



Heritage, Commerce and Lifestyle

SHIRE OF NORTHAM

MINUTES OF THE BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11 MAY 2009



**SHIRE OF NORTHAM
BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
MONDAY 11th MAY, 2009 at 5.30PM**

Shire of Northam Council Chambers, 395 Fitzgerald St, Northam

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DISCLAIMER

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1. OPENING AND WELCOME

Mr Chadd Hunt, Executive Manager of Planning Development declared the meeting open at 5.37pm and welcomed all those present.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Parts of Division 6 Subdivision 1 of the Local Government Act 1995 requires Council members and employees to disclose any direct or indirect financial interest or general interest in any matter listed in this agenda.

The Act also requires the nature of the interest to be disclosed in writing before the meeting or immediately before the matter being discussed.

NB A Council member who makes a disclosure must not preside or participate in, or be present during, any discussion or decision making procedure relating to the disclosed matter unless the procedures set out in Sections 5.68 or 5.69 of the Act have been complied with.

All of the Attendees declared that they had no interest in any of the items that are to be discussed at this meeting.

3. ATTENDANCE

DELEGATES (VOTING RIGHTS)

Bakers Hill Brigade
Clackline/Muresk Brigade
Grass Valley Brigade
Inkpen Brigade
Irishtown Brigade
Jennapullin Brigade
Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
Southern Brook Brigade
Wundowie Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
Shire of Northam

Mr C Barrington
Mr R Russell
Mr R Marris
Mr S Kuiper
Mr R MacKenzie
Mr L Smith
Mr G Montgomery
Mr P Antonio
Ms A Brucciani
Cr S Pollard

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (NON – VOTING RIGHTS)

Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (East)
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (West)
Department of Environment and Conservation
FESA
Shire Communications Officer
Shire of Northam

Mr P Gentle
Mr G Ashman
Mr K Pollack
Mr L Mincherton
Mr E Fox
Mr C Hunt

PUBLIC GALLERY

There were 10 members of the public in the gallery.

4. APOLOGIES

Mr Matthew Letch (Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade)
Mr Paul Reynolds (Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade Delegate)

5. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

As provided for under the meeting rules at the Annual Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting a chairperson is required to be appointed.

- a. Mr Ray Russell (Clackline/Muresk delegate) nominated Mr Ross MacKenzie (Irishtown Delegate)
- b. Mr Sim Kuiper (Inkpen Delegate) nominated Mr Richard Marris (Grass Valley Delegate)

As two nominations were received a second secret ballot was conducted. Both results tied 5-5.

The Shire President exercised his right under the Local Government Act and elected himself Chairperson of this Committee.

6. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

**Moved: Mr Ross MacKenzie (Irishtown Delegate)
Seconded: Mr Chris Barrington (Bakers Hill Delegate)**

That the minutes of the Meeting on the 11th November, 2008 be received.

CARRIED 10/0

7. AGENDA ITEMS

7.1 ELECTION OF CHIEF BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER AND DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS

Name of Applicant:	Internal Staff Report
File Ref:	5.1.3.1
Officer:	Chadd Hunt
Officer Interest	Nil
Policy:	Bush Fire Brigade Administration Procedures Manual
Voting:	Simple Majority
Date:	30/04/2009

PURPOSE

In accordance with the Administrative Procedures Manual Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting Rules and previous resolutions of the Shire of Northam this committee is required to nominate to Council:

- Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO)
- Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer East (DCBFCOE)
- Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer West (DCBFCOW)

BACKGROUND

The Shire of Northam has previously appointed Mr Richard Marris to the position of CBFCO, Mr Phil Gentle as DCBFCOE and Mr Gordon Ashman as DCBFCOW. All positions were appointed until April 2009.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting Rules stipulates the following with respect to the appointment of both CBFCO and Deputy CBFCO:

“1.5.3 Election of Local Government Officers at the Annual General Meeting to be held in April each year:

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee may forward to the Shire of Northam recommendations for the following positions which will 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 be appointed to the same position;

- a. Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
- b. Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (2)
- c. Fire Weather Officers

Persons wishing to nominate for the above positions must meet the training requirements and be prepared to carry out the duties of the position.”

Following the individual Brigade meetings held recently the current incumbents in the positions were the only nominations received from the Brigades.

The position of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer is made under the powers of section 38A of the Bush Fires Act 1956.

CONFORMITY WITH THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Key Result Area – Land Use & Infrastructure – Outcome 6 – Adequate provisions for Bush Fire Protection are provided, monitored and maintained.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

OFFICER'S COMMENT

Given the above information it is recommended that this Committee recommend to Council that the nominated persons be appointed to the positions.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

1. That this Committee recommends to Council that the following persons be appointed to the following positions until April 2011:
 - Chief Bush Fire Control Officer – Mr Richard Marris (Grass Valley Delegate)
 - Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer (East) – Mr Phil Gentle (
 - Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer (West) – Mr Gordon Ashman

RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE'S DECISION

Moved: Mr Paul Antonio (Southern Brook Delegate)
Seconded: Mr Chris Barrington (Bakers Hill Delegate)

1. **That this Committee recommends to Council that the following persons be appointed to the following positions until April 2011:**
 - **Chief Bush Fire Control Officer – Mr Richard Marris**
 - **Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer (East) – Mr Phil Gentle**
 - **Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer (West) – Mr Gordon Ashman**

CARRIED 10/0

7.2 REVIEW OF SHIRE OF NORTHAM FIREBREAK ORDER

Name of Applicant:	Internal Report/Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
File Ref:	5.1.5.3
Officer:	Chadd Hunt
Officer Interest	Chadd Hunt
Policy:	Nil Bush Fires Act 1954
Voting:	Simple Majority
Date:	30/04/2009

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for the Committee to consider changes to the Shire of Northam's Firebreak Order. The Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade has also requested that the requirement for a 3 metre vertical clearance within the order also be removed and the width of firebreak reduced to 2 metres.

BACKGROUND

The Clackline/Muresk Brigade have requested that the following motion be considered by this Committee:

- "That Shire removes the 3 metre height clearance requirement for firebreaks and reduces the width from 3 metres to 2 metres."

Council has previously adopted a Firebreak Order in July 2008, a copy of which is attached to the Agenda.

The current Firebreak Order stipulates a number of restrictions with regards to the type and construction required for all land within the Shire of Northam.

The particular components of the Order which have been highlighted to be discussed are:

- The requirements for a 3 metre vertical clearance for all firebreaks.
- The requirements for a firebreak 3 metres in width.
- The requirement for land area greater than 2023m² but less than 1 hectare to slash the entire lot, or install a 3 metre firebreak.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Council has the power to adopt a Firebreak Order under Section 33 of the Bush Fires Act which stipulates that Council can determine what specifications are appropriate.

CONFORMITY WITH THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Key Result Area – Land Use & Infrastructure – Outcome 6 – Adequate provisions for Bush Fire Protection are provided, monitored and maintained.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

OFFICER'S COMMENT

The issue which staff highlighted is the requirement for either firebreaks or vegetation control on lots within townsite boundaries. An example is the Special Residential areas within the outskirts of the Northam Townsite which currently have the option of either installing a 3 metre firebreak or slashing the entire lot to a maximum height of 75cm. If the firebreak is installed then there is no restriction on the height of the vegetation on the block in question which poses a potential fire risk.

The issue raised by the Clackline/Muresk Brigade is with respect to a 3 metre vertical clearance requirement for all firebreaks. The reasoning behind this requirement is to ensure there is sufficient clearance of vegetation for emergency vehicles.

With regard to the requirement for the width of the firebreak to be reduced staff believe the current arrangements to be satisfactory and would not recommend any changes at this time.

COMMITTEE'S DISCUSSION POINTS FOR THIS TOPIC

- Significant discussion occurred with respect to Council's Firebreak Order. Some delegates felt that a single guideline or requirement for all land within the Shire was too broad. There were suggestions to look at different requirements for different areas of the Shire.
- Discussion occurred with respect to the purpose and intent of firebreaks and what they were designed for.
- The issue was raised with respect to historic requirement for 2 metre firebreaks within the former Shire areas.
- The issue was raised with respect to practicality of the vertical clearance requirements within some localities including the broad-acre farming areas where roadside vegetation is an issue.

- The issue was raised with respect to the finalisation of the Firebreak Order. Given that Council sends a copy to each landowner with the Rates Notices which is generally in June/July priority needs to be given to this issue.

Given the above discussion this Committee resolved to establish a Working Committee to work through the issues raised above and to recommend direct to Council proposed modifications to the Firebreak Order.

DELEGATE'S RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mr Lynton Smith (Jennapullin Delegate)
Seconded: Mr Ray Russell (Clackline/Muresk Delegate)

That Shire removes the 3 metre height clearance requirement for firebreaks and reduces the width from 3 metre to 2 metres.

LOST 0/10

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That this Committee recommend to Council that it adopts the Firebreak Order as attached to this agenda subject to any changes highlighted.

RECOMMENDATION/COMMITTEE'S DECISION

Moved: Mr Ross MacKenzie (Irishtown Delegate)
Seconded: Mr Richard Marris (Grass Valley Delegate)

That this issue be referred to a Working Committee to discuss the Firebreak Order and make recommendations on any proposed changes.

CARRIED 10/0

Note: The Committee generally agreed that the Working Committee be set comprised of the following:

- **(East) Brigades - Mr Paul Antonio (Southern Brook Delegate)**
- **(West) Brigades - Mr Ray Russell (Clackline/Muresk Delegate)**
- **Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service - Mr Greg Montgomery (Northam VFRS Delegate)**
- **Shire of Northam - Cr Michael Letch**
- **Chief Bush Fire Control Officer - Mr Richard Marris (Grass Valley Delegate)**

It was agreed that the Working Committee would report directly to Council.

7.3 COMMUNICATION ISSUES

Name of Applicant:	Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
File Ref:	5.1.3.1
Officer:	Chadd Hunt
Officer Interest	Nil
Policy:	Bush Fire Act 1954
Voting:	Simple Majority
Date:	30/04/2009

PURPOSE

For this Committee to consider recommendations made to it by the Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade with respect to two communication issues.

BACKGROUND

The Clackline/Muresk Brigade have requested that this Committee consider the two following motions:

- “That the control of all fires in Bush Fire Brigade Areas should be on VHF Channel 43” and;
- “Bush Fire radio be the first means of callout followed by pager, SMS and phone”

It is anticipated that the Clackline/Muresk delegates will be able to expand on the issues raised at this meeting.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Council has previously considered the report from the Organisation Review which includes the following recommendations which was previously endorsed by the Bush Fire Advisory Committee:

- “That the Shire of Northam adopts the FESA Brigade callout protocol through the use of radios, pagers and SMS.”

CONFORMITY WITH THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Key Result Area – Land Use & Infrastructure – Outcome 6 – Adequate provisions for Bush Fire Protection are provided, monitored and maintained.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

OFFICER'S COMMENT

The issue with respect to operational procedures for the use of specific bush fire channels during a fire incident will require further discussion at this meeting.

With regard to the proposal to utilise only Bush Fire Radio to call for assistance to fires, staff believe that the current process of utilising a combination of tools is the most appropriate.

This Committee and Council has previously endorsed the use of pagers, SMS, telephones and radios as the most appropriate method of communication.

The current "000" agreement with FESA stipulates that in the event of an incident being reported FESA Communications Centre will contact via pagers, members of the "Executive Group" to request a response to the reported incident. If no response to the pager is received then FESA Communication Centre will then ring members on the Executive Group individually until a response has been given. Following the report of an incident the use of pagers, SMS, radios and phones is undertaken to ensure a suitable response is provided and staff support this current arrangement.

COMMITTEE'S DISCUSSION POINTS FOR THIS TOPIC

Discussion occurred with respect to the use of pagers, SMS and radio communication.

- The issue was raised with respect to the timeliness of responses to incidents using various forms of communication
- Concerns were raised that the pager system is unreliable
- The issue was raised with respect to the use of other radio channels when the Incident Controller determines such

DELEGATE'S RECOMMENDATION

1. That the control of all fires in Bush Fire Brigade Areas should be on VHF Channel 43.
2. Bush Fire radio is to be the first means of callout followed by pager, SMS and phone.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

1. That this Committee reaffirms the use of VHF Channel 43 as the primary radio channel for the control of bush fire within the gazetted Bush Fire Brigade District with the use of other channels and frequencies as required.
2. That the current operations of using pagers, SMS, telephone and radio for responding to incidents be continued.

RECOMMENDATION/COMMITTEE'S DECISION

Moved: Mr Ray Russell (Clackline/Muresk Delegate)
Seconded: Mr Ross MacKenzie (Irishtown Delegate)

1. That the control of all fires in Bush Fire Brigade Areas should be on VHF Channel 43.
2. Bush Fire radio is to be the first means of call-out followed by pagers, SMS & telephone.

MOTION LOST 4/6

Moved: Ms Adina Brucciani (Wundowie VFRS Delegate)
Seconded: Mr Richard Marris (Grass Valley Delegate)

1. That this Committee reaffirms the use of VHF Channel 43 as the primary radio channel for the control of bush fire within the gazetted Bush Fire Brigade District with the use of other channels and frequencies as required.
2. That the current operations of using paging, SMS, telephone and radio for responding to incidents be continued.

CARRIED 9/1

7.4 ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

Name of Applicant:	Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
File Ref:	5.1.5.11
Officer:	Chadd Hunt
Officer Interest	Nil
Policy:	Bush Fires Act 1954
Voting:	Simple Majority
Date:	30/04/2009

PURPOSE

For this Committee to consider a recommendation from the Clackline/Muresk Brigade regarding the implementation of the Organisational Review.

BACKGROUND

The Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade have requested that the following motion be considered by this Committee:

- “That Shire applies timeframes and targets to outstanding Bush Fire Organisation Review Recommendations in order for progress to be made (on Recommendations 2, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19.)

The following are the recommendations as endorsed by the Council:

- “2. That procedures for the callout of backup resources be contained in the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Response Plan which is developed in consideration with the Bush Fire Advisory Committee prior to endorsement by Council.”

“12. That FCO’s and Brigade Officers undergo training in saccharisation of wildfires and that development of communication plans be instigated.”
- “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.”
- “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.”
- “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.”
- “18. 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, saccharisation and the development of radio communication plans.”
- “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.”

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The responsibility for management of bush fires is contained within the Bush Fires Act 1954.

CONFORMITY WITH THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Key Result Area – Land Use & Infrastructure – Outcome 6 – Adequate provisions for Bush Fire Protection are provided, monitored and maintained.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

OFFICER'S COMMENT

It is recognised that the recommendations from the Bush Fire Review are required to have further work to ensure that they are all implemented in accordance with the resolution.

It should also be noted that Council has recently resolved to employ a Senior Ranger/Emergency Services Officer who will be partially responsible for implementing the recommendations contained within the Organisational Review. It is anticipated that following the establishment of the new positions in June/July this year that a timeframe for implementation will be developed and available for further discussion at the Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting later this year.

DELEGATE'S RECOMMENDATION

1. That Shire applies timeframes and targets to outstanding Bush Fire Organisation Review Recommendations in order for progress to be made (on Recommendations 2, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19.)

RECOMMENDATION/COMMITTEE'S DECISION

Moved: Mr Ray Russell (Clackline/Muresk Delegate)
Seconded: Ms Adina Brucciani (Wundowie VFRS Delegate)

1. That Shire applies timeframes and targets to outstanding Bush Fire Organisation Review Recommendations in order for progress to be made (on Recommendations 2, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19.)

CARRIED 10/0

7.5 APPOINTMENT OF FIRE WEATHER OFFICERS AND HARVEST BAN OFFICERS

Name of Applicant:	Internal Staff Report
File Ref:	5.1.3.1
Officer:	Chadd Hunt
Officer Interest	Nil
Policy:	Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting Rules
Voting:	Simple Majority
Date:	01/05/2009

PURPOSE

To ensure that Fire Weather Officers and Harvest Ban Officers are appointed by Council for a term to coincide with the annual Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting and the term of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers.

BACKGROUND

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee Rules as adopted by both this Committee and Council, stipulates the position of Fire Weather Officers and Harvest Ban Officers are to be appointed for a two year period with an option to renew for a further two years.

These positions were appointed in November 2008 and subsequently will need to be reappointed in November 2010. It is recommended that these appointments be made until April 2011 to coincide with that of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting Rules as adopted by the Bush Fire Advisory Committee and Council stipulates the following:

- “1.5.3 Election of Local Government Officers at the Annual General Meeting to be held in April each year:

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee may forward to the Shire of Northam recommendations for the following positions which will 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 be appointed to the same position;

- a. Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
- b. Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (2)
- c. Fire Weather Officers

Persons wishing to nominate for the above positions must meet the training requirements and be prepared to carry out the duties of the position.”

Given that the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommended appointments in November 2008 it is suggested that these appointments be adjusted to coincide with the Annual General Meeting to be held in April/May in 2011.

CONFORMITY WITH THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Key Result Area – Land Use & Infrastructure – Outcome 6 – Adequate provisions for Bush Fire Protection are provided, monitored and maintained.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

OFFICER’S COMMENT

The purpose of this report is to address an anomaly with the timing of appointments to the Fire Weather Officers and Harvest Ban Officer positions.

It is anticipated that this Committee and Council will endorse the minor modifications proposed.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That this Committee recommends to Council that the following people be appointed to the position of Fire Weather Officers until April 2011:

- Fire Weather Officer Mr Richard Marris
- Deputy Fire Weather Officer Mr Phil Gentle
- Deputy Fire Weather Officer Mr Gordon Ashman

2. That this Committee recommends to Council that the following people be appointed to the position of Harvest Ban Officers until April 2011:

- WEST Mr Sim Kuiper
- NORTH EAST Mr Lynton Smith
- CENTRAL Mr Gordon Ashman
- EAST Mr Phil Gentle

RECOMMENDATION/COMMITTEE’S DECISION

**Moved: Mr Ray Russell (Clackline/Muresk Delegate)
Seconded: Cr Steve Pollard (Chairman)**

1. That this Committee recommends to Council that the following people be appointed to the position of Fire Weather Officers until April 2011:

- **Fire Weather Officer Mr Richard Marris**
- **Deputy Fire Weather Officer Mr Phil Gentle**
- **Deputy Fire Weather Officer Mr Gordon Ashman**

2. That this Committee recommends to Council that the following people be appointed to the position of Harvest Ban Officers until April 2011:

- **WEST Mr Sim Kuiper**
- **NORTH EAST Mr Lynton Smith**
- **CENTRAL Mr Gordon Ashman**
- **EAST Mr Phil Gentle**

CARRIED 10/0

7.6 APPOINTMENT OF FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS

Name of Applicant:	Internal Staff Report
File Ref:	5.1.3.1
Officer:	Chadd Hunt
Officer Interest	Nil
Policy:	Bush Fires Act 1954
Voting:	Simple Majority
Date:	01/05/2009

PURPOSE

For this Committee to endorse the nominations received for Bush Fire Control Officer for endorsement by Council.

BACKGROUND

Council appoints Fire Control Officers under the powers of the Bush Fires Act 1954. Individual Brigades have nominated additional persons to be designated as a Fire Control Officer and subsequently this Committee is requested to endorse the appointment.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Council has the authority under Section 38 of the Bush Fires Act to appoint persons to the position of Fire Control Officer.

CONFORMITY WITH THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Key Result Area – Land Use & Infrastructure – Outcome 6 – Adequate provisions for Bush Fire Protection are provided, monitored and maintained.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

OFFICER'S COMMENT

The positions required to be considered by this Committee are:

- Clackline/Muresk Ms Sue Brooker
- Bakers Hill Mr Martin Beaumont

Should this recommendation be supported by this Committee and Council the Bakers Hill Brigade will have five (5) Fire Control Officers and the Clackline/Muresk four (4.)

Whilst there is no restriction on the number of Fire Control Officers per Brigade it is recommended that if appointed, the individuals confirm in writing their willingness to perform the duties of the position.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That this Committee recommends to Council that the following persons be appointed to the position of Fire Control Officer:
 - Ms Sue Brooker – Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
 - Mr Martin Beaumont – Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigade

2. That Council confirms in writing with the newly appointed Fire Control Officers the duties and responsibilities of the position, training requirements and request written confirmation of their commitment to undertaking those duties.

RECOMMENDATION/COMMITTEE'S DECISION

Moved: Mr Ray Russell (Clackline/Muresk Delegate)
Seconded: Mr Richard Marris (Grass Valley Delegate)

1. That this Committee recommends to Council that the following persons be appointed to the position of Fire Control Officer:
 - Ms Sue Brooker – Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
 - Mr Martin Beaumont – Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigade

2. That Council confirms in writing with the newly appointed Fire Control Officers the duties and responsibilities of the position, training requirements and request written confirmation of their commitment to undertaking those duties.

CARRIED 10/0

7.7 PROPOSED UPDATING OF ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES MANUAL

Name of Applicant:	Clackline / Muresk Bush Fire Brigade
File Ref:	5.1.5.11
Officer:	Chadd Hunt
Officer Interest	Nil
Policy:	Bush Fire Brigades Administration Procedures Manual
Voting:	Simple Majority
Date:	08/05/2009

PURPOSE

For this Committee to consider the submissions from the Clackline/Muresk Bush Fire Brigade on the proposed modification to the Administration Procedures Manual.

BACKGROUND

The Administration Procedures Manual was agreed to by the Bush Fire Advisory Committee at its meeting held on 7th July 2008 and was subsequently adopted by Council at its meeting held on 13th August, 2008.

The Clackline/Muresk Brigade has suggested the following changes to the existing document:

1. Include the definition of Normal Brigade Activities as contained within the Bush Fires Act as an appendix to the Manual
2. Include the adopted Shire of Northam policies as an appendix to the Manual
3. Remove duplication of Shire of Northam policies within Section 3.2
4. Include the following requirements within Section 3.5 Brigade Commitments, Brigade Training:
 - a) FESA Volunteer Fire Fighter Induction
 - b) Introduction to Fire Fighting prior to commencing active fire fighting duties
 - c) Completion of Bush fire Fighting module within 12 months of being registered
5. Modify the wording under Section 9.3 to correct an editing error to ensure that the wording relating to the duties of the Lieutenant not Chief Bush Fire Control Officer as currently states

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The Manual has been adopted by Council as Policy and subsequently any substantial changes will need to be endorsed by Council.

Currently the Manual does not stipulate what specific training is required to be undertaken by members of volunteer brigades. New members of Brigades are generally required to complete basic training and the introduction to Fire Fighting module.

CONFORMITY WITH THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Key Result Area – Land Use & Infrastructure – Outcome 6 – Adequate provisions for Bush Fire Protection are provided, monitored and maintained.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

OFFICER'S COMMENT

The suggestions proposed by the Clackline/Muresk Brigade other than the suggested training requirements are basically administrative in nature and supported by staff.

The suggested modifications to the training requirements by Clackline/Muresk provides a specific requirement for the minimum training that members are required to undertake.

The current proposed wording from Clackline/Muresk requires further consideration as it could be interpreted to apply to all brigade members

RECOMMENDATION

That this Committee recommends that the Administrative Procedures Manual be modified by:

1. Including the definition of Normal Brigade Activities as contained within the Bush Fires Act as an appendix to the Manual
2. Including adopted Council Policies relating to the Bush Fire Brigades as an appendix to the Manual
3. Deleting duplicated information under *Section 3.2 Conditions of Membership*
4. Including the following *under Section 3.5 Brigade Commitments, Brigade Training*:
 - a) FESA Volunteer Fire Fighter Induction
 - b) Introduction to Fire Fighting prior to commencing active fire fighting duties
 - c) Completion of Bush Fire Fighting module within 12 months of being registered
 - d) Correcting the error under *Section 9. The duties of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Officer Bearers, 9.3 Lieutenant* by replacing "Chief Bush Fire Control Officer" where it appears with "Lieutenant."

RECOMMENDATION/COMMITTEE'S DECISION

Moved: Mr Ray Russell (Clackline/Muresk Delegate)
Seconded: Mr Ross MacKenzie (Irishtown Delegate)

That this Committee recommends that the Administrative Procedures Manual be modified by:

- 1. Including the definition of Normal Brigade Activities as contained within the Bush Fires Act as an appendix to the Manual.**

CARRIED 10/0

RECOMMENDATION/COMMITTEE'S DECISION

Moved: Mr Ross MacKenzie (Irishtown Delegate)
Seconded: Mr Chris Barrington (Bakers Hill Delegate)

- 2. That this Committee recommends that the Administrative Procedures Manual be modified by including adopted Council Policies relating to the Bush Fire Brigades as an appendix to the Manual.**

CARRIED 10/0

RECOMMENDATION/COMMITTEE'S DECISION

Moved: Mr Richard Marris (Grass Valley Delegate)
Seconded: Mr Ross MacKenzie (Irishtown Delegate)

- 3. That this Committee recommends that the Administrative Procedures Manual be modified by deleting duplicated information under *Section 3.2 Conditions of Membership*.**

CARRIED 10/0

RECOMMENDATION/COMMITTEE'S DECISION

Moved: Mr Chris Barrington (Bakers Hill Delegate)
Seconded: Mr Ray Russell (Clackline/Muresk Delegate)

- 4. That this Committee recommends that the Administrative Procedures Manual be modified by including the following *under Section 3.5 Brigade Commitments, Brigade Training*:**

- a) FESA Volunteer Fire Fighter Induction**
- b) Introduction to Fire Fighting prior to commencing active fire fighting duties**

- c) **Completion of Bush Fire Fighting module within 12 months of being registered**
- d) **Correcting the error under *Section 9. The duties of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Officer Bearers, 9.3 Lieutenant* by replacing “Chief Bush Fire Control Officer” where it appears with “Lieutenant.”**

CARRIED 9/1

RECOMMENDATION/COMMITTEE’S DECISION

Amendment Moved: Mr Ross MacKenzie (Irishtown Delegate)
Amendment Seconded: Mr Lynton Smith (Jennapullin Delegate)

- e) **That the word “preferred” be inserted in Clause 3.2 in place of “required” when it first appears.**

AMENDMENT LOST 4/6

The original motion was then CARRIED 9/1

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

8.1 *Report of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer*

“The 2008/2009 fire season has fortunately proved to be fairly uneventful even though it has been quite busy with some 60 call-outs. We did have two fairly serious incidents, the first being the annual Mr Ommaney fire in Northam and the other being the simultaneous fires that occurred at Douglas and Werribee Roads. I hope that the Shire of Northam take action to alleviate the ongoing Mt Ommaney problem prior to the next fire season. This issue was discussed at the subsequent debrief and action by the Shire was agreed to.

Progress by the Shire with the recommendations emanating from the Harris Report has been slow. Primarily this has been caused by the high workload that Shire staff is encountering. It is hoped that the new Shire Ranger Policy and possibly the employment of a specialised Emergency Hazard Management Officer will alleviate this problem.

It is encouraging to note that although there was initial resistance, in some quarters to the recommendations relating to clothing on the fire ground and training in Incident Control and also the AIIMS system, there has been an uptake of the recommendations by brigade members.

The new Harvest Ban system has been a marked improvement on the old system and I congratulate the officers involved.

The communications system in place is coming under attack from various quarters, but it should be noted that although there are some glitches in the combined use of the Radio Network, Pagers and SMS, it is working quite well, and that there have not been any delays in attending fires. In fact the system allows a lot wider group of fire fighters to be

aware of an emergency. There are many volunteers within the shire that do not have radios or are not near a radio on the initial call, who can quickly react to an SMS or Page message.

It is disappointing to see that there are still some disruptive elements within some brigades. The greater majority of brigade members are excellent team members. And Fire Brigades have to be made up of team players that have respect and trust for their fellow fire fighters and can be completely confident in their ability. Likewise Brigades have to have that understanding with their fellow brigades. However, an extremely small number of vocal people seem to think that they are above being part of a team. I suggest that these people take a good, strong look at themselves and re-evaluate their stand, and either become part of the team, or resign.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Brigade Members, Shire staff, FESA officers and others for being so dedicated and devoting their time and effort in making the 08/09 fire season in the Northam area as safe and uneventful as it was.”

Richard Marris. CBFCO Shire of Northam.

11.05.2009

8.2 Report of Department of Environment and Conservation

Mr K Pollack briefed the Committee on the Departments proposed burning program for the forthcoming months.

“Mokine Nature Reserve – to be burned during Autumn
Warramine Nature Reserve – not on the list for forthcoming burning season
Clackline Nature Reserve – to be burned during Autumn
Bobakine Nature Reserve – not on the list for forthcoming burning season
Woodowing Nature Reserve – not on the list for the forthcoming burning area

The issue with respect to the forthcoming burning season with regard to the day start to the year will potentially impact on the prescribed burning program.”

Various questions and answers were asked and responded to with regard to the Department of Environment and Conservation burning programs.

8.3 Report of FESA

1. “I would like to pass onto the CBFCO and all Brigade’s Volunteers, the communities vote of appreciation for their commitment throughout the year.
2. Presently I am waiting the approval of the new ESL boundaries for the Northam and Wundowie Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services before proceeding with the Northam Bush Fire Brigades, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and the Shire looking at the present Brigade boundaries taking into account the growth with the Shire.
3. Thank you to Southern Brook Brigade for considering where they believe a fire shed should be put. I understand Inkpen Brigade have formed a committee and will be reporting back latter in the year.

4. I have noted and been approached by some brigade members that some brigades have available a large number of active members, but not all get the same opportunity to jump on an appliance when it is going to a fire. Hence some are losing interest.
5. The Bush Fire Management Plan is intended to be finished over winter and will be available by the oncoming season in October 2009.
6. UXO mapping is ongoing and as further research becomes available, the maps will be changed appropriately and delivered in October prior to the 2009/10 season.
7. We are presently having some minor problems with SMS as a result of 2 systems running in parallel and only one being correctly maintained.

We have delayed sorting this out as FESA has just tendered the systems and it is quite probable the contract will go to one company, instead of 2.

Pagers are working okay, as long as the person is in range of the pager service.

The executive notification where a number of people are notified of the initial call, allows for a number of redundancies, will stay, as this enables FESA to hand over the call appropriately within the required time frame.

8. I would like to congratulate the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Richard Marris for efforts throughout the years and wish him the best.
9. Grants:
 - Western Power
 - Lotterys West
- 10.a) Change of Restricted Burning Periods needs to be requested to FESA and then advertised.
- b) All positions need to be gazetted"

Linton Mincherton, FESA

11 May 2009

8.4 Reports of Shire of Northam

1) "Changes to ESL Process

Emergency Services Levy proposed 2009/10 = \$57,770

Operating Grant 2008/2009 - \$60,865 GST Excl.

Grants Manual soon to be distributed. Appeal process is to be forwarded with the Grants Manual.
Currently \$58,574

Spent Number of invoices outstanding Yet to be paid

2009/10 Budget

Will write to the individual Brigades in the next week or so.

2) Changes to Staff Structure

Current contract with Shire of Toodyay will not be renewed past 30th June, 2009. The Shire is currently in the process of recruiting:

- Senior Ranger/Emergency Services Officer
- Ranger
- 0.5 FTE Part-time Ranger

Council agreed to a Community Emergency Services Officer with funding from FESA. FESA funding no longer available. Options are still being pursued.

Ranger Service will be operational by 1st July 2009.

3) Provision of Fire Sheds – Southern Brook and Inkpen Brigades

Looking at location for new sheds for these two brigades. The capital cost of these will be included in the 2009/10 ESL submission.

Location details are yet to be finalised.

FESA have indicated that land can be leased to the Shire. The Shire wishes to possibly purchase if able to as it is the preferred option. Further consultation is required with Brigades as to the best location.

4) ESL Expenditure

- Reminder to contact Melissa at the Shire for Purchase Orders prior to ordering any goods/services
- Need to include within Purchase Order estimated costs
- Emergency repairs can be handled differently – contact Melissa or myself directly

5) Connection of Telephone & Fax Lines

The Shire of Northam is looking at connecting phone and fax lines to:

- Clackline/Muresk Shed on
- Grass Valley Shed
- Irishtown Shed

6) Post season servicing of vehicles – prior to 30th June, 2009 if possible

7) Thanks to all Bush Fire Brigade Secretaries & Volunteers”

Chadd Hunt, Executive Manager Planning & Development, Shire of Northam, 11 May, 2009

8.5 Reports of Brigades

Bakers Hill Brigade

- “Increased training over the last 12 months
- Undertaken PPE training
- Members list updated – a number transferred to “Auxiliary Membership”
- Battery issue with vehicles – new charger system to be installed
- Some discussion by members regarding the provision of a new shed and vehicle within the Wundowie locality”

Clackline/Muresk Brigade

“Since our last AGM our brigade has conducted 9 training sessions, including one community meeting at the Clackline Hall. Our average attendance at training sessions was 16. The most popular was “Safety on the Fire Ground” with 21 people, which shows we are on the right track with our safety emphasis, we were pleased to welcome Rob Herzer to that session and invite people from other brigades to join us.

In the last 12 months 46 of our members have successfully completed FESA training courses, including 12 members on the recent Hot Fire Course at Forrestfield.

Our units are in good order and the brigade is running smoothly.”

Grass Valley Brigade

- “Post Christmas period very busy
- 11 Call-outs (4 farmer related)
- Issue with respect to rail grinding and cause of fires
- Provided support to individual fires in Avon Industrial Park
- Raised issue with respect to previous resolutions of Bush Fire Advisory Committee regarding the upgrading of fire warning signs and the proposed signage which states that the use of Channel 5 for reporting fires. The signs are currently in a poor state of repair. Stickers advising same were supposed to be sent out with rates notice.
- Issue raised with respect to the introduction of the new radio system throughout the state – issue with respect to roll-out throughout the state
- Need for implementation of Harris Report recommendations
- Need for succession planning for Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Deputy Bush Fire Control Officers, Fire Weather Officers

- Proposed visit to Perth area to investigate and inspect FESA Communications Centre Training Centre etc – any interested parties to contact the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer”

Inkpen Brigade

- “Issue raised with respect to Shire workers and Contractors working when a Harvest, Vehicle Movement and Hot Works Ban is implemented – Should the Shire also be subject to stopping work?”

Irishtown

- “Relatively quiet summer
- New, second hand (refurbished) light tanker delivered
- Issue with respect to vehicle movement bans on predetermined days (Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Day) and if the ban should be lifted at a certain time.
- Generally agreed that this issue needs to be discussed further with respect to the type of brigade Irishtown is classified as – generally termed a “Community Responsive Unit.”

Jennapullin Brigade

- “Generally quiet season
- Annual Meeting was held
- Issue with respect to enforcement of Firebreak Order – requires Shire to enforce requirements. Council staff responded that for the next fire season enforcement and action will be given a high priority
- Suggested that the Shire of Northam should issue all Fire Permits as is the case in the Shire of Goomalling
- Reiterate that the Incident Controller should issue Channel that fire communications should occur on”

Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service

- “Want to thank all the other Brigades with which a professional relationship has been developed
- Has ongoing issue with active member numbers attending incidents
- Advised the Committee of the Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service’s Call-out Procedures
- Advised the Committee of the Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service’s radio issues when attending fires”

Southern Brook Brigade

- “Issue with tank on auxiliary motor – issue for other similar models
- Request/Suggestion that when Harvest, Vehicle Movement or Hot Works ban is imposed it should be announced on all channels on the radio network.”

Wundowie Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service

- “Similar issues and sentiments as the Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
- Low turn out number to incidents”

8.6 Communications Officer

- “Requested call signs from all Brigades to be updated so that a current list can be compiled and call signs reallocated if appropriate.”

BUSHFIRE INCIDENTS IN OUR SHIRE BUSHFIRE AREAS (up until 6/5/09)	
SO FAR THIS YEAR	55
TOTAL LAST YEAR	36

BUSHFIRE INCIDENTS IN OUR SHIRE BUSHFIRE AREAS	
TEN years ago	41
TWENTY years ago	18
TWENTY FIVE years ago	13

WHERE THEY WERE (which Brigade area they were in)	
Bakers Hill	18
Clackline/Muresk	11
Grass Valley	8
Irishtown	3
Inkpen	5
Jennapullen	2
Southern Brook	0

