the Shire of Northam adopts as Policy the AIIMS Management System for the Management of Incidents within the Shire and direct all Bush Fire Brigades that they are to use AIIMS Management System to manage the control and extinguishment of wildfires as required. See also Bush Fire Control Officer Section 9.2 of Bush Fire Brigade Constitution.**

**Motion Carried 5/3**

9.22 RECOMMENDATION 22

The Shire of Northam develops a policy of children attending wildfires under the age of 16 years and advises their insurer to cover persons in accordance with the Policy.

**Moved R Russell and seconded S Kuiper that the Shire of Northam develops a policy of no children attending wildfires under the age of 16 years and advises their insurer to cover persons in accordance with the Policy.**

**Motion Carried 7/1**

9.23 RECOMMENDATION 23

The Shire of Northam develops a Policy on wearing protective clothing a wildfires and hazard reduction burning. This Policy is to cover Brigade personnel issued with Protective Clothing and farmers attending in private appliances.

**Moved J Chitty and seconded S Kuiper that the Shire of Northam develops a Policy on wearing protective clothing a wildfires and hazard reduction burning. This Policy is to cover Brigade personnel issued with Protective Clothing and farmers attending in private appliances.**

**Motion Carried 7/1**

9. GENERAL BUSINESS

Various items raised by the Clackline Muresk BFB were resolved to be dealt with at the next BFAC meeting.

**R Marris moved that a second meeting should be planned for Monday 7 July 6.30pm.**

It was recommended that 2 people from each brigade should be in attendance to discuss the issues that have been left on the table.

R Marris spoke about Unexploded Ordnance Mapping.

The maps have only been provided in a limited release and are not allowed to be copied for distribution.

**Moved R Marris and seconded S Pollard that the Shire contact FESA to request more UXO maps.**

**Motion Carried 8/0**

**Close of Meeting**

I certify that the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting Held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 have been confirmed as a true and correct record."

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_ Date