



BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

Committee Brief

To advise the Local Government regarding all matters relating to the preventing, controlling and extinguishing of bush fires, the planning of the layout of fire-breaks in the district, prosecutions for breaches of the Bush Fires Act 1954, the formation of bush fire brigades and the grouping thereof under group brigade officers and the ensuring of cooperation and coordination of bush fire brigades in their efforts and activities.

General Meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee
Held in the Council Chambers
7:00pm Wednesday 1 May 2019

Rob Stewart
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Committee Members

Cr L Handasyde, Cr B Bell, Cr M O'Dea (Deputy), (Resolution No. 223/17), CBFCO Mr N Handasyde, Mr John Rodgers Mr B Lynch, Mr B Appleby, Mr Iain Mackie, Mr R Wright, Mr C Norton, Mr D Trotter, Ms K Thomas, Mr M Wills, Mr J Baily, Mr M Adams, Mr M Wallace, Mr G Pyle, Mr A Hood, Mr J Stasev and Mr R Randall. (Resolution 97/18)

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MEMBERSHIP

Cr L Handasyde (Chairperson)

Cr B Bell (Deputy Chairperson)

Cr M O'Dea

Mr N Handasyde CBFCO

Mr J Rodgers

Mr B Lynch

Mr B Appleby

Mr I Mackie

Mr R Wright

Mr C Norton

Ms K Thomas

Mr D Trotter

Mr M Wills

Mr J Baily

Mr G Pyle

Mr M Adams

Mr A Hood

Mr M Wallace

Mr R Randall

Mr J Stasev

1 DECLARATION OF OPENING / ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

At 7.22pm the Presiding Member declared the meeting open.

2 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIESMembers Present

Cr L Handasyde	Council Representative (Presiding Member)
Cr B Bell	Council Representative
Cr J Moir	Council Representative
Cr M O'Dea	Council Representative
Mr N Handasyde	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Ms K Thomas	Porongurup Bush Fire Brigade
Ms V Randall	Forrest Hill Bush Fire Brigade
Mr C Moore	Forrest Hill Bush Fire Brigade
Ms H Wearmouth	Kendenup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr B Wearmouth	Kendenup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr T West	Mount Barker Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service
Mr J Stasev	Mount Barker Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service
Mr M Wills	Rocky Gully Bush Fire Brigade
Mr M Wallace	Chief Fire Weather Officer
Mr D Trotter	Perillup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr I Mackie	Middle Ward Bush Fire Brigade
Mr C Norton	Narrakup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr B Skinner	Woogenellup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr W Matthews	Porongurup South Bush Fire Brigade
Mr J Baily	Porongurup South Bush Fire Brigade
Mr J Rodgers	Denbarker Bush Fire Brigade
Mr M Adams	Woogenellup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr S Adams	Woogenellup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr R Wright	Narpyn Bush Fire Brigade
Mr N Hunt	Woogenellup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr G Pyle	South Stirlings Bush Fire Brigade
Ms D Pyle	South Stirlings Bush Fire Brigade

Visitors

Mr M Parker	PF Olsen
Mr V Hilder	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (Albany)
Mr R Lake	Department of Fire and Emergency Services
Mr W Bailye	Department of Fire and Emergency Services

Staff

Mr R Stewart	Chief Executive Officer
Mr D Lynch	Manager Works and Services
Ms A Chadbourne	Senior Administration, Works and Services

Apologies

Mr R Randall	Base Radio Officer
Mr K Forbes AM	Middle Ward Bush Fire Brigade
Mr C Nelson	Kojaneerup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr B Lynch	Forest Hill Bush Fire Brigade

3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Moved Ms V Randall, Seconded Cr B Bell;

That the Minutes of the General Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 2 May 2018 as circulated, be taken as read and adopted as a correct record.

CARRIED

4 REPORTS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

4.1 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES MANAGER REPORT

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to all brigade members and their families for all their efforts over the fire season. There has been quite a variety of causes and size of the various fires attended, which I am sure the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer will cover in his report.

The efforts of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers, Base and Deputy Radio Operators, Chief Fire Weather Officer and Deputy Fire Weather Officers are to be commended. Thank you for giving your time and for carrying out your roles to a high standard.

Congratulations also go to those who have continued in their role or who have been appointed into new roles for 2019/2020.

The Local Government Grant Scheme has been submitted, including four requests for items between \$1,200.00 and \$5,000.00.

All brigade sheds will have OH&S inspections twice as well as the normal test and tag and fire extinguishers.

There have been ongoing workshops in regards to a mitigation plan surrounding the Porongurups, this has consisted of representatives from the two local brigades, local residents, Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions and the Shire of Plantagenet.

Radio servicing will be conducted in August, truck servicing in August/September and the normal PPE ordering in September.

There are a number of training courses open to all brigade members both in this Shire and surrounding Shires.

4.2 CHIEF BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER REPORT

See Attachment One.

Discussion took place around the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer's (CBFCO) report, namely fuel reduction burns in the Porongurup and Stirling National Parks and the assessment of volunteers hours for 2018/2019. As this was the first year the amount of volunteer hours had been estimated it was agreed this would be a benchmark for comparison for future years.

4.3 FIRE WEATHER OFFICER REPORT

No report provided.

4.4 BASE RADIO OPERATOR REPORT

See Attachment Two.

Discussion occurred around the difficulties in estimating the actual number of fire fighters at various fire grounds. It was noted that fire trucks are documented.

A question was put to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) about the supply of food to fire fighters when responding to a fire. The CEO advised the CBFCO may authorise the supply of food to volunteers during a fire if no local government officer was available to do so.

4.5 DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES REPORT

Rob Lake gave a verbal report to the meeting.

He welcomed Wes Bailye the new Area Officer for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES). Wes is based in Albany.

Rob highlighted the busy 2018/2019 Christmas period in Albany and that many reinforcements were required to assist with fighting the fires. He also mentioned the Esperance fires which ran from mid December 2018 to the end of March 2019. These were classed as complex fires which began from lightning strikes in the Midlands and the Goldfields areas. Once again a large number of volunteers assisted.

Following these fires, more discussion and planning has taken place with community groups.

The Broad Acre Replacement Program for fire vehicles was mentioned with the first vehicles in the system not likely to be available until 2020/2021.

4.6 DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, BIODIVERSITY AND ATTRACTIONS REPORT

Vince Hilder gave a verbal report to the meeting.

He informed the meeting that 2018/2019 has been a quiet fire season for the Department of Conservation, Biodiversity and Attractions (DCBA) with only 13 fires in the region.

Meetings have been held with the Shire of Plantagenet and the CBFCO to discuss and identify areas within the Porongurup National Park that could have fuel reduction burns. He highlighted one such burn planned for the south east corner of the area – approximately 20 to 30 hectares. An area in the Stirlings has also been identified in the south west corner for a planned fuel reduction burn.

4.7 PLANTATION COMPANY REPORT

Mal Porter from PF Olsen provided a verbal report to the meeting.

Following the fires in May last year the plantation industry reviewed its Code of Practice with the intent of having fire regulations available by 2020.

Mal discussed the reduction in the use of fire in plantations as a method of reducing harvest residues; instead the intent being to spread out the waste left from harvest and windrowing it back into the soil to break down.

He also highlighted that following consultation with DFES, the plantation industry now has a fire fighting unit that is formally recognised and can respond to fires.

5 GENERAL BUSINESS

5.1 ANNUAL BUSH FIRE MITIGATION NOTICE

See Attachment Three.

The meeting looked at the draft Annual Bush Fire Mitigation Notice (BFMN) which has been recently reviewed in a workshop with Shire staff and Bush Fire Control Officers. A number of changes have been made to the 2019/2020 notice and these were highlighted as follows:

- A new section – ‘Definitions’ was included this year which defines a fire break and a total fire ban;
- Abandoned houses are to be treated the same as sheds; and
- Adjoining properties are to be treated as individual properties rather than as one lot.

Discussion and comment was made during the meeting as follows:

- The height of vegetation to 50mm as defined in the fire break section;
- The fire break requirement of 15m would remain in place on a plantation after harvest or when in rotation. When the flammable material has been reduced ie the coppice has been removed and the plantation is in the process of reversion back into pasture, the fire break required would be 6m wide;
- The treatment of abandoned buildings on a property. After some discussion, it was agreed that abandoned buildings should be clearly marked (sign posted) as such and that no fire breaks will be required. The buildings will not be considered to be salvageable in a fire.

Moved Mr I Mackie, Seconded Mr R Wright;

That the following requirement for abandoned buildings be inserted into the BFMN:

‘Abandoned buildings clearly marked by an approved sign shall be considered under the same requirements as a shed and will not be considered salvageable in a fire.’

Moved Mr D Trotter, Seconded Mr N Handasyde;

That the Council implement the Annual 2019/2020 Bush Fire Mitigation Notice as presented.

CARRIED

5.2 KARRI OAK AIRSTRIP

Cr Handasyde advised the meeting that at a recent Council Meeting, Councillors endorsed a licence arrangement with the owners of the Karri Oak Airstrip for its use by water bombers.

The CEO elaborated on this saying that the agreement was currently being assessed by a legal team and issues were being looked at prior to any documents being signed.

Vince Hilder offered assistance. He explained that DFES has agreements with owners of airstrips for use by water bombers.

5.3 FIRE APPLIANCE HOSE FITTINGS AND DELUGE SYSTEM FILTER SEAL

The CBFCO advised that these systems were serviced annually.

Discussion took place about tank fittings and the inability of water takers to connect to the water tanks on Braidwood Hill.

The Manager Works and Services (MWS) advised this was an operational matter and would be attended to by the new CESM.

5.4 TRUCK UPGRADES

The plan for the future fire truck fleet is for vehicles to be upgraded to 4.4 Broad Acre Tankers.

5.5 TRUCKS' FOAM SYSTEM NOT WORKING

Members present discussed the difficulties they have with the foam system in fire trucks. It was suggested that Wes Bailye could look into the problem and advise if there are any alternative systems for foam input.

5.6 SKEDS

It was agreed that at this time of year only a weekly call on a Sunday morning was required and this would be discussed by Officers at the Thursday morning call in.

5.7 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

The CEO advised the meeting that the Community Services Manager (CSM) and the CESM position were currently vacant. The new CESM position is to be advertised once the job description has been discussed with DFES and revised. The MWS has taken on the role until the position is filled.

The CEO also discussed the enforcement of the BFMN by Shire rangers at the commencement of the 2018/2019 fire season. He thanked the CBFCO and the brigades for their support and advised that only three infringements were issued as a result of the comprehensive program of inspection and education. The same program would be run for the 2019/2020 season.

6 NEXT MEETING

7.00pm, Wednesday 6 May 2020

7 MEETING CLOSURE

At 8.53pm the Presiding Member declared the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED: CHAIRPERSON _____ **DATE:** ___/___/___

ATTACHMENT THREE