

Bush Fire Advisory Committee

Minutes | 14th October 2021

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SHIRE OF QUAIRADING

Bushfire Advisory Committee

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 14th October 2021 commencing at 5:00 pm.

ITEM 1 OPENING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the Meeting and declared the Meeting open at 5:00 pm.

"Before we start our Meeting, I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Noongar / Ballardong land and we pay respect to the original custodians...past, present and future and welcome you all here today for this Meeting".

ITEM 2 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

2.1 Fire Control Officers / Weather Monitor

Mr N Gelmi	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer / Chairperson
Mr C Anderson	Fire Control Officer
Mr P Groves	Fire Control Officer
Mr S Hadlow	Fire Control Officer
Mr L Johnston	Fire Control Officer
Mr G Hughes	Fire Control Officer

2.2 Shire

Cr W Davies	Shire President
Cr P Smith	Councillor
Mr G Fardon	Chief Executive Officer/FCO
Mr S Bell	Community Emergency Services Manager/FCO

2.3 Invited Observers / Visitors

Mr G Rowles	Department of Fire and Emergency Services
Mr B Humfrey	Bushfire Risk Planning Coordinator

2.4 Apologies

Mr J Smart	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Mr B Wilson	Fire Control Officer / Captain Quairading North BFB
Mr M Whyte	Fire Control Officer
Mr M Davies	Fire Control Officer
Mr A Duncan	Fire Control Officer / VFRS Captain / Central BFB Captain
Mr N Fraser	Fire Control Officer

ITEM 3 DEPUTATIONS / PRESENTATIONS / SUBMISSIONS

Bushfire Risk Planning Coordinator – Mr Brian Humfrey

Mr Humfrey provided an update on the Bushfire Risk Management Plan for the Shire of Quairading and advised that the Plan is nearing completion. The Draft Plan is currently with Quairading CEO and DFES in Perth for a review prior to being submitted to the Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM) for endorsement and the Council for Acceptance.

370 Assets have currently been identified with varying risk levels.

Assets that have been identified as an extreme risk are required to be actioned within two years of the plan being endorsed by OBRM, and very high risks to be actioned within three years of the plan's endorsement.

ITEM 4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES AND BUSINESS ARISING

4.1 Confirmation of Minutes – 15th April 2021

RECOMMENDATION: BFAC1– 21/22

MOVED Mr Craig Anderson SECONDED Mr Linden Johnston

That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 15th April 2021 be confirmed as a true and correct record of that Meeting, subject to the typographical error in item 7.5 being corrected.

CARRIED

4.2 Business Arising

Item 7.5

Mr Fardon informed of a typographical error stating the incorrect year, 2020/21, correction to 2021/22.

Item 8.3

Cr Davies asked about Brigade T-shirts.

Mr Bell informed that the expense for purchasing shirts for all members would be significant having been quoted \$15.95 per shirt with all members entitled to 2 shirts each, over the 6 brigades there are approximately 120 members.

Mr L Johnston suggested that shirts be purchased only for Fire Control Officers, with "FCO" displayed on the shirts.

Mr Bell commented on possibly purchasing shirts for those that attend deployments, and have the Brigade name/Local Government name embroidered on them.

Those present believed ordering for Fire Control Officers and volunteer personnel that attend Deployments would have merit. CESM Mr Bell to proceed to further research and organise.

ITEM 5 CORRESPONDENCE

5.1 Inward

No inward correspondence has been received.

5.2 Outward

No outgoing correspondence.

ITEM 6 CBFCO / DCBFCO / FCO / CESM REPORTS

6.1 CBFCO Report

Mr Gelmi reported having attended the recent District Operational Area Committee (DOAC) Meeting in Northam.

Fuel cards will be issued to Brigades this year, although remaining funds from the previous year will not be rolled over to the new cards.

6.2 DCBFCO Report

Mr Smart was not in attendance at this meeting and there was no report submitted.

6.3 FCO's Reports

There were no reports submitted from any of the FCO's.

6.4 CESM Report

Truck Servicing

Frontline Fire and Rescue Equipment have serviced all operational equipment on the fire appliances and repaired or replaced parts as required. All appliances are now fully operational.

The meeting questioned the high expense for the operational servicing and repairs of the appliances.

Mr Bell advised that the higher cost could be attributed to regular operational services on the pumps and firefighting equipment not having been carried out since the appliances were delivered to the District.

In the future, this servicing will be undertaken on a regular basis thereby minimising the additional expenses. The meeting noted that all costs for the servicing of the appliances are covered under the ESL Operating Grant funding.

Incident Report Books

All appliances now have incident report books in them and also the attendance book must be filled out for each incident attended by the appliance. The other two report books are required to be filled out by the primary brigade in attendance (these are being explained further at Brigade AGM's).

Vehicle Fault Report Books

Vehicle Fault Report books are now in all appliances and are to be used. This will enable the brigade and other relevant personnel to keep track of any issues that have been reported.

Personal Protective Clothing

There is a reasonable supply of PPE currently in the Central BFB Shed and this will be made available to those who require during the season. There is some PPE located in each of the appliances as well.

Wearing the provided PPE is not mandatory, but recommended. The minimum standard to be worn at an incident is a long sleeve shirt, long pants and boots. Those who do not meet the minimum requirement (and there is no PPE available in the appliances at the time), will be asked to leave the fire ground.

6.5 Other Agency Reports

Nil

UNCONFIRMED

ITEM 7 ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

7.1 Appointment of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Mr Fardon thanked all FCO's for their service over the past year, and then declared all positions vacant.

Nominations were called for the position for Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Mr S Hadlow nominated Mr N Gelmi

Mr L Johnston seconded this nomination

Mr N Gelmi accepted the nomination

There being no further nominations, Mr N Gelmi was elected unopposed.

RECOMMENDATION: BFAC2- 21/22

MOVED Mr Stuart Hadlow SECONDED Mr Linden Johnston

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting recommend to Council that: -

Mr Nigel Gelmi be appointed as Chief Bush Fire Control Officer until September 2022.

CARRIED

7.2 Appointment of Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Nominations were called for the position for Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer/s

Mr J Smart had informed the CESM that he is able to continue in the role of DCBFCO, and suggested that it remain as a dual appointment.

The general consensus of the Meeting was that this is a good idea to allow for an incoming and outgoing DCBFCO to overlap for a period.

Mr N Gelmi nominated Mr J Smart and Mr A Duncan

Mr C Anderson seconded this nomination

Mr J Smart accepted nomination by notice prior to the meeting

Mr A Duncan accepted nomination by notice prior to the meeting

There being no further nominations, John Smart and Adam Duncan were elected unopposed.

RECOMMENDATION: BFAC3- 21/22

MOVED Mr Nigel Gelmi SECONDED Mr Craig Anderson

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting recommend to Council that: -

1. Mr John Smart be appointed as a Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer until September 2022.
2. Mr Adam Duncan be appointed to the position of a Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer until September 2022.

CARRIED

7.3 Appointment of Fire Control Officers

Further to discussions from previous meetings, those Fire Control Officers who have not completed the required DFES FCO's course will be unable to be appointed as a FCO for the forthcoming year.

The Meeting noted that the FCO Training Course to be held in Quairading had to be rescheduled to prior to the 2022/2023 Fire Season.

Current FCO's: -

Mr N Gelmi, Mr J Smart, Mr P Groves, Mr M Whyte, Mr G A Fardon, Mr S Hadlow, Mr N Fraser, Mr C Anderson, Mr L Johnson, Mr B Wilson, Mr A Duncan, Mr G Hughes, Mr M Davies and Mr S Bell.

Mr S Hadlow informed the Meeting that he is stepping down as an FCO and nominated Mr Thomas Hadlow.

RECOMMENDATION: BFAC4- 21/22

MOVED Cr Wayne Davies SECONDED Mr Nigel Gelmi

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting recommend to Council that: -

1. The following persons subject to their acceptance, be elected as Fire Control Officers for the Shire of Quairading for the next 12 Months: -

Mr N Gelmi, Mr J Smart, Mr P Groves, Mr M Whyte, Mr T Hadlow, Mr N Fraser, Mr C Anderson, Mr L Johnson, Mr B Wilson, Mr A Duncan, Mr G Hughes, Mr M Davies and Mr S Bell.

2. Mr G A Fardon be appointed as a Fire Control Officer until his departure on 17th December 2021.

CARRIED

The appointment of the incoming CEO as a Fire Control Officer will be discussed with Ms Gibbs upon her commencement of employment with Council on the 1st December 2021.

7.4 Appointment of Fire Weather Monitors

The Role of the Fire Weather Monitors is to keep an eye on current weather conditions at the request of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or Deputy BFCO in the Chief's absence, in order to decide whether a harvest vehicle movement and hot works ban will be implemented at any given time on a day that is required should the weather conditions warrant it.

Current FWM's: -

Town	Mr G A Fardon
North West Area	Mr J Smart
South West Area	Mr G Richards
South East Area	Mr G Hughes and Mr P Groves
North East Area	Mr B Wilson
Advisor	Mr S Bell

RECOMMENDATION: BFAC5- 20/21

MOVED Mr Stuart Hadlow SECONDED Mr Linden Johnston

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting recommend to Council that: -

The following persons be appointed as Fire Weather Advisors for the forthcoming year: -

Town	Mr G Fardon (until departure on 17/12/2021)
North West Area	Mr J Smart
South West Area	Mr G Richards
South East Area	Mr G Hughes, assisted by Mr P Groves
North East Area	Mr B Wilson
Advisor	Mr S Bell

CARRIED

ITEM 8 DISCUSSION POINTS

8.1 Pre-Season Synopsis

Report Provided by Mr G Rowles from DFES (Attached)

8.2 Restricted Burning Period/Prohibited Burning Period (RBT/PBT)

The Meeting resolved to remain with the existing Gazetted dates which could be varied jointly by the CBFCO and the Shire President due to seasonal conditions.

8.3 Bush Fire Exercise/Training

Rural Firefighting Awareness Course

The Rural Firefighting Course is now available for use and is on the DFES eAcademy. Training utilising this course will commence next year.

Fire Control Officer Course

The course anticipated to be held in September was cancelled due to lack of availability of those who required to undertake the training, this is to be rescheduled to take place on a Monday in September 2022.

Local Brigade Training

Mr Bell informed that a training day will be taking place on Saturday 23rd September commencing at 8:30am at the Central Brigade facility, this will take approximately half a day.

8.5 Firebreak Inspections

The meeting resolved to support on-ground inspections this year.

All FCO's were requested to inspect their Locality and to report any Firebreak breaches to the CESM for further action by the Shire.

Mr Bell informed that the town site inspections had taken place on Wednesday 13th October.

Mr Johnston informed that the Sandalwood plantation workers are currently slashing their external firebreaks.

ITEM 9 URGENT MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

Work Health and Safety Legislation

Documentation on the new WHS legislation will be circulated to relevant personnel as it comes to hand. Currently the new Act is set to be in force from 1st January 2022.

Mr Fardon read out a Worksafe publication (Attached)

Mr Bell informed that he was currently updating Council's Bushfire Policies and Procedures Manual for review and consideration.

CESM Review

Mr Fardon reported that he recently attended a CESM Review meeting in Northam at which there was discussion between the Councils in the Region on the increased workload surrounding Legislation and Policy changes, as well as the increased workload of actioning the Bushfire Risk Management Plans once they have been endorsed. Mr Fardon also commented on the future workload over 4 Councils & Communities.

CEO's Retirement

Mr N Gelmi thanked Mr Fardon for his support of the Bushfire Brigades and Fire Control Officers during his 28 year term at the Shire of Quairading and wished him all the best for his future.

Mr Fardon advised that Mr Allan Rourke, Executive Manager of Works and Services is also departing on the 17th December 2021, the recruitment process is currently underway for this position.

Mr Fardon thanked Cr W Davies for his support to the BFAC and Brigades during his 10 years on Council. Cr W Davies further thanked Mr Fardon for his time and support.

ITEM 10 NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled to take place in April 2022 (Date to be finalised in February 2022) commencing at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.

ITEM 11 CLOSURE

There being no further business, the Chairperson closed the meeting at 6:12 pm.

I certify the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 14th October 2021 were confirmed on _____ as recorded.

Confirmed....._/___/2022

Quairading BFAC 14th October 2021

Seasonal outlook:

Maximum temperatures for November to January are likely to be above median for much of western and the Northern Interior of WA

Above median minimum temperatures for November to January are very likely for almost all of Australia

Bureau's *ENSO Outlook* has been raised to La Niña ALERT, which means around a 70% chance of La Niña forming. This is approximately triple the normal likelihood. This cooling of the tropical Pacific towards La Niña levels is likely contributing to the wetter than median outlooks.

November to January rainfall is likely to be above median for northern and south coastal WA. The rest of WA has roughly equal chances of above or below median rainfall (chance of exceeding the median is close to 50%)

The Region is now in the High Threat Period. The High Season appliances for the Region should start by 1st November. York 1x LT, and Narembeen 1 x 3.4 Northam will have 1 x 3.4 and 2 x LTs by end of December.

Reminder to contact the RDC for assistance at incidents

Covid – Refer to the Interim Operational Procedures (IOPs) Volunteer Hub

WHS legislation changes due to be implemented 1st January 2021. Relates to volunteer Brigades and LG responsibilities. (google it for details)

Volunteer ID Card roll out: there will be a staggered roll out across the region informing all brigades and units of the new ID Card process. This information/email will be sent to the Captains/Unit Managers as they are the ones responsible for approving ID Card requests.

Justin Corrigan will return from AL to the AO Lower Wheatbelt role 1st November.