

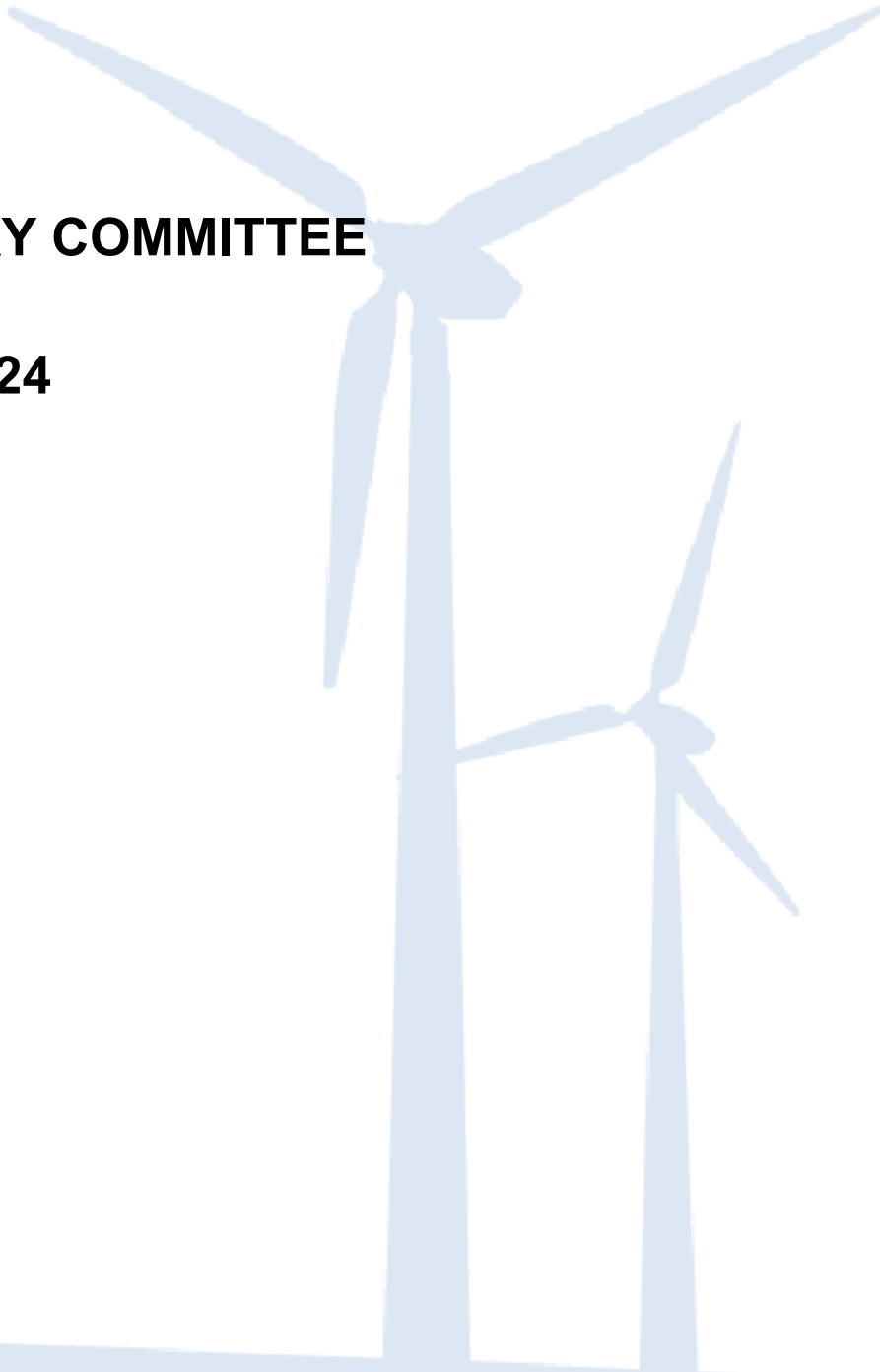


**Shire of Esperance**

**BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 15 JULY 2024**

**MINUTES**



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### **ETHICAL DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Council is committed to a code of conduct and all decisions are based on an honest assessment of the issue, ethical decision-making and personal integrity. Councillors and staff adhere to the statutory requirements to declare financial, proximity and impartiality interests and once declared follow the legislation as required.

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## SHIRE OF ESPERANCE

### MINUTES

#### **BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON 15 July 2024 COMMENCING AT 6:00 PM**

#### **1. OFFICIAL OPENING**

The Presiding Member declared the meeting open at 6:00pm.

#### **Vale – Harry Stead (Coomalbidgup BFB) 2003-2023**

In honour of Harry Stead, everyone observed a minute's silence in respect for the fallen family member, friend and colleague

#### **2. ATTENDANCE**

Everyone welcomed Mrs Claudia Magana, who started with the Shire in November 2023 as the Bushfire Risk Mitigation Coordinator.

#### **Members**

Cr W Graham	Shire of Esperance (Chairperson)
Pres. R Chambers	Shire of Esperance (Deputy)
Mr P Longmire	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Mr A Perks	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Mr T Carmody	Cascade Bush Fire Brigade
Mr K Scott	Coomalbidgup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr K Jeitz	Coomalbidgup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr M Scott	Coomalbidgup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr D Sanderson	Grass Patch Bush Fire Brigade/Bush Fire Volunteer Assoc.
Mr R Longbottom	Grass Patch Bush Fire Brigade
Mr G Harris	Grass Patch Bush Fire Brigade
Mr J Durdin	Quarry Rd Bush Fire Brigade
Mr L Palmer	Quarry Rd Bush Fire Brigade
Mr C Scott	Six Mile Hill Bush Fire Brigade
Mr P Rowe	Six Mile Hill Bush Fire Brigade
Mr S Brennan	Six Mile Hill Bush Fire Brigade
Mr N Ruddenklau	Condingup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr B South	Beaumont Bush Fire Brigade
Mr S Schlink	Howick Bush Fire Brigade
Mr K Lawrence	Pink Lake Bush Fire Brigade
Mr A Waters	Pink Lake Bush Fire Brigade
Mr C Hines	Mt Merivale Bush Fire Brigade
Mr B King	Mt Merivale Bush Fire Brigade
Mr N Norwood	Scaddan Bush Fire Brigade
Mr A Reichstein	Neridup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr H Davies	Gibson Bush Fire Brigade
Mrs S Prosser	Esperance Emergency Support Unit
Mr P Pratt	Esperance Emergency Support Unit

**Ex Officio**

Mr A Peczka	Community Emergency Services Manager
Ms Z Sheffield-van Mierlo	Manager Ranger and Emergency Services
Mrs C Magana	Bushfire Mitigation Coordinator
Mr J Black	DBCA Esperance District Manager
Mr S Peterson	District Officer for Department of Fire and Emergency Services

**Guests**

**3. APOLOGIES & NOTIFICATION OF GRANTED LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Mr W Carmody	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Mr L Mickel	Beaumont Bush Fire Brigade
Mrs K Naylor	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
Mr P Harkness	Emergency Support Unit
Mr P Luberdia	Dalyup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr C Hallam	Grass Patch Bush Fire Brigade
Mr M Ietto	Grass Patch Bush Fire Brigade

**4. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

**4.1 Declarations of Financial Interests – Local Government Act Section 5.60a**

**4.2 Declarations of Proximity Interests – Local Government Act Section 5.60b**

**4.3 Declarations of Impartiality Interests – Admin Regulations Section 34c**

**5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**Moved: Mr Longbottom**  
**Seconded: Mr South**

**BFA0724-105**

**That the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting of the 3 October 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record.**

**CARRIED**

**6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Nil

**7. REPORTS**

**7.1 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer – Mr Phil Longmire**

- Thanked everyone who put in the time and effort in supporting one of the largest volunteer brigade regions in WA.
- Acknowledged the tragedy of Harry Stead.
- Explained that the goal of the Bush Fire Brigades is to continue to improve all components to deal with not only fires, but safe operating environments due to the weather conditions and safer working environments with improved training and equipment.

- Thanked Tjaltjraak for being proactive with planned mitigation burns for the coming season

#### **7.2 DFES District Officer – Mr Stephen Peterson**

- Star Link- The mobile star link devices which are to be fitted to the Mt Beaumont and Cascade 4x4's and the four Esperance light tankers is still progressing. Currently still in the procurement process and it is still expected that they will be installed prior to the fire season.
- Townsite Mitigation- The budget for the 2023/24 financial year was \$70,000. Mr Peterson was able to secure an extra \$32,000 taking the financial year spend to \$102,000. For the 2024/25 financial year Mr Peterson has applied for \$100,000 and has been allocated \$80,000. He will seek extra funding early in 2025.
- AWS Warning Levels- Have fully changed to the new national system with the removal "All Clear" messaging now referred to "De-escalating"
- Read out the following letter from crews that came across to assist at the Boxing Day incident:  
"On behalf of the crews that came across to assist on Ned's Corner, we'd like to express our deepest sympathy for the families, friends and crewmates for the loss of Harry. It was an honour and a privilege to assist in providing some relief and respite for the local crews at such a difficult time. Words are always inadequate in the context of loss and grief, so we were very glad to be able to offer practical assistance. We hope that you get the time, space, care and comfort within your community that is no doubt needed in the coming months. We and many others in the broader firefighting community are always happy to come back if more help is needed down the track.

Sincerely,

Denmark, Plantagenet, Katanning, Albany, Gairdner, Cranbrook and Gnowangerup crews."

#### **7.3 DBCA Esperance Officer – Mr Justin Black**

- Esperance district is soon to receive an additional Firefighting appliance and a light vehicle
- Currently advertising for a Fire Operations Officer, a Field Firefighter and Conversation Employee
- Completed 223km of slashing in 2023/24 period, valued at \$210,000.
- Responded to 16 fires within DBCA tenure and assisted DFES/LG with 13 fires
- Carried out 200Ha of Prescribed Burning in 2023/24
- Planning to conduct prescribe burning over 10,000Ha of UCL and 3,500Ha of DBCA tenure for 2024/25 period
- Planning to carry out 60km of firebreak slashing for 2024/25 period and the possibility in purchasing a spray unit to provide additional life to slashed firebreaks.

#### **7.4 Community Emergency Services – Mr Ashley Peczka**

- The Shire received \$353,700 for our 2023/24 MAF program. 47/52 MAF treatment was completed and spent up to 92% of allocated funding.
- CTIS retrofitted to the Condingup 4.4B.
- WAERN radio servicing is around the corner Mr Peczka asked everyone to start reporting any faults.
- Cell-Fi's units in appliances will be switched to be locked into 4G mode.
- Addressed weight times with PPE/PPC orders.
- Provided an overview of expenditure to the 2023/24 ESL budget.
- Provided updates to Condingup and Grass Patch BFB shed builds.
- Provided overview to the 2024/25 ESL operating grant fund & capital grant submissions.
- Provided overview of forecast fleet replacement program.

#### **7.5 Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades – Mr Danny Sanderson**

- Mr Sanderson highlighted to the committee the work that is carried by the association behind the scenes

- Association has not been able to employ staff. They still rely on volunteers to run it and the assistance from WA Farmers where they share office space.
- Some areas are still needing additional assistance from the association in regards to capital grants, etc.
- Association AGM to be held at the WAFES conference on Friday, 7 September starting at 4pm

## 8. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

### 8.1 Incident & Safety Report

- Gibson Fire Shed break in
- Condingup Bush Fire Brigade Ridgeland Road shed break in – minor equipment missing
- Boxing Day incident
- Heat damage to appliance reflective stripping from mitigation burns

## 9. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

### 9.1 Election of Chief & Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers

Chairperson Cr Graham, declared all positions vacant at 6:40pm and acted as Returning Officer to carry out the election of Office Bearers:

- **Chief Bush Fire Control Officer**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Phil Longmire*  
Nominated by: Brett South  
Seconded: Craig Scott
- **Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Will Carmody*  
Nominated by: Craig Scott  
Seconded: Nigel Norwood
- **Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Adrian Perks*  
Nominated by: Tom Carmody  
Seconded: Phil Longmire

### 9.2 Election of Senior Fire Control Officers

- **West Zone**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Tom Carmody*  
Nominated by: Mark Scott  
Seconded: Kirk Jeitz
- **West Coast Zone**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Kinglsey Scott*  
Nominated by: Kirk Jeitz  
Seconded: Peter Rowe
- **North Zone**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Chris Hallam*  
Nominated by: Phil Longmire  
Seconded: Graham Harris
- **East Zone**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Simon Schlink*  
Nominated by: Phil Longmire  
Seconded: Brett South



- **East Coast Zone**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Adrian Perks*  
Nominated by: Brett South  
Seconded: Tom Carmody
- **Urban Rural Zone**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Peter Rowe*  
Nominated by: Laurie Palmer  
Seconded: Craig Scott

**9.3 Election of Deputy Senior Fire Control Officers**

- **West Zone**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Will Carmody*  
Nominated by: Phil Longmire  
Seconded: Kirk Jeitz
- **West Coast Zone**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Mark Scott*  
Nominated by: Tom Carmody  
Seconded: Adrian Perks
- **North Zone**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Perrin Guest*  
Nominated by: Dan Sanderson  
Seconded: Nigel Norwood
- **East Zone**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Lyndon Mickel*  
Nominated by: Simon Schlink  
Seconded: Nic Ruddenklau
- **East Coast Zone**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Nic Ruddenklau*  
Nominated by: Phil Longmire  
Seconded: Brett South
- **Urban Rural Zone**  
*Nominated/Elected: Mr Andrew Waters*  
Nominated by: Peter Rowe  
Seconded: Laurie Palmer

**9.4 Confirmation of Fire Weather Officers for 2024/25 Season**

<b>Fire Weather Officer</b>	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
<b>Deputy Fire Weather Officers</b>	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (East)
	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (West)
	Senior Fire Control Officer – Urban/Rural
	Community Emergency Services Manager

**MOTION**

**Moved: Mr Peter Rowe**  
**Seconded: Mr Brett South**

**BFA0724-106**

**Committee Decision**

**The Committee moves that members within the above position roles, be elected as Fire Weather Officers and Deputy Fire Weather Officers for the 2024/25 Season.**

**CARRIED**

**9.5 Confirmation of Brigade Fire Control Officers for 2024/25 Season**

Thanks to Jason Allan (Salmon Gums), Dave Mills (Gibson) and Craig Hines (Mt Merivale) for their service as Fire Control Officers. Thanks to Dave Vandenberghe for his service as Scaddan BFB Captain, standing down from the role.

**Committee Decision/Motion**

**The Committee endorses the current Fire Control Officer list and that the Community Emergency Services Manager follows up with brigades that were not present to confirm their listings.**

**9.6 Confirmation of Brigade Permit Issuing Officers 2024/25 Season**

**Committee Decision/Motion**

**The Committee endorses the current Permit Issuing Officer list and that the Community Emergency Services Manager follows up with brigades that were not present to confirm their listings.**

**10. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**MOTION**

**Moved: Mr Ashley Peczka**

**Seconded: Mr Peter Rowe**

**BFA0724-107**

**Committee Decision**

**That the meeting proceed behind closed doors for items 10.1 and 10.2 due to sensitives relating to the Boxing Day Incident.**

**CARRIED**

The meeting went behind closed doors at 6:56pm.

**10.1 Group Welfare Check in**

**10.2 Boxing Day Debrief**

**MOTION**

**Moved: Mr Ashley Peczka**

**Seconded: Mr Phil Longmire**

**BFA0724-108**

**Committee Decision**

**That the meeting come from Behind Closed Doors**

**CARRIED**

The meeting resumed from behind closed doors at 7:20pm.

**10.3 Bush Fire Brigade Local Laws**

Ms Zoe Sheffield-van Mierlo advised that the Local Law has been through the public consultation period with comments received by Danny Sanderson. Comments have also been received by Acting Commissioner of DFES on behalf of Minister for Emergency Services, and Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries on behalf of Minister for Local Government. Consideration of comments to commence.

Proposal to form sub-group to consult with Committee on matters raised in public and Ministerial comments. Committee members to express interest in participation. Danny Sanderson and Phil Longmire expressed interest in involvement.

#### **10.4 Mitigation**

Mrs Claudia Magana provided an overview to the Shire's 2024/25 Mitigation Activity Fund (MAF) Program.

#### **10.5 AFDRS**

Mr Phil Longmire advised the committee he is still working through the idea of Ground observers with DFES to assist with ground-truthing fuel loads by a network of cameras. This will aid in adjusting fuel load figures when it comes to calculating the day's fire danger rating. Currently the system is pre-set at 4.5tn/Ha, but if we want to reduce it post-harvest requires Ground observers to feed back into the system. There are positives in doing this, but there will be a knock-on effect that would occur in other areas.

Mr Phil Longmire was still comfortable with the 50FBI figure for Harvest bans. He thanked the professionalism of FCO as most Harvest Bans come online between FBI figure of 40-50, as local conditions were deteriorating.

#### **10.6 Role of Fire Control Officers**

Certificate of appointments for Fire Control Officers must be returned as soon as they are received to assist the governance team in carrying out the process to confirm your role as a Fire Control Officer.

If a Fire Control Officer is in charge of an incident, they are making the decisions to extinguish the fire, they are responsible for filling out an incident report. Reports need to be completed online or sent to the Shire in an appropriate timeframe. If there are brigades coming across to assist, the brigade captain is to submit an attendance report so we can confirm who was on the fire ground.

A generic letter will be sent out to serving Fire Control Officers that are not showing any formal qualifications against their training records. As per the council policy it is a requirement for FCO's to obtain their qualifications within the first 12 months and to sit a refresher training every 5 years of consecutive service. If selected FCO's can please read the letter and provide the appropriate information back to the Shire.

#### **10.7 Training Schedule**

Mr Ash Peczka asked the committee apart from the standard courses of Bushfire Safety Awareness, Fire Fighting Skills, Ground Controller and Fire Control Officer. Are there any other courses that members would like to see?

Mr Phil Longmire requested for Firemapper training.

Mr Tom Carmody asked whether there were plans for various training courses in Perth like level 1 IC. Mr Steve Petersen advised a Level 1 Incident Controller course has a PUA reference and the course is still under review to better cater for rural volunteers.

#### **10.8 Fire Hazard Reduction Notice**

Mr Ash Peczka advised the committee of the following amendments to the notice;

- Removal of 2tn/ha wording to be keep in a parkland cleared state within townsites
- Clarity to bare earth breaks around gas cylinders, are for those cylinders that are isolated from a structure. Not for those attached to side of their house.

**MOTION**

**Moved: Mr Peter Rowe**

**Seconded: Mr Craig Scott**

**BFA0724-109**

**Committee Decision**

**The Committee moves;**

- 1. To support the Draft 2024/25 Fire Hazard Reduction Notice, and**
- 2. To endorse the following Restricted and Prohibited Burning Times**  
**Rural Zone:**  
**Restricted Burning Period – 18 September 2024 to 12 November 2024**  
**Prohibited Burning Period – 13 November 2024 to 31 January 2025**  
**Restricted Burning Period – 1 February 2025 to 31 March 2025**  
**Urban Rural Zone**  
**Restricted Burning Period – 18 September 2024 to 12 November 2024**  
**Prohibited Burning Period – 13 November to 9 March 2025**  
**Restricted Burning Period – 10 March 2025 to 30 April 2025**

**CARRIED  
F10 - A0**

**10.9 Vehicle Servicing Schedule**

Mr Ash Peczka presented the upcoming BFB vehicle servicing schedule and reminded the members if there are any known issues with the appliance to let the service provider know so the appropriate parts can be ordered in advance.

**10.10 Terms of Reference**

Ms Zoe Sheffield-van Mierlo reminded everyone about the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Terms of Reference that require the Committee to meet twice a year, in April and September, and that there is a need to hold the AGM in April so that the Fire Hazard Reduction Notice can be endorsed by the Committee prior to the Notice going to Council for endorsement. Holding the AGM in July has resulted in time constraints to include the Notice and BFAC minutes as an item for the July Ordinary Council Meeting. It was acknowledged that April and May are a difficult time for the Committee to meet given seeding season is underway.

Phil Longmire requested that the Terms of Reference are addressed at the next BFAC.

**10.11 FireMapper**

Mr Ash Peczka asked the rural brigades trialling the FireMapper this season, if there was a need to purchase additional licence groups?  
Mt Beaumont and Cascade brigades showed interest in acquiring a licence each.

**10. CLOSURE**

The Presiding Member declared the meeting closed at 8:25pm.

The next meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory is scheduled for Tuesday 10 September 2024, commencing at 6pm in the Council Chambers.

**These Minutes were confirmed at a meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_**

**Signed \_\_\_\_\_**

**Presiding Member at the meeting at which the Minutes were confirmed.**

**Dated \_\_\_\_\_**