



Minutes

Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held at the Shire of Northampton Council Chambers, Northampton on Friday 22 of May 2026 at 1pm.

1.0 DECLARATION OF OPENING OF MEETING BY CHAIRPERSON

Cr Karl Suckling declared the meeting open at 1:02pm.

2.0 Attendance

Voting Members

Karl Suckling- Shire Councillor & Presiding Member

Kyle Carson- Captain Ajana/Binnu BFB

Damien Harris- Deputy CBFCO

Joe Wood- Captain Port Gregory/ Yallabatharra BFB

Tatiana Vafiades- CBFCO/ CESM

Wes Teakle- Captain Isseka BFB

Chad Gabby- Captain Horrocks BFB

Non-Voting Members

Brian Robinson- Executive Manager of Communities, Development and Regulation

Scott Rintoul- Captain Northampton VFRS

Matt Johnson- Deputy CBFCO

Guests:

Mark Teale- Department of Fire and Emergency Services

3.0 Apologies

Scott Bridgman- Deputy CBFCO

4.0 Confirmation of Minutes

Moved: Tatiana Vafiades

Seconded: Joe Wood

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 23 March 2026 are to be considered for adoption.

Motion Carried: 7/0

5.0 Business Arising from Last Meeting

Referring to the List of Actions from past minutes, the following updates were provided:

1. Supply DFES approved communication devices (WAERN) for each Brigade

DFES approved handheld community devices per brigade as part of the 2025/26 DFES Operational Grant has started to be rolled out. 2 handheld devices for a dual cab and 1 for a single cab appliance.

- Port Gregory has Received 1
- Horrocks has received 1
- Isseka has Received 1
- Binnu has received 1

Also, the last fixed WAERNS are in the process of being updated and they are to be installed into farmer response vehicles.

2. A list of equipment and contractors available for fire mitigation

The CESM is currently updating the Contractors Contact List, including Centrepont Earthmoving and Red Dust Holdings after their approvals and list of equipment is available. The List will be forwarded to BFAC members for reference and to keep as a live document, updating as required.

It must be noted that all contractors must complete Rural Fire Awareness training and provide a copy of their certification for retention on the Shire of Northampton records to be included on the Approved Contractor's List.

4. Testing of Automatic Vehicle Location Devices

Initial testing was completed successfully. All AVL's to now be tested on a monthly basis.

8. Additional water resources for fire fighting

The CESM is to liaise with Bushfire Mitigation team at DFES to identify grant opportunities for water sources for presentation to the Committee.

9. Standardisation of Fire Couplings

BFAC was advised that all water couplings have been inspected, with the majority being a standard 50mm male camlock fitting. Connections not complying with this standard will be replaced as necessary. This issue will be dealt with administratively by the CESM.

11. Additional Airports/Runways to provide water refill opportunities for aircraft

Investigations still ongoing and information is still being compiled by Tatiana and Shire's Manager Corporate Services – Michelle Allen, as well as the RFDS and DCBA.

14. Capital Grant-Starlink Communication Equipment

The CESM identified that:

- a) DFES had confirmed that the funding could be used for the purpose;
- b) Costings had been obtained on the basis of the BFAC recommendation from 23 March 2026, but that this would exceed the allowed budget; and
- c) An extension to the required expenditure date is being sought.

Moved: Karl Suckling

Seconded: Kyle Carson

That a request an extension for funding be sought and updated quotes be obtained for the following:

- 4 to be purchased, including subscription; and
- 3-4 units to be purchased without subscriptions.

Motion Carried 7/0

The CESM undertook to obtain the revised quotes and circulate the officers revised recommendation to the committee for consideration as a “running minute”.

18. Draft Bushfire Management and Mitigation Plans

The CESM advised that the previous BFAC recommendation to combine the two mitigations plans was not supported by DFES until they have been adopted and approved by OBRMS. Council can combine the plans after they have been adopted and presented. It will be a living document with constant running changes.

Once the Mitigation Plans have been finalised to the satisfaction of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Plan will be utilized to secure ongoing grants for the implementation of mitigation techniques in preparation for future bush fire seasons. Tatiana to look into DWIR and MAFS funding and grant timelines and present to BFAC members.

Feedback is still sought on the draft plans prepared by Mr. Scott Rintoul, prior to those plans being considered by Council.

6.0 General Business

6.1 Secure Use of High Season appliance from DFES for 2026/27 fire season.

The CESM advised an email has been sent to Leigh Mulholland DFES to secure a high season appliance for the south of Northampton district during the 2026/27 fire season.

6.2 Amendments to the Bushfire Operating Manual and Procedures/ Guidelines to be reviewed.

The CESM has identified some potential modifications/improvements to the Bush Fire Operating Manual/ Procedures as adopted. A report on the potential changes will be presented to next BFAC for consideration before presenting to Council.

6.3 Consideration of Tatiana Vafiades stepping down as CBFCO and a New CBFCO being voted on.

Tatiana stated she was more than happy to step down as CBFCO and recommended Matt Johnson be considered to fill the position.

Moved: Tatiana Vafiades

Seconded: Damien Harris

Tatiana Vafiades to remain as CBFCO for this current period, but with Tatiana to guide and mentor Matt Johnson - DCBFCO for the role at a future time.

Motion carried 7/0

6.4 Review 2026/2027 Annual Firebreak Notice

A Draft Annual Firebreak Notice was prepared by the CESM for consideration of BFAC and was discussed at the meeting with several small changes identified. Tatiana is to circulate a revised notice once a name is updated. Flying minute to be run via email/ WhatsApp.

6.5 Review of Draft Fire Break and Bushfire information Pamphlet

The CESM presented a draft Bushfire Information Booklet for BFAC members consideration. Members have 2 weeks to review and advise of any changes after Tatiana updates the changes and presents pamphlet to the members this week. Will be a flying minute via email/ WhatsApp and all members to agree.

6.6 Review Draft of the Fire Break and Fuel Hazard Reduction variation form.

The CESM prepared a draft form which was presented to the meeting. Some modifications were discussed. Changes to be made to the variation form and presented at the next BFCA meeting.

6.7 Harvest and Movement Bans to be Reviewed

Information from DFES legal team is attached, as to what is lawful and able to be changed according to the Regulations and the Act.

Motion to be moved and clearly stated the Shire of Northampton RECOMMENDS NO CARTING on the HVMB regulations. A link to be added to web page that enables you to click on a link which shows all regulations, permitted and not permitted activities during HVMB. Tatiana to get more posters and educate the community about TFB and HVMBs.

6.8 Training

Discussion was had for Tatiana and Mark Teale to liaise and book courses. FCO, Ground Controller, Bushfire Safety awareness and fire fighting skills.

7.0 Other Business

7.1 New Captain at Horrocks Bush Fire Brigade

Mr Chadd Gabby is officially welcomed to the BFAC as the new captain of Horrocks. The Terms of Reference require modification to reflect the new appointment.

7.2 Australian Garnet Resources for Fire Fighting

New Horrocks Brigade Captain - Chadd Gabby outlined that he works for Australian Garnet on George Grey Drive. They have lots of water capacity and a 3.3 fire fighting appliance which opens options for them to be able to support the BFB fleet.

This information to be incorporated into Shire Bush Fire Mitigation plans.

7.3 Membership Nomination Forms

All Shire Brigades are to adopt a membership form and not use DFES application forms. The Shire needs to have its own for personal record keeping.

7.4 Northampton Volunteer Brigade Appliances

Scott Rintoul informed the committee that there is less capability for the Northampton Volunteer Fire and Rescue to help Bush fires after losing their high season appliance 2.4, as they only have a light tanker and the HSR which only holds 1400L. Mr Rintoul advised he has put a business proposal forward to DFES in hopes of securing a heavy vehicle permanently for Northampton VFRS. Mark Teale informed us about the capabilities of the HSR and its importance for property defense and many other capabilities.

Moved: Karl Suckling

Seconded: Damien Harris

The Committee recommend that the Shire of Northampton provide a letter of support to DFES in order to secure another Heavy Vehicle for the area, whether it be housed within the townsite at the VFRS or one of the Bushfire Brigades.

Motion Carried: 7/0

7.5 Report from Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

Verbal report provided from AO Midlands Mark Teale. The report is attached.

7.6 Report from CBFCO

Verbal Report given about mitigation burn week and the current season.

8.0 Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee will be scheduled for September 4th Friday 2026 at 1pm with the purpose of discussing matters arising after last meeting.

9.0 Closure

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 2:43pm.

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	Discussions to occur with DFES over potential supply of communication devices. Potential supply of 2 DFES approved hand held community devices per brigade as part of the 2025/26 DFES Operational Grant. 26/5/25 – DFES waiting for roll out. Bushfire Mitigation Officer identified 5 “additional” Waern Radio’s which are currently with DFES for updating. 22/5/2026 - DFES Operational Grant rollout commenced. 2 handheld devices for a dual cab and 1 for a single cab appliance. • Port Gregory has Received 1 • Horrocks has received 1 • Isseka has Received 1 • Binu has received 1 Last fixed WAERNS being updated and to be installed into farmer response vehicles.	EMCDR/CESM	Commenced.
2.	A list of equipment and contractors available for fire mitigation and response situations	CESM currently updating list for circulation, adding contractors identified by the Committee. Contractors to complete Rural Fire Awareness Training and supply copy of certification prior to being included on the list.	CBFCO	Commenced
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. An additional peak season fire unit was made available by DFES	CBFCO/CESM	Complete
4.	Testing of Automatic Vehicle Location Devices	Testing of AVL’s to occur in a coordinated manner. Initial test complete. AVL’s to be tested monthly on an ongoing basis.	CBFCO/Deputy CBFCO’s	Ongoing (Monthly Basis)
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	Completed.

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	Completed.
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 fittings water supply for the purposes of firefighting and road maintenance.	EMCDR/CESM	Pending funding.
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	Complete.
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. 16/5/25 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 Binnu & West Ogilvie. Northampton has been deemed as not being at an acceptable standard.	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	Rejected – Complete
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

14	Capital Grant-Starlink communication equipment	Proceeding with Starlink for vehicles rather than trailer mounted. The Committee supports the use of Local Government Small Commitment Fund to purchase 7 or 9 Starlink units which includes first year subscription.	EMCDR/CESM	Commenced
15	Terms of Reference	Update to reflect Cr Karl Suckling as Chair and allow for flying minutes.	EMDCR	Completed
16	Appointment of CBFCO	Ms. Tatiana Vafiades be appointed as CBFCO	EMDCR	Completed.
17	Access to Domestic Water Supplies	The Committee request the Shire implement requirements for new homes not connected to reticulated water supplies to have a water tank(s) with firefighting couplings to ensure that water may be used in the event of a fire.	EMCDR/CESM	Pending
18	Draft Bushfire Mitigation Plans	The Committee recommends the two Fire Mitigation Plans be merged into one document to include all areas of the Shire, with focus on the individual townsites of Northampton, Horrocks, Port Gregory and Kalbarri. Agenda item to be presented to Council for adoption of the Plan.	EMCDR/CESM	Not Able to Proceed. Completed.
19	Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans	That requirements of Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans be strictly enforced. No means No. 22-6-26 Based on information received from DFES legal, Tatiana to make amendments and add details to website- SHIRE RECOMMENDS NO CARTING.	EMCDR/CESM	Completed.

20	Secure Use of High Season appliance from DFES for 2026/27 fire season	CESM to lodge request with Send a DFES email to secure 1 heavy appliance for the south of Northampton Shire.	CESM	New
21	Review of Fire Break Notice	Amendments made to incorporate last BFAC meetings Votes of blocks 100m2, 1000m-2000m and over 2000m2. Small amendments made and running minute for approval before Council consideration.	CESM/ CBFCO/ EMDCR	Commenced.
22	Additional Fire Break and Firefighting Information Pamphlet	Small amendments to be made and approved on by running minutes by BFAC team before recommendations to council	CESM	Commenced
23	Adoption of a Fire Break Variation Form	Tatiana to make amendments and present at the next BFAC meeting	CESM/ EMDCR	New
25	Training	Training needs discussion and organisation of courses.	CESM	New
26	Mine Site Capability/ Meetings	Mark Teale and Tatiana Vafiades to Visit Mine sites	AO Midlands/ CESM	New
27	Membership forms to be established from Shire	Membership forms to be established and passed by flying minutes.	CESM/ EMDCR	New
28	Letter of Support from Northampton Shire for Heavy Appliance	A letter of Support to be formed and signed and presented to DFES for securing a Heavy appliance for the Northampton townsite.	EMDCR	New