



Informal Meeting Notes from the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held at the Shire of Northhampton Council Chambers, Northhampton on Monday 26 May 2025

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**1.0 Meeting Opening**

The meeting commenced at approximately 2:00pm

**2.0 Attendance**

Joe Wood – Captain Port Gregory/Yallabatharra BFB

Scott Rintoul – Captain Northhampton VFRS

Karl Suckling – Shire Councillor

Brian Robinson – Acting Chief Executive Officer

**Guests**

Mark Teale – Department of Fire and Emergency Services

Tatiana Vafiades – Secretary Port Gregory/Yallabatharra Brigade

**3.0 Apologies**

Rob McKenzie – Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO) & Captain Isseka BFB

Lindsay Rowe – Captain Horrocks BFB

Travis Glass – Captain Kalbarri VFRS

Kyle Caron – Captain Ajana/Binnu BFB

Damien Harris – Deputy CBFCO North

Scott Bridgeman – Deputy CBFCO South

Captain Sandy Gully/Alma BFB

**4.0 Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes from the previous meeting could not be confirmed due to a lack of a quorum. Minutes to be considered at next available meeting.

**5.0 Business Arising from Last Meeting**

See attached Action List.

## **6.0 General Business**

### **7.1 Bushfire Operational Guidelines**

At the BFAC meeting held in March 2025, the Committee indicated a preference for Bushfire Operational Guidelines being based on the Shire of Collie Operational Guidelines. Draft Guidelines have now been prepared by the Executive Manager of Community, Development & Regulation.

Copies of the draft were provided to committee members at the meeting. Copies to be provided to those not in attendance for consideration at the next BFAC meeting.

### **7.2 Review of the 2024/2025 Annual Firebreak Notice**

A copy of the 2024/2025 annual firebreak notice is attached for the purposes of discussion and feedback. Formal adoption of the notice could not be achieved due to a lack of a quorum.

*Some discussion occurred where it was identified that previous Annual Fire Break Notices had been aligned with the Shire of Chapman Valley. Those present generally agreed that the closed season should end on 1 March, allowing permits to be required up to 14 April.*

*Further input from BFAC for the 2025/2026 fire season to be obtained via email.*

### **7.3 Future Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Arrangements**

In recent years, the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer has been a Council appointed position, who has performed as CBFCO as part of their duties.. Whilst there are no issues with a Shire Officer being the CBFCO, the Advisory Committee may wish to nominate an external member.

Matter to be discussed at next available meeting.

### **7.4 Use of Private Vehicles**

DFES Guidelines for Operating Private Equipment at Fires were provided to for members information and reference at the 24 March 2025 meeting, with the intent of detailed discussions occurring at this BFAC meeting.

Whilst some discussion occurred, the matter will need to be formally considered at the next BFAC meeting.

### **7.5 Local Government Grants Scheme (ESL)**

DFES has finalised their allocation for the Shire of Northampton. Having regard to the Shire's submission DFES has agreed to an increase in the allocation to \$55,000 with an additional \$10,000 for Personal Protection Clothing.

*Further information was provided to those present at the meeting.*

## **7.6 2025/2026 Personal Protection Clothing Requirements**

With the additional funding allocation from DFES, the Shire's draft budget currently contained funding of \$15,000 towards PPC requirements.

Brigades are requested to supply a list of PPC requirements to the CBFCO prior to 30 June 2025 in order that orders may be placed for PPC. It must be acknowledged that adequate funding is unlikely to be available to meet all requests.

Priority should be given to the replacement of PPC that is more than five years old. *Detailed discussions occurred as to what equipment may be classified as Personal Protection Clothing.*

## **7.7 Training**

Council has been requested to increase the funding allocation for training, ensuring that some funds will be available to meet costs associated with training.

Brigades are requested to identify training needs by 30 June 2025, in order that the training the Shire is able to support can planned immediately following the Shire's adoption of the Annual Budget.

*The matter was discussed and it was generally agreed that the priority needs to be training of Chief Bushfire Control Officers. Shire Officers to liaise with Department of Fire and Emergency Services over potential training units that would be available to brigade members.*

## **7.8 Review of Bush Fire Management Plan**

The Shire's Bush Fire Management Plan, which can be used to secure Bush Fire Mitigation Funding from DFES is now overdue for review. BFAC were advised that it was proposed that an appropriate consultant will be employed to prepare a Bush Fire Management Plan and that Council will be requested to consider funding this review as part of the coming budget.

Unfortunately due to significant budget constraints an allocation has not been included within the draft budget. It therefore appears to progress this matter in the next financial year, the review will need to be completed 'in house'.

## **7.9 Proposal for Community Emergency Services Manager**

At the 24 March meeting, BFAC was advised that the Shires of Northampton and Chapman Valley were un-successful in an application for funding of a shared Community Emergency Services Manager position.

Preliminary advice is that this is will be further considered by the State and that it may be supported in 2026.

## **8.0 Other Business**

Nil.

## **9.0 Next Meeting**

To be confirmed

## **10.0 Closure**

Shire of Northampton Bush Fire Advisory Committee – List of Actions from Minutes				
No	Action	Comment	Responsible Officer	Status
1.	Supply DFES approved communication Devices for each Brigade	<p>Discussions to occur with DFES over potential supply of communication devices as part of Shire's Operational Grant.</p> <p>Potential supply of 2 DFES approved hand held community devices per brigade as part of the 2025/26 DFES Operational Grant.</p> <p>26/5/25 – DFES waiting for roll out.</p>	EMCDR	Commenced.
2.	<i>A list of equipment and contractors available for fire mitigation and response situations</i>		CBFCO	Pending
3.	Secure Use of High Season appliance from DFES for 2025/26 fire season.	As a minimum high season appliance to be sought over harvest period, preferably a 4.4 if available	CBFCO	Pending
4.	Testing of Automatic Vehicle Location Devices	Testing of AVL's to occur in a coordinated manner.	CBFCO/Deputy CBFCO's	Pending
5.	Preparation of Bush Fire Operational Guidelines	Draft Guidelines to be prepared based on Collie example for consideration at the next meeting (19/5).	EMCDR	Draft Prepared
6.	The Terms of Reference be updated with the identified proxies.	An agenda item is being prepared for consideration at 17 April 2024 Council meeting.	EMCDR	Completed
7.	Secure Budget funds to undertake a formal review of the Shire's Bush Fire Management Plan.	Subject to Shire budget process. 26/5/25 - DFES Officer Mark Teale to advise if assistance can be made available from DFES.	EMCDR	Pending
8	Additional water resources for fire fighting	Funding to be sought under the Shire's proposed 2025/26 Annual Budget towards a water tank and associated	EMCDR	Pending.

		water supply for the purposes of fire fighting and road maintenance.		
9	Standardisation of Fire Fighting Couplings	The CBFCO undertake an audit of existing couplings and obtain costs for the replacement of the couplings to be considered as part of the Shire's annual budget process.	CBFCO	Pending.
10	Additional PPE for Brigades	Shire to seek increase in funding to \$15,000 per year through DFES operational grants and/or Shire budget processes.  26/5/25 - Mark Teale to provide standard equipment list.	EMCDR	Completed
11	Additional Airports/Runways to provide water refill opportunities for aircraft.	Shire Officers to confirm current status of access arrangements for private airfields located at Northampton (primary preference), at Kyle Carson's property in Binu & West Ogilvie.	CBFCO & Manager of Corporate Services	Pending
12	Amalgamation of Isseka, Sandy Gully/Alma Bush Fire Brigades	Isseka and Sandy Gully/Alma brigades to consider potential for amalgamation.	CBFCO	Pending
13	Use of Trailers on Fire Ground	Use of trailers on fire ground to be addressed in draft Operational Guidelines (see Item 5)	EMCDR	Complete