



Shire of Northam  
*Heritage, Commerce and Lifestyle*

## **Shire of Northam**

### **Agenda**

### **Bush Fire Advisory Committee**

**10 September 2019**

**NOTICE PAPER**  
**Bush Fire Advisory Committee**  
**10 September 2019**

Committee Members

I inform you that the Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting will be held in the Council Chambers located at 395 Fitzgerald Street, Northam on 10 September 2019 at 5:30pm.

Yours faithfully



**Jason Whiteaker**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## DISCLAIMER

This agenda has yet to be dealt with by the Council. The Recommendations shown at the foot of each item have yet to be considered by the Council and are not to be interpreted as being the position of the Council. The minutes of the meeting held to discuss this agenda should be read to ascertain the decision of the Council.

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## 1. DECLARATION OF OPENING

## 2. ATTENDANCE

### Voting Committee:

Councillor – Shire of Northam	Terry Little
Councillor – Shire of Northam	Carl Della
Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Mathew Macqueen
Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer	Simon Peters
Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade	Linton Mincherton
Clackline Muresk Bush Fire Brigade	Joe Marasco
Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigade	Steve Gray
Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade	Sam Moss
Irishtown Bush Fire Brigade	Rob Herzer
Jennapullin Bush Fire Brigade	Aaron Smith
Southern Brook Bush Fire Brigade	Paul Antonio
Wundowie Bush Fire Brigade	
Northam Central Bush Fire Brigade	
Wundowie Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service	Jeffrey Roberts
Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service	Greg Montgomery

### Non Voting

Community Emergency Service Manager	Brendon Rutter
District Officer Northam	Darrel Krammer
Department of Parks and Wildlife (Wheatbelt)	Graeme Keals
Department of Parks and Wildlife (Perth Hills)	Michael Pasotti

### Staff:

Executive Manager Development Services	Chadd Hunt
Executive Assistant - CEO	Alysha McCall

### 2.1 APOLOGIES

### 3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Item Name	Item No.	Name	Type of Interest	Nature of Interest

### 4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

#### 4.1 COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 9 JULY 2019

##### RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory meeting held 9 July 2019 be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting.

## 5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### 5.1 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES MANAGER REPORT

<b>Address:</b>	N/A
<b>Owner:</b>	N/A
<b>Applicant:</b>	N/A
<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Brendon Rutter Community Emergency Services Manager
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Chadd Hunt Executive Manager Development Services
<b>Officer Declaration of Interest:</b>	Nil.
<b>Voting Requirement:</b>	Simple Majority
<b>Press release to be issued:</b>	No

#### BRIEF

For the Committee to receive and note the update provided by the Community Emergency Services Manager.

#### ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

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#### A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

N/A.

#### B. CONSIDERATIONS

##### B.1 Strategic Community / Corporate Business Plan

Theme Area 3: Safety and Security

Outcome 3.1: Shire of Northam residents are able to pursue the fullest life possible without fear of or hindrance from crime and disorder.

##### B.2 Financial / Resource Implications

Nil.

##### B.3 Legislative Compliance

Nil.

**B.4 Policy Implications**

Nil.

**B.5 Stake Holder Engagement / Consultation**

Nil.

**B.6 Risk Implications**

Risk Category	Description	Rating (consequence x likelihood)	Mitigation Action
Financial	N/A	N/A	N/A
Health & Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputation	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Interruption	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A

**C. OFFICER'S COMMENT**

The 2019/2020 season is fast on its way, with the season starting to show signs of turning early it is an opportune time to look at what pre-season training brigades require. Please ensure that Training Officers and/or Captains advise of any requests or requirements from your brigades as soon as convenient.

Pre-season servicing of the appliances is under way with the operational certification process and annual hose testing commencing and will continue until the fleet has been completed and certified as ready for the current season.

**Appliance reallocation** – The outcome from the R2R process that initiated the reallocation of appliances in an effort to improve efficiency and provide capability to any identified gaps in coverage is nearing completion.

The appliances have all be renamed in the DFES RMS and P1 CAD system including the AVL, and the signwriting will be completed by the end of August 2019.

Any appliance that was reallocated has been cleaned and detailed as best as possible with all lockers cleaned & stocked as per the original stowage lists.





If a brigade is a recipient of an appliance that is of a different type, it is strongly recommended that a familiarisation session be held with your members to ensure that everyone knows where all the stowage items are, and how to operate the appliance systems including pumping, draughting etc.

Staff are happy to assist all brigades with any training needs prior to the season.

**Bushfire Forum** – On 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019 Council will be holding the inaugural Shire of Northam Bushfire forum. This is a pre-season briefing that is open to all members about the expected outlook for the coming fire season as well as just brushing up on some basics for the season ahead. The Forum will have guest speakers from LGIS and the DFES wellness branch. An invite will be going out in the near future.

**Emergency Services Family Fun Day** – 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019 is the day to be in Northam, the family fun day replaces the firefighters dinner due to feedback received from the brigades and is open to all volunteer emergency service personnel and their families. We will have a range of activities on the day including an animal farm etc. as well as some ‘competitions’ between our services that are all designed to capture the competitive spirit of all of our volunteers in a relaxed atmosphere.

**Captains meetings** – Due to a suggestion of one of our Captains it has been highlighted that the Captains, CESM, Chief & the Deputy should get together more regularly both prior to, during and after the season to ensure that things are tracking along, and provide a platform for any issues that need addressing.

The proposed schedule for the Captains meetings are as follows;

- 1 - Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019 @ Spencers Brook Tavern from 1800;
- 2 - Feb 7<sup>th</sup> 2020 @ Grass Valley Tavern from 1800;
- 3 – Apr 3<sup>rd</sup> @ Loose foot Saloon (El Caballo) from 1800; and
- 4 – May 29 @ Northam Tavern from 1800.

**Annual Calendar** – in August an annual calendar was prepared that was emailed to brigades to keep all members informed of important dates such as BFAC’s etc. It is hoped that this is a useful tool for the brigades and if there is anything that is suggested to be added please contact staff to arrange.

It is also proposed to publish it online to ensure that all members are able to access the information readily. Brigades are welcome to add information to it for important dates within their brigades.

**2019/2020 Bushfire Season – Regional Deployments** - Last season was particularly busy in the Goldfields, which meant that there was an increase in request for assistance coming from the region.

It is important to mention that there is never any expectations that volunteers make themselves available for deployment. When a request comes through it is offered to any volunteers who would like to go for a 5 day deployment only if they are willing and able to be deployed.

Staff want to ensure that all volunteers are aware that they are not under any obligation to go on deployments, any assistance from volunteer firefighters is gratefully received, and very much appreciated by our regional partners.

Appliances on deployment – as with previous years it is highly likely that the Shire of Northam will receive requests for assistance in providing appliances for fire suppression activities. As is always the case, once a request comes through, staff contact the CBFCO & DCBFCO to make a decision on how much assistance we can offer, and if an appliance is identified as being able to be released, staff contact the Captain out of courtesy to brief them on the request and the decision of the Chief.

Unfortunately due to the often difficult terrain in the Goldfields some damage may occur, which will be rectified upon return prior to the appliance being returned to the Brigade in a clean and tidy manner. To prevent any issues arising, all cleaning and repair work must be completed prior to the appliance being sent back to the Brigade. This ensures that all remediation works are completed in a timely manner.

**Agenda Items from Brigades** - Officers have received several agenda items that due to either not requiring a decision from council or having already been addressed have not been placed into the agenda. I'll provide a brief description of the agenda item and the reason for not being included below.

**Wundowie VFRS – Council to purchase electronic weather stations.**

*“The purchase of these weather stations will eliminate the liability issues currently had by supplying live and accurate weather data 24/7 that will be recorded and used to implement harvest movement bans.*

*Also, unlike the current process of volunteer members giving up their time by making them-selves available to obtain weather data manually to calculate if a HMV should be activated.*

*Having these stations active and placed strategically located around the shire the CBFCA can remotely obtain all information on demand and place bans if required.*

*The Shire purchases electronic weather stations and fit them to fire stations or weather officer's property to gather the correct information to implement harvest bans for the 2019/20 fire season"*

#### Officer Comment

In the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Council have made provisions to co fund the rollout of 7 x Davis Instruments Weather link IP systems. This co funding is reliant on a successful application through the National Disaster Resilience Programme (NDRP) funding that will be released later in the year.

Should the funding not be successful, staff will utilise the current budgeted amount to rollout 50% of the project with further funding sources to be investigated in an effort to fund the remaining 50% project the following year.

#### **Northam VFRS – Electronic Fire Danger Rating Signs**

*"The Northam VFRS feel these should be placed at the main entrances to the town of Northam (East and West).*

*The exact locations can be debated during the meeting by delegates in order to get the best coverage.*

*The Northam VFRS feel this can go a long way to keeping the public better informed on fire danger ratings.*

*Some electronic signage models even have the ability to advise the public of other important fire/weather information etc. depending on model purchased."*

#### Officer Comment

In the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Council have made provisions to co fund the rollout of electronic LED FDR signage. This co funding is reliant on a successful application through the National Disaster Resilience Programme (NDRP) funding that will be released later in the year.

Should the funding not be successful, staff will utilise the current budgeted amount to rollout 50% of the proposed project with further funding sources to be investigated to fund the remaining 50% of the rollout of 6 signs in strategically placed locations through the Shire of Northam.

**Irishtown BFB – Constitution & Charitable Entity Registration**

*“The need to be incorporated to be an Australian Charities & Not-For-Profit Commission charitable entity. This need to be brought up at BFAC to understand how brigades stand.*

*We have been registered under Australian Charities & Not-For-Profit Commission charitable entity but we need to be incorporated to comply. This registration allow any donors to the brigade to claim a tax deduction.*

*How do the brigades allow any donors to claim the tax deduction given we are governed by the Bushfire Manual and not a constitution?”*

Officer Comment

Officers are of the understanding that to be registered as a charitable organisation, there is no longer a requirement to be incorporated, Brigades would need to demonstrate the existence of brigade rules in place of a constitution which exists in the form of the Shire of Northam Bush Fires Manual.

Officers have provided a handout “Charity Information Pack” in an electronic copy attached the agenda email for brigade perusal. Although the package was distributed on 2013, Officers confirmed the information is valid.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council note the Community Emergency Services Manager Report as provided.**

## 5.2 CHIEF BUSHFIRE CONTROL OFFICER (CBFCO) REPORT

<b>Address:</b>	N/A
<b>Owner:</b>	N/A
<b>Applicant:</b>	N/A
<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Matt Macqueen Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Chadd Hunt Executive Manager Development Services
<b>Officer Declaration of Interest:</b>	Nil.
<b>Voting Requirement:</b>	Simple Majority
<b>Press release to be issued:</b>	No

### BRIEF

For the Committee to receive and note the report provided by the Chief Bushfire Control Officer.

### ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

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### A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

The CBFCO report for the 2018/19 bushfire season is provided below.

### B. CONSIDERATIONS

#### B.1 Strategic Community / Corporate Business Plan

Theme Area 3: Safety and Security

Outcome 3.1: Shire of Northam residents are able to pursue the fullest life possible without fear of or hindrance from crime and disorder.

#### B.2 Financial / Resource Implications

Nil.

#### B.3 Legislative Compliance

Nil.

#### B.4 Policy Implications

Nil.

## B.5 Stake Holder Engagement / Consultation

Nil.

## B.6 Risk Implications

Risk Category	Description	Rating (consequence x likelihood)	Mitigation Action
Financial	N/A	N/A	N/A
Health & Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputation	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Interruption	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A

## OFFICER'S COMMENT

Chief's Report BFAC 10 September 2019

R2R. After nearly 3 years it's great to see units re-named and moved around the Shire to their new home for the 2019/20 fire season. I do hope the brigades will take good care of their appliance that they might have gained. Please take the time before the season kicks off to have a good look over the unit and how it works. If your brigade has any questions about the appliance, please let myself or the CESM know and we're more than happy to come out to your brigade.

2019/20 Fire Season. As you can see it look like the fire season will start earlier than usual. With the low rain fall and warmer temperature we might be attending incidents sooner than expected. I do ask brigades to update their SMS list and if you could let us know if your brigade will be running a roster.

Permits/ FCO's. An FCO meeting has been called for the 13<sup>th</sup> September to discuss dates, times and brigade burns for the restricted period. Also we'll be running through rolls and responsibilities of an FCO and also incident management.

FCO's will be expected to fulfil their roles and responsibilities under the act, and will be required to operate as incident controllers. For this coming season all FCO's are encouraged to attend fires within their district, but may be called upon to assist at other incidents within the Shire.

FCO's are expected to operate in accordance all relevant DFES SOP's and in line with standard incident management procedures to alleviate the CBFCO, DCBFCO or CESM from having to attend an incident, such as:

- 1- FCO must chose a control point and remain in place for entire incident, location of control point must be advised to all personnel and to Comcen.
- 2- FCO must not be on the fire ground under any circumstances, you are there to run the incident, not squirt water that is not your role, direct your crews, that's your job.
- 3- Incident notes have to be kept in your incident diary, there is no exceptions it is a requirement of running an incident
- 4- White copies of notes are to be provided to Shire for filing after each incident, you are accountable for your decisions, so make sure you take good notes.
- 5- Comcen must be kept informed of what is happening, they need a sitrep every 30 minutes otherwise you will have the CBFCO/DCBFCO/CESM attend.
- 6- All fire must be extinguished to DFES standards, nothing can be left burning or smouldering to prevent re-ignition, otherwise it is your responsibility to attend and extinguish again.
- 7- You are in control of the incident until it is closed, it is the responsibility of the FCO to arrange for relief crews, patrols at defined intervals, request welfare/logistics support through the CESM etc.
- 8- As FCO in charge you will not leave the fire ground until all other members have left, you must be prepared to stay overnight if required.
- 9- You must be aware of weather conditions and be able to justify your decisions to the CBFCO/DCBFCO/CESM if requested.
- 10-If you need help, ask for it, the CBFCO/DCBFCO/CESM are happy to assist, however will not necessarily step in, you will still be in charge unless you are out of your depth.
- 11-All back burning must be approved by you BEFORE ignition, if it goes bad, you are responsible, so make sure you are happy to accept responsibility for the back burn, otherwise do not approve it.
- 12-The CBFCO/DCBFCO/CESM will step in and take control if the incident is being run poorly, or if it is escalating beyond your capacity, they are ultimately responsible so if you're not doing the job correctly, don't be surprised if they stand you down.

There is defined triggers that if met you may get the CBFCO/DCBFCO/CESM/DFES or a combination of all based on the incident at hand, any incident can trigger attendance at the discretion of the officer but some of the major ones are:

- All Structure Fires
- All vehicle fires involving road closures

- Anything involving zone 3 response trigger
- Any incident occurring on day of "SEVERE" and above
- Any incident impacting state/federal infrastructure or facilities
- Any incident that has life involvement
- Any incident where media is present
- Any incident that is of a political nature
- Any incident where would be in the best interest of Council
- Any incident 3rd alarm and above
- Any incident involving a multi-agency response

The end of the day, you have put your hand up to become an FCO, everything here is your responsibility if you disagree with anything in this list perhaps re think your decision. An FCO is an important job and one that has been taken lightly for years, there has been little interest in fulfilling the role correctly or managing an incident to any sort of standard.

FCO's who fail in their duties will be held accountable by the CEO of the Shire, multiple failures will result in your appointment being revoked, it's time to step up and do the job properly otherwise you'll only burn out the next person who takes on the Chief role.

### **Minutes from Captains Meeting – 19<sup>th</sup> August 2019 – Inkpen Shed**

#### **Chief's comments and recommendation's**

*Electronic Fire Danger Rating Signs (see photo on page 5).*

*It is something I have brought up at BFAC and the shire doesn't want to know anything about it as it costs money.*

*The Electronic Fire Danger Rating Signs can be installed anywhere as long as there is mobile signal. The LED board can be automatic linked to the BOM web site so as the FDR changes for the shire the board is updated. Also messages can be posted on the board if a harvest ban goes on or other messages like TFD's and restricted & prohibited times.*

*Locations should be at main entrances to the shire and also into the town side of Northam.*

- GEH east and west of the shire
- Yilgarn Ave, Mitchell Ave
- York, Goomalling roads after other install have been done.

#### **Recommendations**

- *The Shire purchase 2 Electronic Fire Danger Rating Signs for the 2019/20 season.*
- *The Shire approach WALGA to fund 2 other Electronic Fire Danger Rating Signs for the 2020/21 season.*



### **Fire Weather Officers & Weather Stations**

We are heavily reliant on volunteer fire weather officers, who are not officially recognised under the act due to not undertaking the official training that runs for several weeks and being officially gazetted under the Act (there is officially 2 in WA), this places a lot of responsibility on the volunteers to remain available during the high threat period.

The Shire should install professional weather stations at each brigade shed or where necessary, this would give a better understanding of the accurate weather conditions, as all stations are linked to a central website and would provide up to 10 locations to ensure bans are implemented based on professionally calibrated instruments, everyone has access to the website to see for themselves what the readings are at each location. The calculation can also be done automatically so weather officers don't have to enter any information.

### **Recommendations**

- The Shire purchases electronic weather station and fit them to the fire stations or weather officer's property to gather the correct information to implement harvest bans for the 2019/20 fire season.

### **2010 Toodyay fire**

- Murray McBride was on holidays at the time of the fire. He was instructed to pack up and to come back to Toodyay, that phone call was at 5pm Murray was back in Toodyay at 10 that night.
- Murray stayed on that fire ground for 10 weeks assisting in recovery even though back then there wasn't a recovery plan, so it all had to be made up as they went along.
- Murray was self-employed at the time.

The Chief has a great role to fill, these days there are plans in place to assist with a major incident, but this means more meetings and training for the Chief. LMAC meeting are held every couple of months to go through the procurers if and when a major incident happens. Storm, flood, fire, earthquake, outbreak of diseases and whatever else might happen.

Horton Road the Lakes is an example. I was there for 5 full days and over the weekend I had Simon cover for me as I had family commitments. This job had myself and the CESM dealing with the property owner, the very disgruntled property owner where the fire started, EPA, DWER, Main Roads, LG Mundaring and Northam, DFES, local VBFB and the list goes on. 5 days of repeatedly going over and over the same phone call and emails as well as monitoring the incident. This incident went for just over 2 weeks.

### **Turnout & Communication**

A lot don't know what happens before and after an incident and why communication has to always be flowing.

- 1) 000 caller ends up being put through to Comm's (6IP) in Cockburn.
- 2) The job gets allocated to the closest or suitable Shire/ brigade/ station.
- 3) Selected people (Chief, DCBFCO & CESM) get a group call on the phone.
- 4) Whoever takes that call will decide within seconds (e.g. Chief),
  - What brigades to turn out, Shire officers/equipment, DFES officers, Air Support, police, DFES emergency warnings, road closures?
  - What's the weather for the day, what was the weather the day before and what's coming up, does a harvest ban need to go on?
  - What else is going on within the shire, other Shire's or other major incidents within the state?
  - Have our crews been out the past 24 hours and need a rest so look at other appliances from other brigades or Shire's?
  - Zone 3 response.
- 5) Call goes out. If the brigade calls haven't been answered within 3 minutes or less the messages will keep being sent out. The Chief will be contacted by Comm's with "what's going on, why we haven't had a response yet. Do you want us to send other brigades"?
- 6) Once the brigade have turned out they must contact Comm's to let them know,
  - What units are turning out with how many crews from that brigade?
  - What incident they are attending.
  - If late turnout, is it still emergency road conditions.
  - Notify the Chief.
- 7) On arrival the first arriving appliances must,
  - Contact Comm's to notify they have arrived.
  - Give a brief PAFTAC of the incident and classification.
  - Contact Chief to notify them that you have arrived, what's going on, is there any property under threat, what resourcing is needed. All other units attending that incident must do the same apart from the PAFTAC.
- 8) In the initial part of the incident Comm's must be updated every 5 to 10 minutes. Now if none of that gets done from the start this is where the Chief will either turnout, turnout another officer or be on the phone or radio to the brigade on scene with what's going on.
- 9) Throughout the incident the Chief (on scene or not) will be dealing with.

- DFES commutations, air op's, emergency warnings (public notification), spot weather forecasts and managers.
- Shire, Shire depo, equipment, Rangers and managers.
- Local brigades, crew changeover.
- Other agents that might be involved in e.g. police, ambulance, main roads, environmental groups, red cross (catering), evacuation centres and many others.
- Upcoming days- weeks.

10) When things start to become under control everything that has happened has to be undone, it's a matter of going back over everything that has happened and start to undo it.

- Contacting DFES to start downgrading the incident.
- Shire resources.
- Local and brigades that have come in to assist.

11) If something major has happened a LEMC meeting may be called with all the departments that have been involved to start recovery.

12) The Chief will be involved right to the point of the incident being closed and any matters that arise after the incident has been closed.

- Damage to equipment, private, Shires.
- Damage to private property and infrastructure.
- Meetings, debriefs.

This only briefly explains some of what goes on with one job. Think of all of that if there was 5 jobs across the Shire in one week.

Whoever takes the Chief position needs to understand the limitations of the Fire Brigades Act 1942 as this will determine what is possible within the Bushfires Act 1954 - again the VFRS are unable to legally operate outside their gazettes townsites, they must be under control of an IC/BFCO to ensure they are protected under the Bush fires act. There may be times the chief needs to have an understanding of the emergency management act 2005 as well.

### **Recommendations for the 2019/20 Fire Season**

1. Rural Fire Service. Brigades put forward to BFAC that Council approach DFES to take over the VBFB.  
From what I've heard through the grape vine it's only going to be 2 years until the RFS will come in to play. As the Shire has very little understanding and intrust of bushfire why not hand the VBFB to the RFS and be under one hat instead of being split between two.  
Brigades would have to put up a motion at BFAC to go to Council to look at that option. If that was the case, I would stay on for another 12 months to assist with the transition.
2. 2019/20 Fire season



**BARTCO**  
Visual Information Systems

Phone: 1300 306 106  
www.bartco.com.au



## Electronic Fire Danger Rating Sign (EFDRS) FACT SHEET

**BARTCO wins Product Design Award for 2013 at the Fire Awareness Awards for recognition for design and innovation.**

Providing the public and motorists with fast, reliable and accurate information regarding fire ratings...**THAT CAN SAVE LIVES!**

Bartco is proud to be the innovator of the new advancement in the notification of Fire Danger Ratings.

Our new Electronic Fire Danger Rating Signs (EFDRS) use LED indicators, an LED message sign for notifications, combined with GPRS communication and a web based interface to remotely send information, virtually instantly to a sign or network of signs.

FIRE DANGER RATING TODAY



**CODE RED EFDRS - Victoria**

FIRE DANGER RATING TODAY



**CATASTROPHIC EFDRS**  
All States (excluding VIC)

### Features Include;

- Display Type: Super Bright LED modules
- Message Panel : Dynamic Variable Message Display
- Overall Sign Dimensions: 1840mm x 1420mm
- Power Supply: Solar and battery backup
- Enclosure: Aluminium
- Screen: Non-glare UV polycarbonate
- GPRS Modem
- Temperature Sensor
- Security Locks
- Communication Management: (optional using Bartco WebStudio™ and CurbSite™ Lite app) with auto update from RSS Feed
- Brightness Control: Automatic and manual

Contact BARTCO today  
for a free no obligation quote

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Fax: + 61 3 9646 2724

Sales Enquiries: sales@bartco.com.au

Technical Enquiries: service@bartco.com.au

BARTCO uses standards to develop, engineer, and manufacture from an ISO 9001:2000 certified manufacturing facility located in Australia.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council note the Chief Bushfire Control Officer Report as provided.**

### 5.3 BAKERS HILL BFB FCO NOMINATIONS

<b>Address:</b>	N/A
<b>Owner:</b>	N/A
<b>Applicant:</b>	N/A
<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Brendon Rutter Community Emergency Services Manager
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Chadd Hunt Executive Manager Development Services
<b>Officer Declaration of Interest:</b>	Nil.
<b>Voting Requirement:</b>	Simple Majority
<b>Press release to be issued:</b>	No

#### BRIEF

For the Committee to receive and endorse the nominations for BFCO from the Bakers Hill BFB.

#### ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

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#### A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

N/A.

#### B. CONSIDERATIONS

##### B.1 Strategic Community / Corporate Business Plan

Theme Area 3: Safety and Security

Outcome 3.1: Shire of Northam residents are able to pursue the fullest life possible without fear of or hindrance from crime and disorder.

##### B.2 Financial / Resource Implications

Nil.

##### B.3 Legislative Compliance

Bush Fires Act 1954

##### B.4 Policy Implications

Nil.

**B.5 Stake Holder Engagement / Consultation**

Nil.

**B.6 Risk Implications**

Risk Category	Description	Rating (consequence x likelihood)	Mitigation Action
Financial	Advertising Costs	low	Advertise with other BFCO's in 1 advert
Health & Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputation	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Interruption	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	Bush Fires Act 1954	HIGH	Ensure that BFCO's are adequately trained in accordance with the Bush Fires Act 1954 & Shire of Northam Bush Fires Manual
Property	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A

**C. OFFICER'S COMMENT**

At the Ordinary Council Meeting held Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019, Council received late advice from the Bakers Hill BFB Captain on behalf of the membership raising some concerns.

As a result of the late information Council resolved to refer all BFCO nominations back to the brigade for further discussion with the exception of Simon Peters who is our current deputy.

At the time of completing this report no formal feedback had been received from the Bakers Hill BFB.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council appoints the following Fire Control Officers for the 2019/20 Season in accordance with the criteria set in section 5 of the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Manual:**



## 5.4 RURAL FIRE DIVISION

<b>Address:</b>	N/A
<b>Owner:</b>	N/A
<b>Applicant:</b>	N/A
<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Mathew Macqueen Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Chadd Hunt Executive Manager Development Services
<b>Officer Declaration of Interest:</b>	Nil.
<b>Voting Requirement:</b>	Simple Majority
<b>Press release to be issued:</b>	No

### BRIEF

For the Committee to contact the Rural Fire Division for an update on the development of the division.

### ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

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### A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

For many years it has become evident of the multiple issues surrounding the management of the Bush Fire Service by local government across the state. A large portion of the issues surround the lack of consistency within each local government in relation to minimum training requirements, policies and procedures etc.

I have suggested for a number of years that the bushfire service should be all run under the one umbrella by DFES as the HMA for all fire incidents within WA.

Having DFES manage the bush fire service will ensure that there is consistency amongst all brigades, and will finally ensure that all bush fire volunteers have access to the same level of training and resourcing as their DFES managed counterparts.

This will assist with reducing the often toxic us & them mentality that currently exists and will ensure that the volunteers from all disciplines can get on with the job of serving their communities.

**B. CONSIDERATIONS**

**B.1 Strategic Community / Corporate Business Plan**

Theme Area 3: Safety and Security

Outcome 3.1: Shire of Northam residents are able to pursue the fullest life possible without fear of or hindrance from crime and disorder.

**B.2 Financial / Resource Implications**

Nil.

**B.3 Legislative Compliance**

Bush Fires Act 1954

**B.4 Policy Implications**

Nil.

**B.5 Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation**

Nil.

**B.6 Risk Implications**

<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Rating (consequence x likelihood)</b>	<b>Mitigation Action</b>
Financial	No cost to the local government	Low	N/A
Health & Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputation	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Interruption	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A

**C. OFFICER'S COMMENT**

Staff support clarification being received regarding the functioning and resourcing of the Rural Fire Division.



**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council contact the Rural Fire Division (RFD) to request:**

- 1. An update on progress of the RFD implementation;**
- 2. Advice on how the RFD will be structured and where the Bush Fire Brigades will sit in that structure;**
- 3. A timeframe of when this is likely to occur;**
- 4. A response by 31st October 2019 to enable the response to be tabled at the November pre-season BFAC.**

## 5.5 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

<b>Address:</b>	N/A
<b>Owner:</b>	N/A
<b>Applicant:</b>	N/A
<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Brendon Rutter Community Emergency Services Manager
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Chadd Hunt Executive Manager Development Services
<b>Officer Declaration of Interest:</b>	Nil
<b>Voting Requirement:</b>	Simple Majority
<b>Press release to be issued:</b>	No

### BRIEF

Standard Operating procedures for the Shire of Northam Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades

### ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: SOP 19 – Brigade

#### A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

The proposed SOP was raised in the CESM report at the last BFAC meeting where it was proposed that it be circulated to Brigades for comment prior to being presented to this meeting. Brigade representatives were asked to seek comment from their brigades and provide to officers to be tabled at the next BFAC meeting.

In the absence of any feedback from brigades and in the interest of further development of the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Manual.

SOP 19 – Brigade Burns has been developed to ensure that a consistent approach is applied in relation to Brigade Burns on private property as a fund raising activity. The process has been developed to ensure compliance with the Bush Fires Act 1954 to ensure that any brigade activity is appropriately recorded for insurance purposes.

**B. CONSIDERATIONS**

**B.1 Strategic Community / Corporate Business Plan**

Theme Area 3: Safety and Security

Outcome 3.1: Shire of Northam residents are able to pursue the fullest life possible without fear of or hindrance from crime and disorder.

**B.2 Financial / Resource Implications**

Nil.

**B.3 Legislative Compliance**

Bush Fires Act 1954

Bush Fires Regulations 1954

**B.4 Policy Implications**

Shire of Northam Bush Fire Manual.

**B.5 Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation**

Chief & Deputy Bush fire Control Officers.

**B.6 Risk Implications**

Risk Category	Description	Rating (consequence x likelihood)	Mitigation Action
Financial	All costs associated with the works will be as agreed by private landowner and brigade, council will invoice for works out of private works GL and paid to brigades upon receipt of invoice.	low	Ensure costs are agreed upon between all parties prior to works commencing.
Health & Safety	Volunteer personnel are exposed to hazardous environment whilst conducting hazard reduction burns	High	Ensure that all SOP's are followed, brigade members are wearing correct PPC, and are following LACES whilst engaged in hazard reduction burning.

Reputation	Council has a duty of care to its volunteers to ensure that they are adequately covered by council insurance whilst conducting brigade activities, including but not limited to conducting hazard reduction burns for private residents within the Shire of Northam.	High	Ensure correct procedures are followed to ensure adequate protections are in place for brigade members as provided for under the Bush Fires Act 1954.
Service Interruption	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	<p>Burning off private land is not a power of a Bush Fire Brigade or a Bush Fire Control Officer unless directed by Local Government in the circumstances described in Section 33 (4) and (6) of the <i>Bush Fires Act</i>.</p> <p>Brigades operating in accordance with the powers and duties described in the <i>Bush Fires Act</i>, enjoys immunity from liability. If a brigade operates outside these parameters, members may well have personal liability for any damage caused as a result.</p>	High	Ensure brigades are aware of the requirements of the SOP, Monitor to ensure activities are carried out in accordance with the procedure.
Property	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A

### C. OFFICER'S COMMENT

Burning off private land is not a power of a Bush Fire Brigade or a Bush Fire Control Officer unless directed by Local Government in the circumstances described in Section 33 (4) and (6) of the *Bush Fires Act*.

In other words, a property owner who is subject to a Local Government notice to remove hazards and does not want to do the work personally may request the Local Government to do the work. The Local Government can also act in default of the owner or occupier. In both circumstance the brigade/contractor can directed by the Local Government to carry out the work as specified in the notice.

There is no other way in which brigades can carry out burning of private land and still enjoy the immunity conferred by the *Bush Fires Act*.

Local Governments have a crucial role in ensuring that proper direction is given to brigades and that appropriate notices have been issued to landholders as required by Section 33.

In summary, a brigade operating in accordance with the powers and duties described in the *Bush Fires Act*, enjoys immunity from liability. If a brigade operates outside these parameters, members may well have liability for damage caused as a result. Accordingly, all requests direct from landholders to brigades must be referred to the Local Government so that Local Government may lawfully direct the brigade to act.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council:**

- 1. Endorse Standard Operating Procedure 19, and acknowledge that this Standard Operating Procedure will be included in the future Section 8 of the Bush Fire Manual.**
- 2. Ensure that brigades are adequately informed and trained on the new process to ensure compliance with obligations under the Bush Fires Act 1954**

## Attachment 1

### SOP.19 BRIGADE BURNS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Procedure No.	SOP.19
Procedure Subject:	Brigade Burns on Private Property

#### Introduction

Burning off private land is not a power of a Bush Fire Brigade or a Bush Fire Control Officer unless directed by Local Government in the circumstances described in Section 33 (4) and (6) of the Bush Fires Act.

In other words, a property owner who is subject to a Local Government notice to remove hazards and does not want to do the work personally may request the Local Government to do the work. The Local Government can also act in default of the owner or occupier. In both circumstances the brigade/contractor can be directed by the Local Government to carry out the work as specified in the notice.

There is no other way in which brigades can carry out burning of private land and still enjoy the immunity conferred by the Bush Fires Act.

Local Governments have a crucial role in ensuring that proper direction is given to brigades and that appropriate notices have been issued to landholders as required by Section 33.

In summary, a brigade operating in accordance with the powers and duties described in the Bush Fires Act, enjoys immunity from liability. If a brigade operates outside these parameters, members may well have liability for damage caused as a result. Accordingly, all requests direct from landholders to brigades must be referred to the Local Government so that Local Government may lawfully direct the brigade to act.

#### Procedure

1. The land owner / occupier (applicant) makes contact with the Brigade.
2. The FCO (or their delegate) must visit the proposed burn site with the applicant and establish the aims and objectives of the burn and identify any risks.
3. Alternatives to burning should be identified and considered if practical.
4. The Brigade is to cost the burn and provide a quote to the applicant on behalf of the local government for the work to be carried out by the Brigade.
5. If the scope and cost of the burn is agreed to by the applicant, the applicant is required to send a written request through to the CESM.
6. The FCO is to prepare a burn plan in consultation with the brigade members and the property owner/occupier and submit the plan with a private works request form to the CESM for approval.
7. The CESM in consultation with the CBFCO is to assess the burn plan with any proposed variations to the conditions to be discussed with the FCO prior to being recorded on the burning plan. Any alterations are to be dated and initialled by the CESM and/or CBFCO.
8. Once the plan is approved, the CESM and/or CBFCO is to approve the plan in writing, which will authorise the brigade to carry out the works.
9. A 'permit to burn' must be issued to the applicant (Not the Brigade) before any burning is carried out during the Restricted Burning period.
10. The Shire of Northam will invoice the applicant and receive the outstanding monies.
11. On receipt of payment, the local government will forward the monies to the Brigade upon receipt of a brigade invoice



## 6. MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

### 6.1 SECTION 4.2G AND 4.4G OF THE BUSH FIRE MANUAL – VOTING RIGHTS

#### MOTION

**Moved: Robert Herzer**

**That Council amend section 4.2G of the Shire of Northam Bushfire Manual, to remove any requirement for brigade members to be 'active' in order to have voting rights.**

#### BACKGROUND

Issue of Brigade members not having attended 4 activities (relevant to being a firefighter) to be reclassified as Auxiliary Member under 4.2G of Bush Fire Brigades (Shire of Northam Bushfire Manual) & denied voting rights under 4.4G to be removed.

Given the stats in the risk to resource most members would not be eligible to vote. We find this unworkable as only a very limited number of people were able to vote. The intent is to stop not active members stacking meeting but we need to have this clause removed if not then re defined to have more participation.

#### OFFICERS COMMENT

This matter has also been raised by a member of the Clackline / Muresk Bush Fire Brigade and has been included as Attachment 1.

At the BFAC meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2018 Section 4 of the Brigade manual was endorsed by the committee and referred to Council for endorsement.

The relevant section of Clause 4.2G is as follows –

*Membership of the Bush Fire Brigade can be terminated at the discretion of the brigade executive group if the member –*

- *Gives written notice of resignation to the Brigade Secretary;*
- *is, in the opinion of the Brigade, permanently incapacitated by mental or physical ill-health;*
- *Is dismissed by the Brigade; or*
- *Ceases to be a member or is taken to have resigned;*
- *Has not been active with the Brigade for a period of twelve (12) months that a member will be taken to have resigned from the Bush Fire*

*Brigade. A member may be considered inactive if they fail to attend a minimum of one (1) Brigade activity relevant to the member's role within a twelve (12) month period;*

- *A firefighter, who in a twelve (12) month period, does not attend at least four (4) Brigade activities relevant to their role as a firefighter, can be reclassified as an Auxiliary Member in the Brigade;*
- *Brigade activities that relate to the fire-fighting role include but are not limited to; Brigade training, turning out to an incident and hazard reduction burns;*

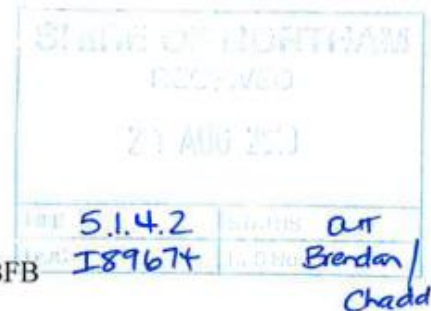
Similarly the relevant section of Clause 4.4G is as follows –

#### **4.4G Voting**

*To be eligible to one vote a Brigade Member must have attended a minimum of 4 Brigade activities such as hazard reduction burns, incidents, brigade training or DFES training within that year.*

If issues arise due to a clause in the manual that brigades believe need to be addressed, brigade reps are encouraged to put a motion forward with a recommended change to be tabled at BFAC for discussion.

## Attachment 1



BACKGROUND DETAILS ——— CLACKLINE MURESK BFB

Blair Wilding is regarded by the Shire of Northam as a “NON ACTIVE “ Brigade member. —

That is — he has not attended [according to the Shire] Brigade events or fires.

This is completely wrong. He was a frontline fire fighter at two fires at least as well as attending Brigade events—but was out of the district for the O’Brien fire.

It seems that attendance at these fires, with one or both of his units was not recorded. Why this was so is a matter for future investigation.

Blair Wilding is one of the best and most experienced fire fighters in the Shire of Northam.

This assertion that he is “Not Active” is an insult to him and the Brigade.

The Clackline Muresk Bush Fire Brigade requires his immediate reinstatement.

## 6.2 RESTRICTED BURNING DATES / CREATION OF TWO ZONES

### MOTION

**Moved: Robert Herzer**

**That Council investigate what is required to reinstate a 2 zone system to allow better management of bushfire risk at the turn of the seasons.**

### BACKGROUND

Discussion to bring restricted burning dates forward, or create 2 zones within the Shire such as East and West. Fire risk is different to each of those areas. Matter for BFAC.

I have been asked to raise this again by our brigade. The nature of our Shire means that the risks and needs to burn are different during the restricted burning period. As identified in the Risk to Resource report 2019, members feel the creation of a two fire zones will allow more appropriate fire risk controls to be implemented across the shire. This allow the lower risk are to undertake activities which would be considered too risky in the other district.

### OFFICERS COMMENT

There are provisions under the Bush Fires Act 1954 where due to seasonal conditions the Prohibited & Restricted period's commencement dates can be varied for a specific period by agreement of the CBFCO & Shire of Northam President with the support of a gazetted CALM Officer.

Officers are aware that historically the Shire was split into an east & west zone, and the inherent complexities that come with splitting a district. While the Bush Fires Act 1954 allows provisions for the local government to vary dates based on seasonal conditions, the act specifies that a local government may alter the dates for "its District" the Act does not provide provisions for the district to be split.

This can be addressed through management of the permit issuing process, a workshop has been tabled for 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019 for the BFCO's to discuss the coming permit season and will identify strategies that could address a lot of these concerns, further advice can be tabled at the Nov BFAC.

### 6.3 STRUCTURE

#### MOTION

**Moved: Jeffery Roberts**

**That Council endorse Chief position to become a paid role under the Shire of Northam CESH and x2 deputies and x1 snr FCO (deputy in training)  
Honourarium stays in place for the x2 deputies**

#### BACKGROUND

The recommended structure has been included as Attachment 1.

#### OFFICERS COMMENT

The position of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer is an integral part of the management of fire incidents within the Shire of Northam.

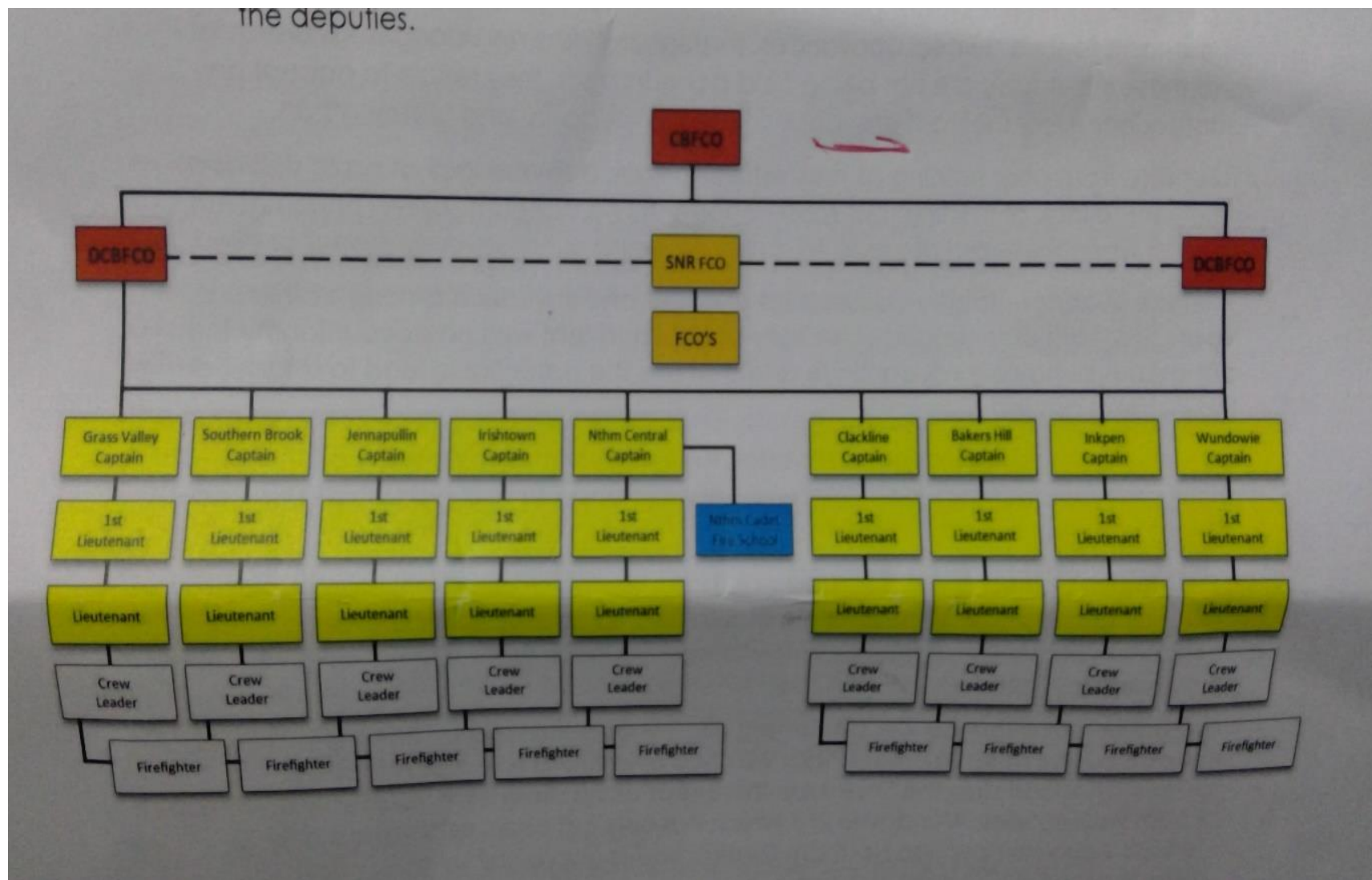
Officers appreciate the role has evolved in recent years due to the current climate and focus on emergency services both locally and interstate.

Officers believe the position of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer should remain a position held from within the volunteer Bushfire Brigade, albeit with some major changes to reduce the impact the position can take on the volunteer in the role. This includes the reduction of administrative duties currently being undertaken by the CBFCO position.

Discussion with the current CBFCO have also indicated that a strategy needs to be developed to assist the incoming CBFCO to reduce the load, by sharing responsibility with the DCBFCO (s), BFCO's and Captains of each brigade.

At this current point in time Officers are not recommending the position of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer should be filled by a paid employee of council.

### Attachment 1



## 6.4 GENERAL BUSINESS AT BFAC MEETINGS

### MOTION

Moved: Sam Moss

That Council include an agenda item for 'General Business' to future BFAC meetings for discussion/general business.

### BACKGROUND

Grass Valley BFB believes the inclusion of a general business session would be invaluable for discussion between brigades where we can look at motions for future BFAC meetings, discuss ideas/issues that individual brigades have had and want to send back to other brigades for feedback prior to a motion being submitted.

### OFFICERS COMMENT

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee has been formed by Council in accordance with s67 Bush Fires Act 1954. The Committee is an official advisory committee of Council and is therefore bound by Councils Standing Orders and as such there is currently no "general business" section on any committee of council agenda.

Agenda items of an urgent nature can be discussed by decision of the chairperson, a decision will be made on a case by case basis.

## 6.5 SUCCESSION PLANS FOR CBFCO AND DCBFCO POSITIONS

### MOTION

**Moved: Sam Moss**

**That Council develop a detailed and fully supported succession plan/s for the Chief and Deputy/s positions.**

### BACKGROUND

Grass Valley BFB believe the Shire of Northam need to draw up succession plans with the various brigades and FCO's for filling FCO positions and the Chief and Deputy/s positions, discussing opportunities for advancement and training, and taking advantage of any volunteer who wishes to advance their capabilities and the depth of their involvement in the BFB system. This plan should also outline how these positions will be supported to minimise the burden of these roles on volunteers.

### OFFICERS COMMENT

Whilst staff agree succession planning is important, what is unclear is what additional 'planning' is required. The system / structure as it currently exists is in place, from a theoretical perspective, whereby the Chief Bushfire Control Officer would be chosen from amongst existing brigade Fire Control Officers.

So the succession plan should be that the Fire Control Officers within each brigade are qualified, and using their current positions to gain experience with the view of potentially taking on the Chief position in a future year. While this is the current theoretical structure it is also the most logical succession planning structure moving forward. Issues may arise from time to time whereby you have Fire Control Officers who are unwilling, or unable, to take on the Chief position, leaving a void. Staff would recommend that brigades be mindful of this when electing their Fire Control Officers.



## 6.6 NOMINATIONS FOR CHIEF BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER

### MOTION

**Moved: Sam Moss**

**That Council endorse the Grass Valley BFB nominations for the 2019/2020 season.**

- **Chief Bush Fire Control Officer - Matt Macqueen**
- **Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer - West - Simon Peters**
- **Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer - East - Chris Marris**

### BACKGROUND

The Grass Valley BFB believes that it is in the best short and long term interest of the community and the local bush fire service to see the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer remain in volunteer hands. In saying that, we believe the chief role is one which must be supported strongly by both the Brigades and in particular the Shire.

On the basis that this support is more forthcoming, we understand that the current Chief, Matt Macqueen, is prepared to consider continuing as Chief for a further 12 months, while other members of the fire service are supported and encouraged to build up their training and experience.

As such, the Grass Valley BFB wish to make the following nominations for the 2019/2020 season.

Chief Bush Fire Control Officer - Matt Macqueen  
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer - West - Simon Peters  
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer - East - Chris Marris

The Grass Valley BFB believe the inclusion of a second deputy will aid in sharing the workload of the Chief, as well as provide for a greater pool of potential candidates for future succession to the chief as was the case in the past. In saying this, the Brigade believes that members outside of the chief/deputy chief roles should be supported and encouraged to build their skillset/experience for consideration of the senior roles into the future. Competition for these roles would be a great outcome.

In regards to Chris Marris's nomination, this is on the basis as presented above, with the chief role remaining as a volunteer. Since the below email, Chris has completed both his Ground Controller and AILMS 2017 Gap (already had AILMS 4) training, along with his On-road driving course. He is committed to completing the remaining two courses required at the earliest

suitable opportunity. Chris will have lots to learn but looks forward to doing so alongside two experienced chief and deputy chiefs should his nomination be supported.

**OFFICERS COMMENT**

The current Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Mat Macqueen has tendered his resignation from the position as of October 31<sup>st</sup> 2019 as a consequence the above resolution will be unable to be implemented if it were passed by the Committee.

## 6.7 MANAGEMENT OF THE 2019/2020 BUSH FIRE SEASON

### MOTION

**Moved: Sam Moss**

**That Council develop a plan on how they will manage fires in the 2019/2020 season.**

### BACKGROUND

At a meeting of Bush Fire Brigade Captains and representatives it is noted that there are no volunteers with suitable qualifications to be the Chief Bushfire Control Officer.

### OFFICER COMMENT

Officers are working in accordance with the process as outlined in the email sent to all brigades 20 August 2019. Should a resolution not be made tonight officers will prepare a report for Council on the options available to meet Councils obligations under the Bush Fires Act 1954.

At this point in time if a resolution is not reached and no one is to be appointed to the position of CBFCO within one month after the resignation of the current CBFCO (1<sup>st</sup> November 2019) the provisions section 382(C) and (D) of the Bush Fires Act 1954 may apply. The section of the act states as follows –

- (2C) *The local government shall fill any vacancy occurring in the office of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer within one month after the vacancy occurs and if the local government fails or neglects to do so within that time, the FES Commissioner may by notice in writing require the local government to appoint a person to the vacant office within one month after service on it of such notice.*
- (2D) *Where a local government that has been served with a notice pursuant to subsection (2C) fails or neglects to comply with the requirements of that notice, the FES Commissioner may appoint a person who is not employed in the Department to the vacant office.*

Any outcome from Council decisions will be advertised to brigades accordingly.

**7. URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY DECISION**

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

12<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at 5:30pm.

**9. DECLARATION OF CLOSURE**