



# BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

# MINUTES

BUSH FIRES ACT (1954) SECTION 67

## 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.*

Meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee  
Held at the Council Chambers, Lowood Road, Mount Barker WA 6324  
6:00pm Wednesday 8 May 2024

  
**Julian Murphy**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

## Committee Members

Cr L Handasyde, Cr R Brown, Cr J Oldfield (Deputy) (Resolution No 168/23), Mr N Handasyde, Mr I Mackie, Mr B Skinner, Mr G Pyle, Mrs M Skinner, Mr R Caudwell, Mrs J Burcham (Resolution 080/23)

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

---

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>PAGE NO</b>
1	DECLARATION OF OPENING / ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS	1
2	RECORD OF ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES	1
3	DISCLOSURE OF MEMBER'S INTERESTS	2
4	CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES	2
5	BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES	2
6	REPORTS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND OFFICERS	2
6.1	COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES MANAGER REPORT	2
6.2	CHIEF BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER REPORT	2
6.3	FIRE WEATHER OFFICER REPORT	2
6.4	BASE RADIO OPERATOR REPORT	2
6.5	DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES REPORT	2
6.6	DEPARTMENT OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION, AND ATTRACTIONS REPORT	2
6.7	PLANTATION COMPANY REPORT	2
7	GENERAL BUSINESS	3
7.1	ANNUAL BUSH FIRE MITIGATION NOTICE 2024/2025	3
7.2	BRIGADE ALERT RESPONSE TURNOUT (BART)	4
7.3	MINIMUM NUMBER OF TRUCKS TO AN INCIDENT	5
7.4	PROPOSED DATES FOR WORKSHOPS AND BFAC MEETINGS	5
7.5	MEETING NOTES	6
7.6	VOTE OF THANKS	6
8	NEXT MEETING	6
9	MEETING CLOSURE	6
	ATTACHMENTS	7

---

---

**Presiding Member: Cr L Handasyde**

**Membership: Quorum (8)**

Cr L Handasyde	Council Representative
Cr R Brown	Council Representative
Cr J Oldfield	Council Representative (Deputy)
Mr N Handasyde	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Mr I Mackie	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer No 1
Mr B Skinner	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer No 2
Mr L Handasyde	Chief Fire Weather Officer
Mr G Pyle	Deputy Chief Fire Weather Officer
Mrs M Skinner	Base Radio Operator
Mr R Caudwell	Deputy Base Operator
Mrs J Burcham	Deputy Base Operator

---

**1 DECLARATION OF OPENING / ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS**

6.00pm Cr Handasyde declared the meeting open

**2 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES**Present

Cr L Handasyde	Council Representative
Cr R Brown	Council Representative
Cr J Oldfield	Council Representative (Deputy)
Mr N Handasyde	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Mr I Mackie	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer No 1
Mr B Skinner	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer No 2
Mr L Handasyde	Chief Fire Weather Officer
Mr G Pyle	Deputy Chief Fire Weather Officer
Mrs M Skinner	Base Radio Operator
Mrs J Burcham	Deputy Base Operator

Visitors

Mr B Lynch	Denbarker Bush Fire Brigade
Mr C Moore	Forest Hill Bush Fire Brigade
Mr P Spink	Middle Ward Bush Fire Brigade
Mr R Wright	Narpyn Bush Fire Brigade
Mr C Norton	Narrakup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr D Trotter	Perillup Bush fire Brigade
Mr D Cobain	Porongurup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr W Matthews	Porongurup South Bush Fire Brigade
Mr M Wills	Rocky Gully Bush Fire Brigade
Mr R Drage	Mount Barker Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
Mr B Furber	Kendenup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr G Sounness	Middle Ward Bush Fire Brigade
Mr G Forbes	Narrakup Bush Fire Brigade
Mr I Higgins	Rocky Gully Bush Fire Brigade
Mr G Willcox	PF Olsen
Mr M Anning	Australian Bluegum Plantations
Mr A Determes	Great Southern Farm Services
Mr N Ramage	Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, Albany
Mr P Mackie	
Mrs D Pyle	
Mr D Burcham	

Staff

Mr M Barnes	Community Emergency Services Manager
Mr J Rutter	Ranger

Apologies

Mr K Hemmings	Executive Manager Works and Services
---------------	--------------------------------------

---

**3 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBER'S INTERESTS**

Part 5, Division 6, Local Government Act 1955

Nil

**4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**Moved Mr G Pyle, seconded Mr C Moore**

**That the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting, held on 3 May 2023, be taken as read and adopted as a correct record.**

**CARRIED**

**5 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Nil

**6 REPORTS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND OFFICERS****6.1 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES MANAGER REPORT**

See Attachment 1.

**6.2 CHIEF BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER REPORT**

See Attachment 2.

The Chair thanked the outgoing Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO), Mr Norm Handasyde for his hard work and dedication in the role. Mr Handasyde was CBFCO for five years.

**6.3 FIRE WEATHER OFFICER REPORT**

See Attachment 3.

**6.4 BASE RADIO OPERATOR REPORT**

See Attachment 4.

**6.5 DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES REPORT**

See Attachment 5.

**6.6 DEPARTMENT OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION, AND ATTRACTIONS REPORT**

See Attachment 6.

**6.7 PLANTATION COMPANY REPORT**

Plantation company representatives report on two fires that had started from lightning strikes.



---

## 7 GENERAL BUSINESS

### 7.1 ANNUAL BUSH FIRE MITIGATION NOTICE 2024/2025

See Attachment 7.

Alterations to the BFMN were discussed.

1. Should landowners with more than 10,000 hectares be required to have a heavy-duty unit within the property boundary?
2. Modifications to the BFMN.

Further clarification of the section about firebreaks in the Plantation/Tree Farm was suggested - 15 metre firebreak of plantation boundaries, and within this there is 6 metres (as central as possible of the 15 metres) of firebreak as per definition, with a clearance height of 4 metres across the full width of the 6 metres, with the remaining 9 metres in a hazard reduced state.

Internal breaks to be a minimum trafficable area width of 6 metres in a hazard reduced state with a clearance height of 4 metres across the full width of the 6 metres.

The definition of a firebreak was modified to read as follows:

*'An area that is ploughed, cultivated, scarified, chemically sprayed, slashed, or otherwise cleared of flammable material to a maximum vegetation height of 50mm.'*

#### **Moved Mr I Mackie, seconded Mr D Trotter**

**That the Shire of Plantagenet Bush Fire Mitigation Notice be accepted with the following changes.**

1. **Landowners with more than 10,000 hectares are to have a heavy-duty firefighting appliance. The crew and appliance are to be maintained in a state of operational readiness. This appliance should be in reasonable proximity to the Shire of Plantagenet whether it be within the Shire itself or an adjoining Shire.**
2. **Modifications to apply to plantations/tree farms are as follows:**

**Boundary firebreaks are to be 15 metres wide. Within this 15 metres, 6 metres are to be as central as possible with a trafficable surface and an overhead clearance of 4 metres. This section is to be maintained as a firebreak. The remaining 9 metres of the firebreak is to be maintained in a hazard reduced state.**

**Internal firebreaks are to have a minimum trafficable area width of 6 metres maintained in a hazard reduced state with a minimum overhead clearance of 4 metres.**

**3. Definition of a firebreak to read as follows (inside cover of BFMN).**

**‘An area that is ploughed, cultivated, scarified, chemically sprayed, slashed, or otherwise cleared of flammable material to a maximum vegetation height of 50mm.’**

**CARRIED**

## **7.2 BRIGADE ALERT RESPONSE TURNOUT (BART)**

Discussion took place about the BART App which is an App designed to increase the speed by which brigade members are notified of a fire.

WhatsApp is used by many brigades and their members for information sharing as well as for fire notification. Not all brigades/members are using BART.

The following comments were made

- The need for a common system used by all brigades and members for fire incident advice and turnout.
- On the one hand it is felt there is confusion about the App and how it works and on the other that it is a very effective App for call outs.
- There is a lot of information about fire and related issues being shared via different avenues and it was suggested that one method that covered all avenues could be best.
- Have a separate FCO group for permits only.
- Concern for money spent on the App and it not being fully used.

It was decided to leave the discussion without a conclusion or recommendation.



### 7.3 MINIMUM NUMBER OF TRUCKS TO AN INCIDENT

Guidelines for truck turnout during certain fire behaviour ratings was agreed as shown in the table below.

<b>FBI Rating</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
0-23	Brigade plus as needed
24-30	Minimum two truck turn out
30-50	Four trucks on the road from the start with more remote brigades on standby
50 plus	All available trucks

### 7.4 PROPOSED DATES FOR WORKSHOPS AND BFAC MEETINGS

<b>Type</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Lead into</b>
<b>Workshop</b> Issues from fire season	Mid-February	<b>Brigade AGMs</b> Workshop information and results shared
<b>Brigade AGMs</b> Discussion re workshop information Approval of FCOs and any brigade positions	March/April	<b>BFAC Meeting</b> FCO positions to approve
<b>BFAC Meeting and AGM</b> Brigade issues Approval of BFMN, FCO FWO and committee member nominations	Early May	<b>Council Meeting</b> Approval of BFMN. Approval of FCO, FWO and committee member positions
<b>Workshop</b> Pre-season issues	Early October	<b>Brigade Meetings</b> Workshop information and results shared.
<b>Brigade Meetings</b> Workshop and any relevant items	October	<b>BFAC Meeting</b> Take decisions/comments re workshop issues
<b>BFAC Meeting</b> Brigade/workshop discussion	Mid November	<b>Council/Brigade Meetings</b> Recommended actions forwarded to council and/or brigades where required.
<b>Council/Brigade Meeting</b> Brigade/other issues	Post BFAC	<b>Fire Season</b> A safe fire season.



**7.5 MEETING NOTES**

Notes/minutes from BFAC meetings and workshops will be sent out within two weeks to brigades to distribute and/or discuss with their members.

**7.6 VOTE OF THANKS**

Narpyn Brigade put in a vote of thanks to Norm Handasyde, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Ron Cauldwell 6TN Base operator, and Len Handasyde Chief Fire Weather Officer, to acknowledge their hard work and dedication over the years.

**8 NEXT MEETING**

To be confirmed

**9 MEETING CLOSURE**

6.56pm Cr Handasyde closed the meeting.

**ATTACHMENTS**

**ATTACHMENT ONE**

CESM Report

**ATTACHMENT TWO**

CBFCO Report

**ATTACHMENT THREE**

FWO Report

**ATTACHMENT FOUR**

Base Radio Operator Report

**ATTACHMENT FIVE**

District Officer Report

**ATTACHMENT SIX**

Department of Conservation, Biodiversity and Attractions Report

**ATTACHMENT SEVEN**

Bush Fire Mitigation Notice 2024/25