

SHIRE OF NORTHAM

BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON 8TH JUNE, 2010 COMMENCING AT 6.30PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

- 1. DECLARATION OF OPENING AND WELCOME**
- 2. ELECTION OF CHAIR OF COMMITTEE**
- 3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**
- 4. ATTENDANCE**

DELEGATES (VOTING RIGHTS)

Bakers Hill Brigade	Mr C Barrington
Clackline/Muresk Brigade	Mr B Wilding
Grass Valley Brigade	Mr R Marris
Inkpen Brigade	Mr S Kuiper
Irishtown Brigade	Mr D Russell
Jennapullin Brigade	Mr T Smith
Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service	Mr G Montgomery
Southern Brook Brigade	Mr P Antonio
Wundowie Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service	Ms A Brucciani
Shire of Northam	Cr S Pollard

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (NON-VOTING RIGHTS)

Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (East)	Mr P Gentle
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (West)	Mr G Ashman
Department of Environment and Conservation	Mr K Pollack
FESA	Mr L Mincherton
Shire of Northam	Mr P Steven
	Mr F McQuistan

- 5. APOLOGIES**
- 6. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**
- 7. AGENDA ITEMS**
 - 7.1 Bush Fire Administration Manual – Review of Brigade Objectives & Values**
 - 7.2 Fire Control Officer Duties and Responsibilities**
 - 7.3 Fire Control Officer Nominations**
 - 7.4 Review of Harvest Ban Policy**
 - 7.5 Fire Break Order**
- 8. GENERAL BUSINESS**
- 9. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED**
- 10. DECLARATION OF CLOSURE**

**7.1 Bush Fire Administration Procedure Manual
Review of Brigade Objectives**

Name of Applicant:	Internal Staff Report
File Ref:	5.1.3.1
Officer:	Felix McQuistan
Officer Interest	Nil
Policy:	Bush Fire Administration Procedure Manual
Voting:	Simple Majority
Date:	8 June 2010

PURPOSE

To consider recommending to Council that all Bush Fire Volunteers within the Shire of Northam receive a letter reinforcing the Objectives of the Bush Fire Administration Procedure Manual.

BACKGROUND

In 2008 Council adopted the **Bush Fire Administration Procedure Manual**.

Section 2 relates to the Objectives and Values to be undertaken by the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Brigades and states –

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The Shire of Northam Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades shall undertake the following objectives:

- 2.1.1 *Provide timely, quality and effective emergency service;*
- 2.1.2 *Minimize the impact of emergencies on the community;*
- 2.1.3 *Work with the community to increase bush fire awareness and fire prevention;*
- 2.1.4 *Endeavour to ensure that active brigade members training requirements are maintained and documented to meet FESA standards and that prior learning is to be taken into consideration;*
- 2.1.5 *Ensure all operational equipment is serviceable and available for emergencies;*
- 2.1.6 *Provide a workplace where every individual is treated with respect, in an environment free from discrimination or harassment;*
- 2.1.7 *Service the needs of the community and work cohesively with other agencies;*
- 2.1.8 *Report to council on matters referred to, by the Council, through the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Advisory Committee.*

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

N/A

CONFORMITY WITH THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Key Result Area – Land Use & Infrastructure – Outcome 6 – Adequate provisions for Bush Fire Protection are provided, monitored and maintained.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

OFFICER'S COMMENT

Upon reviewing several incidents within the Shire and common practices within the Brigades, it is pertinent to review these objectives and values to ensure that they are both appropriate and being adhered to.

OBJECTIVES

2.1.1 Provide timely, quality and effective emergency service;

Turn out procedures within the Shire of Northam have been streamlined with improvements made to the “000” agreement and effective communication between Volunteers, however further improvements can still be made in relation to the timeliness of our response to emergencies.

Currently the “000” agreement is initialised once an emergency call has been received by FESA communications. Upon receiving that call a page / SMS is issued to the Brigade Executive Group being –

OPERATIONAL OFFICERS	
Richard Marris	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Phil Gentle	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Gordon Ashman	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Sue Brooker	Radio Operations
Alan Brockman	Radio Operations
Linton Mincherton	FESA District Manager
Felix McQuistan	Emergency Services Coordinator
NON-OPERATIONAL OFFICERS	
Craig Wilson	Ranger
Neville Hale	Chief Executive Officer
Denise Gobbart	Executive Manager Finance & Administration
Phil Steven	Executive Manager Health, Building & Rangers
Chadd Hunt	Executive Manager Planning
Ian Bartlett	Executive Manager Works & Services
Ken Messenger	Works Supervisor

Once the initial page/SMS has been sent, one of the above operational officers is required to contact FESA Communications to firstly acknowledge the page/SMS and to request the appropriate Brigades to be notified by page/SMS.

If Brigade members receive a page/SMS to respond to an emergency, it is because one of the above operational officers has requested that they attend. There is subsequently an expectation that the requested Brigades will man a fire appliance and attend the incident. Previous history has shown that at times a ‘scout’ vehicle (without fire fighting capabilities) is sent to the incident first to provide a report, and only then are fire appliances mobilised. This practice needs to cease as it is crucial we attend all incidents as soon as possible with the equipment to combat the fire.

In addition to this, on several occasions over the past fire season there has been excessive radio traffic at the initial turn-out phase that has impeded volunteers that have already arrived at the incident. Brigade members should be reminded that only essential traffic should be transmitted over the Bushfire network (Channel 43) when an emergency is taking place.

Other radio protocols that are not being adhered to include not keeping messages short and succinct, not advising FESA Communications (6IP) on Channel 24 that you are turning out, and using multiple call signs. If further clarification is required on any of these radio protocols, Brigades are able to request specific training in this regard.

2.1.2 Minimize the impact of emergencies on the community;

Another practice that has been observed over the past fire season is decisions being made to not fully extinguishing a fire. This does not minimize the impact of emergencies on our community, and has in the past led to fire escaping and resulting in further damage and destruction.

All Volunteers that are involved in the operational decision making process, as well as Fire Control Officers making this decision need to take all reasonable steps to ensure that a fire is extinguished as soon as possible. Decisions to allow a fire to continue burning should not be made without the approval of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, FESA Manager or Shire Chief Executive Officer/Approved Delegate.

2.1.3 Work with the community to increase bush fire awareness and fire prevention;

Brigades are taking an active approach to bush fire awareness and fire prevention and should be commended for doing so. Additional materials and training can be provided by Shires Emergency Services Coordinator upon request.

2.1.4 Endeavour to ensure that active brigade members training requirements are maintained and documented to meet FESA standards and that prior learning is to be taken into consideration;

All training undertaken is recorded by FESA, and Brigades can request copies of these training records via the Shire at any time. Each individual Brigade should ensure that new members are advised of the minimum training requirements.

2.1.5 Ensure all operational equipment is serviceable and available for emergencies;

Over the past fire season equipment issues (including fire appliance/vehicle issues) have been reported promptly to the Shire and dealt with accordingly.

In relation to equipment (including vehicles) being available for emergencies, there has been a trend to leave fire appliances at a fire ground in case volunteers are called back to a flare up/in the event that the fire has not been appropriately extinguished.

Brigades need to be advised that this practice should cease immediately, as not only does it increase the chances of vandalism or damage to Council equipment/vehicles and potentially effect our ability to make an insurance claim, it also means that the equipment/vehicle is not available for any other emergency that may take place during the time that vehicle is left unattended on a fire ground. The only exception to this should be when vehicles are being repaired or serviced.

2.1.6 Provide a workplace where every individual is treated with respect, in an environment free from discrimination or harassment;

There have been no reports made to the Shire relating to any discrimination or harassment within the Brigades. All volunteers are welcome to contact the Shire if they feel that they are the victim of discrimination or harassment.

2.1.7 Service the needs of the community and work cohesively with other agencies;

It is disappointing to receive feedback from other agencies to advise that our Brigades have not allowed them to provide assistance at fire incidents – especially when the incident pertains to their area of expertise in emergency response. All Brigades should be reminded that they are required to work together with other emergency services such as: Fire & Rescue Services, DEC Fire, FESA Air Support, SES, St John Ambulance and any other emergency response agency that is called to attend an incident and provide assistance. I am hopeful that these isolated instances will cease, and we work together with other emergency response groups to provide a safe environment for our residents and ratepayers.

2.1.8 Report to council on matters referred to, by the Council, through the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Advisory Committee.

All matters considered by BFAC have been reported to Council accordingly and this will continue.

BFAC RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

That Council send a letter to all Bush Fire Brigade Volunteers to outline the following-

- 1. If they receive a page/SMS to attend an incident they are to take all reasonable steps to turn out to that incident in a fire appliance in a timely and efficient manner;**
- 2. Radio transmissions are to be kept to succinct, essential messages at all times;**
- 3. Any Shire appliance initially turning out to an emergency/returning from an emergency is to contact FESA communications (6IP) via Channel 24 or Phone 1800 198 140;**
- 4. Decisions to allow a fire to continue burning is only be approved by the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers, FESA Operations Officer or Shire Chief Executive Officer/Approved Delegate;**
- 5. Brigade appliances are not to be left unattended at an incident;**
- 6. Any reports of discrimination or harassment within a Brigade can be made directly to the Shire of Northam; and**
- 7. All Volunteers are expected to work together with other emergency response groups to provide a safe environment for our residents and ratepayers.**

7.2 Fire Control Officer Duties, Responsibilities & Training Requirements

Name of Applicant:	Internal Staff Report
File Ref:	5.1.3.1
Officer:	Felix McQuistan
Officer Interest	Nil
Policy:	Bush Fire Administration Procedure Manual
Voting:	Simple Majority
Date:	8 June 2010

PURPOSE

To consider recommending to Council the amendment of Section 8.2 of the Shire of Northam Bushfire Administration Procedures Manual to ensure compliance with the *Bush Fires Act 1954* and include minimum training requirements.

To consider recommending to Council that they adopt minimum training requirements for Fire Control Officers to ensure that all FCO's have the necessary training to complete their statutory obligations under the Act.

BACKGROUND

The current adopted Bushfire Administration Procedures Manual states –

8. THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEER BUSH FIRE BRIGADE OFFICE BEARERS

The office bearers of a volunteer bush fire brigade must be able to demonstrate current competencies for the position of office they are nominated prior to accepting the nomination or undertaking the duties and responsibilities of the said position.

“8.2 BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER

Role

A Bush Fire Control Officer is a delegated representative of the Local Government responsible for the administration of provisions within the Bush Fires Act 1954. The position is required to perform active operational duties in relation to both fire fighting and fire prevention strategies within the local community.

A Bush Fire Control Officer must be able to demonstrate experience in, wild fire behaviour, AIMS and knowledge of the area. The position must be able to interpret provisions of the Bush Fires Act 1954 and be confident with communication skills. It is desirable that this position be held by operational managers of the brigade.

This position reports to the brigade captain on all matters pertinent to bush fire management. In the absence of the brigade captain all powers are delegated to the fire control officer to manage personnel and resources to suppress any illegal or uncontrolled fire.

If more than one FCO's/Brigades are in attendance may take control of fire operations and be Incident Controller or part of the Incident Manager Team as delegated by the Incident Controller.

A Fire Control Officer may hold jointly the position of Brigade Captain.

Duties and Responsibilities

Duties and responsibilities of the Bush Fire Control Officer include:

- 8.2.1 *Authorise permits for hazard reduction burns within the Shire of Northam in accordance with the Bush Fires Act 1954 and Environmental Act;*
- 8.2.2 *Identify and conduct risk assessments of fire hazards within the Shire of Northam;*
- 8.2.3 *Perform duties prescribed by the Bush Fires Act 1954 and authorised by Local Government*
- 8.2.4 *Maintain a personal log book to include a record of events and decisions during an incident*
- 8.2.5 *In the absence of the Brigade Captain take control, command and manage resources during wildfire or hazard reduction burns within the brigade area they are appointed.*
- 8.2.6 *To take control of fire fighting operations at a wildfire outside their brigade area where no other Brigade Captain or Fire Control Officer is present.*
- 8.2.7 *Provide advice to the CBFEO as to when harvest bans and or movement of vehicle bans should be applied.*

Essential Criteria of Bush Fire Control Officer -

- *Knowledge of managing a volunteer organisation*
- *Ability to complete Fire Control Officers course and AIMS training courses*
- *Ability to attend further fire and emergency management training.*

Criteria of Bush Fire Control Officer -

- *Effective Interpersonal Skills*
- *Good Written and Verbal Communication Skills*
- *Leadership Skills*
- *Management Skills*
- *Experience in managing operations*
- *Ability to perform under stressful conditions* ”

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Under the *Bush Fires Act 1954* –

44. Powers and authorities of officers of bush fire brigade

- (3)(a) *Subject to the provisions of sections 13(6) and 45, where the bush fire brigade of a local government is present at a fire which is burning within the district of the local government, if a bush fire control officer of the local government is not present, the captain or in his absence the next senior officer of the bush fire brigade of the local government, or in the absence of the captain and all other officers of that bush fire brigade, any other member of that bush fire brigade has and shall take supreme control and charge of all operations and the officers and members of another bush fire brigade if present are subject to and shall act under his orders and directions.*
- (b) *Subject to the provisions of sections 13(6) and 45, where a bush fire control officer of a local government is present at a fire which is burning in the district of the local government, he has supreme control and charge of all operations, and the officers and members of all bush fire brigades present at the fire are subject to and shall act under his orders and directions.*
[Section 44 amended by No. 35 of 1957 s. 9; No. 14 of 1996 s. 4; No. 25 of 2009 s. 14.]

CONFORMITY WITH THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Key Result Area – Land Use & Infrastructure – Outcome 6 – Adequate provisions for Bush Fire Protection are provided, monitored and maintained.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

OFFICER'S COMMENT

The following changes are required to ensure that the Bush Fire Administration Procedure Manual complies with the *Bush Fires Act 1954*.

Role

"This position reports to the brigade captain on all matters pertinent to bush fire management. In the absence of the brigade captain all powers are delegated to the fire control officer to manage personnel and resources to suppress any illegal or uncontrolled fire."

Duties and Responsibilities

8.2.5 *In the absence of the Brigade Captain To take control, command and manage resources during wildfire or hazard reduction burns within the brigade area they are appointed.*

Duties and Responsibilities

8.2.6 *To take control of fire fighting operations at a wildfire outside their brigade area where no other Brigade Captain or Fire Control Officer is present.*

The above underlined statements and terms contradict the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, which clearly states that in the absence of a Fire Control Officer all powers are delegated to the Brigade Captain. In the Role, Duties and Responsibilities it suggests that the Brigade Captain has the authority and the Fire Control Officer only has authority in the absence of a Captain – this is incorrect.

Duties and Responsibilities

8.2.7 *Provide advice to the CBFCO as to when harvest bans and or movement of vehicle bans should be applied.*

This can now be omitted as Council have delegated this role to the Harvest Ban Officers.

The following information is suggested to be included within the Duties, Roles and Responsibilities of Fire Control Officers to ensure that all members holding this position have the necessary training to complete their statutory obligations under the Act.

Essential Training Requirements of Bush Fire Control Officer -

- *Introduction to Fire Fighting / Bush Fire Fighting / Structural Fire Fighting (or previous equivalent – Modules 1-12)*
- *Crew Leader / Advanced Bush Fire Fighter (or previous equivalent – 228 Wildfire Behaviour/229 Wildfire Suppression)*
- *Fire Control Officers Course (refresher every 5 years)*
- *Introduction to Australasian Inter-Agency Incident Management Systems (AIIMS) Course*

BFAC RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

1. That the following wording from Fire Control Officer 'Role' be removed to ensure that it complies with the Bush Fires Act 1954–
"In the absence of the brigade captain all powers are delegated to the fire control officer to manage personnel and resources to suppress any illegal or uncontrolled fire."
2. That the following wording from Fire Control Officer 'Duties and Responsibilities 8.2.5' be removed to ensure that it complies with the Bush Fires Act 1954–
"In the absence of the Brigade Captain"
3. That the following wording from Fire Control Officer 'Duties and Responsibilities 8.2.6' be removed to ensure that it complies with the Bush Fires Act 1954–
"Brigade Captain"
4. That Fire Control Officer 'Duties and Responsibilities 8.2.7' be deleted as these powers have been delegated under Council's Harvest, Vehicle Movement and Hot Works Ban Policy.
5. That Council adopt the following minimum training requirements for Fire Control Officers for the 2010 / 11 fire season to ensure that all FCO's have the necessary training to complete their statutory obligations under the Act –
Essential Training Requirements of Bush Fire Control Officer –
 - Fire Control Officers Course (refresher every 5 years)
6. That Council adopt the following minimum training requirements for Fire Control Officers for the 2011 / 12 fire season to ensure that all FCO's have the necessary training to complete their statutory obligations under the Act -
Essential Training Requirements of Bush Fire Control Officer –
 - Introduction to Fire Fighting / Bush Fire Fighting / Structural Fire Fighting (or previous equivalent – Modules 1-12)
 - Crew Leader / Advanced Bush Fire Fighter (or previous equivalent – 228 Wildfire Behaviour/229 Wildfire Suppression)
 - Introduction to Australasian Inter-Agency Incident Management Systems (AIIMS) Course

7.2 Fire Control Officer Nominations

Name of Applicant:	Internal Staff Report
File Ref:	5.1.3.1
Officer:	Felix McQuistan
Officer Interest	Nil
Policy:	Bush Fire Administration Procedure Manual
Voting:	Simple Majority
Date:	8 June 2010

PURPOSE

To consider recommending to Council the appointment of Brigade nominated Volunteers to the position of Fire Control Officer in accordance with the *Bush Fires Act 1954*.

BACKGROUND

Each year Council are required to consider nominations for the position of Fire Control Officer, and once approved publish notice in the Government Gazette. Individual Brigades hold their Annual General Meeting and put forth FCO recommendations to BFAC. After consideration the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends to Council which Fire Control Officers should be gazetted.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Council are Responsible for the appointment of Fire Control Officers in accordance Section 38 of the *Bush Fires Act 195* -

38. Local government may appoint bush fire control officer

- (1) *A local government may from time to time appoint such persons as it thinks necessary to be its bush fire control officers under and for the purposes of this Act, and of those officers shall subject to section 38A(2) appoint 2 as the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer who shall be first and second in seniority of those officers, and subject thereto may determine the respective seniority of the other bush fire control officers appointed by it.*

CONFORMITY WITH THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Key Result Area – Land Use & Infrastructure – Outcome 6 – Adequate provisions for Bush Fire Protection are provided, monitored and maintained.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

OFFICER'S COMMENT

The following Brigade Volunteers have been nominated for the position of Fire Control Officer for the 2010/11 Bush fire Season –

Nominated FCO	Brigade	Rank
Gordon Ashman (Deputy Chief)	Bakers Hill	1
Simon Peters	Bakers Hill	2
Steven Gray	Bakers Hill	3
Hugh Williams	Bakers Hill	4
Michael Tighe	Clackline Muresk	1
Michael Letch	Clackline Muresk	2
Blair Wilding	Clackline Muresk	3
Raymond Russell	Clackline Muresk	4
Sue Brooker	Clackline Muresk	5

Nominated FCO	Brigade	Rank
Richard Marris (Chief)	Grass Valley	1
Phil Gentle (Deputy Chief)	Grass Valley	2
Angus Cooke	Grass Valley	3
Alf Brown	Grass Valley	4
Paul Reynolds	Grass Valley	5
Sim Kuiper (to be confirmed)	Inkpen	1
Soren Nielsen (to be confirmed)	Inkpen	2
Clive Owen (to be confirmed)	Inkpen	3
David Russel	Irishtown	1
Ross Mackenzie	Irishtown	2
Doug Morgan	Irishtown	3
Don French	Irishtown	4
Trevor Smith	Jennapullin	1
Brett Smith	Jennapullin	2
Linton Smith (For harvest bans)	Jennapullin	3
Paul Antonio	Southern Brook	1

The following Non-Brigade Volunteers have self nominated for the position of Fire Control Officer for the 2010/11 Bush fire Season:

Nominated FCO	Brigade	Restrictions
Adina Brucciani	Wundowie Fire & Rescue	Permit Issuing Officer for Wundowie Only

BFAC RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

- 1. That Council appoint all nominated Fire Control Officers listed below that have completed the Fire Control Officers course within the past 5 years.**

Name	Course	Date completed
Angus Cooke –	FESA0007	07/06/06
David Russell -	FESA0007	20/04/06
Michael Letch –	FESA0007	07/06/06
Paul Antonio	FESA0007	28/07/06
Sim Kuiper -	FESA0007	07/06/06
Soren Nielsen	FESA0007	18/04/07
Sue Brooker –	FESA0408	24/07/08
Michael Tighe –	FESA0408	19/04/09
Ray Russell –	FESA0408	19/04/09
Trevor Smith-	FESA0408	19/04/09
Adina Brucciani-	FESA0007	20/04/06

2. That Council appoint all nominated Fire Control Officers listed below providing that they complete the Fire Control Officers course prior to the 1st September 2010.

Name	Course	Date completed
Clive Owen	FESA0007	14/09/01
Gordon Ashman CBFCO course 16/8/06 -	FESA0007	14/09/01
Paul Reynolds -	FESA0007	14/09/01
Richard Marris –	FESA0007	14/09/01
Doug Morgan – CBFCO course 19/03/08	FESA0007	21/04/02
Blair Wilding – CBFCO course 19/03/08 –	FEA0007	03/12/03
Brett Smith	FESA0007	05/05/03
Lynton Smith	FESA0007	05/07/04
Phil Gentle –	FESA0007	30/06/04
Ross MacKenzie -	FESA0007	19/10/04
Alf Brown -	cannot find any record	
Don French	cannot find any record	
Hugh Williams –	cannot find any record	
Simon Peters –	cannot find any record	
Stephen Gray –	cannot find any record	

3. That Council write to FESA and request an additional Fire Control Officer course be held prior to 1st September 2010.
4. That Council write to all Brigades advising that they will not appoint Fire Control Officers for the 2011/12 Fire Season that have not completed the minimum training in accordance with the Bush Fire Administration Procedures Manual.
5. That prior to Fire Control Officer's being appointed by Council, nominated volunteers have 30 days to sign a document that clearly shows which duties they will and will not undertake as a Fire Control Officer (refer to attached)
6. That Fire Control Officers who have not completed an FCO's course within the past 5 years may appointed by Council for the 2010 / 11 fire season however their powers are to be limited to non operational duties such as "Issuing permits and Harvest Ban Officers" and are directed that they are only to take charge of a fire in the absence of another Fire Control Officer.

Policy on Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Bans

7.4 Review of Policy on Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Bans

Name of Applicant:	Internal Staff Report
File Ref:	5.1.3.1
Officer:	Felix McQuistan
Officer Interest	Nil
Policy:	Policy on Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Bans
Voting:	Simple Majority
Date:	8 June 2010

PURPOSE

To consider recommending to Council that the Shire of Northam "Policy on Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Bans" be amended so that any future Bans are implemented in the whole of the Shire.

BACKGROUND

In 2008 Council adopted a Policy on Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Bans. This Policy was the first formal, documented Policy outlining who is responsible for the implementation of a Ban, establishing the need for a Ban and the method in which a Ban is implemented.

Over the 09/10 fire season Harvest Ban Officers have imposed Bans if weather readings indicated a Fire Danger Index (FDI) of 32 or higher. It should be noted that in the 09/10 fire season all imposed Bans have been implemented in both Zones 4 and 5.

It is recognised that topographical and geographical differences do exist throughout the Shire of Northam and historically the Shire has been divided into Zones 4 and 5, (commonly referred to as East and West). This has on many occasions created confusion amongst residents as to which zone they are in, whether the Ban applies to them and also resulted in residents that own land in both Zones 4 and 5 being able to continue Harvesting, Movement of Vehicles and Hot Works on another part of their property.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Nil

CONFORMITY WITH THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Key Result Area – Land Use & Infrastructure – Outcome 6 – Adequate provisions for Bush Fire Protection are provided, monitored and maintained.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

OFFICER'S COMMENT

Despite the topographical and geographical differences within the Shire, it is imperative that Council provide a concise Policy to its residents that will not allow for misinterpretation or misunderstanding. Currently there is not enough knowledge amongst Shire residents as to which of the Zone boundaries their property lies within, however all residents are aware of which Shire they live in. By utilising the Shire boundaries solely as the area in which a Ban is applied means that all residents will be able to ascertain whether or not the Ban will affect them.

In addition to this, the Bush Fire Advisory Committee need to ensure that all Fire related policies and processes are easily understood by all Shire residents in the interest of promoting understanding about community safety issues. It should also be noted that with an influx on new residents to the Shire, unlike times gone by where Bans were imposed on harvesting only – and therefore only effected local farmers that were probably well aware of which zone they were in – we are now at a stage where a large portion of our population will not be aware of these zones and may not be in a position to understand if the Ban effects them.

Making the recommended alterations to the Policy on Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Bans will ensure that all residents of the Shire can understand if they are required to cease harvesting, vehicle movement and hot works when a Ban is imposed.

BFAC RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

That Council amend the Shire of Northam “Policy on Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Bans” so that any future Bans are implemented in the whole of the Shire (as per the attached Policy amendments)

7.5 Review of 2010/2011 Firebreak Order

Name of Applicant:	Internal Staff Report
File Ref:	5.1.3.1
Officer:	Felix McQuistan
Officer Interest	Nil
Policy:	Firebreak Order
Voting:	Simple Majority
Date:	8 June 2010

PURPOSE

To consider recommending to Council that the attached firebreak order be adopted by Council for the 2010/11 fire season

BACKGROUND

Annually the Shire of Northam Publish a Firebreak Notice and it has been pointed out that there were some errors with the 2009/10 firebreak notice.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Bush Fires Act 1954

33. Local government may require occupier of land to plough or clear fire-break

- (1) Subject to subsection (2) a local government at any time, and from time to time, may, and if so required by the Minister shall, as a measure for preventing the outbreak of a bush fire, or for preventing the spread or extension of a bush fire which may occur, give notice in writing to an owner or occupier of land situate within the district of the local government or shall give notice to all owners or occupiers of land in its district by publishing a notice in the *Government Gazette* and in a newspaper circulating in the area requiring him or them as the case may be within a time specified in the notice to do or to commence to do at a time so specified all or any of the following things —
 - (a) to plough, cultivate, scarify, burn or otherwise clear upon the land fire-breaks in such manner, at such places, of such dimensions, and to such number, and whether in parallel or otherwise, as the local government may and is hereby empowered to determine and as are specified in the notice, and thereafter to maintain the fire-breaks clear of inflammable matter;
 - (b) to act as and when specified in the notice with respect to anything which is upon the land, and which in the opinion of the local government or its duly authorised officer, is or is likely to be conducive to the outbreak of a bush fire or the spread or extension of a bush fire,

and the notice may require the owner or occupier to do so —

as a separate operation, or in co-ordination with any other person, carrying out a similar operation on adjoining or neighbouring land, and in any event to do so to the satisfaction of either the local government or its duly authorised officer, according to which of them is specified in the notice.

- (2) A notice in writing under subsection (1) may be given to an owner or occupier of land by posting it to him at his last postal address known to the local government and may be given to an owner of land by posting it to him at the address shown in the rate record kept by the local government pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1995*, as his address for the service of rate notices.
- (2a) The provisions of subsection (2) are in addition to and not in derogation of those of sections 75 and 76 of the *Interpretation Act 1984*.

CONFORMITY WITH THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Key Result Area – Land Use & Infrastructure – Outcome 6 – Adequate provisions for Bush Fire Protection are provided, monitored and maintained.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

OFFICER'S COMMENT

The attached Fire Break order is distributed throughout the Shire residents as the Rates notices are sent out as such this item is critical to be endorsed promptly.

BFAC RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

That this Committee recommend to Council that it adopts the Firebreak Order as attached to this agenda subject to any changes highlighted for the 2010 / 11 fire season.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Bush Fire Administration Manual – Review of Brigade Objectives & Values

That Council send a letter to all Bush Fire Brigade Volunteers to outline the following-

1. If they receive a page/SMS to attend an incident they are to take all reasonable steps to turn out to that incident in a fire appliance in a timely and efficient manner;
2. Radio transmissions are to be kept to succinct, essential messages at all times;
3. Any Shire appliance turning out to an emergency/returning from an emergency is to contact FESA communications (6IP) via Channel 24 or Phone 1800 198 140 ;
4. Decisions to allow a fire to continue burning can only be approved by the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers, FESA Manager or Shire Chief Executive Officer/Approved Delegate;
5. Brigade appliances are not to be left unattended at an incident under any circumstances;
6. Any reports of discrimination or harassment within a Brigade can be made directly to the Shire of Northam; and
7. All Volunteers are expected to work together with other emergency response groups to provide a safe environment for our residents and ratepayers.

7.2 Fire Control Officer Duties and Responsibilities

1. That the following wording from Fire Control Officer 'Role' be removed to ensure that it complies with the Bush Fires Act 1954–
"In the absence of the brigade captain all powers are delegated to the fire control officer to manage personnel and resources to suppress any illegal or uncontrolled fire."
2. That the following wording from Fire Control Officer 'Duties and Responsibilities 8.2.5' be removed to ensure that it complies with the Bush Fires Act 1954–
"In the absence of the Brigade Captain"
3. That the following wording from Fire Control Officer 'Duties and Responsibilities 8.2.6' be removed to ensure that it complies with the Bush Fires Act 1954–
"Brigade Captain"
4. That Fire Control Officer 'Duties and Responsibilities 8.2.7' be deleted as these powers have been delegated under Council's Harvest, Vehicle Movement and Hot Works Ban Policy.
5. That Council adopt the following minimum training requirements for Fire Control Officers to ensure that all FCO's have the necessary training to complete their statutory obligations under the Act -
 - Introduction to Fire Fighting / Bush Fire Fighting / Structural Fire Fighting (or previous equivalent – Modules 1-12)
 - Crew Leader / Advanced Bush Fire Fighter (or previous equivalent – 228 Wildfire Behaviour/229 Wildfire Suppression)
 - Fire Control Officers Course (refresher every 5 years)
 - Introduction to Australasian Inter-Agency Incident Management Systems (AIIMS) Course

7.3 Fire Control Officer Nominations

1. That Council appoint all nominated Fire Control Officers listed below that have completed the Fire Control Officers course within the past 5 years.
2. That Council appoint all nominated Fire Control Officers listed below providing that they complete the Fire Control Officers course prior to the 1st September 2010.
3. That Council write to FESA and request an additional Fire Control Officer course be held prior to 1st September 2010.
4. That Council write to all Brigades advising that they will not appoint Fire Control Officers for the 2011/12 Fire Season that have not completed the minimum training in accordance with the Bush Fire Administration Procedures Manual.
5. That All FCO's as appointed by Council have 30 days to sign a document that clearly shows which duties they will and will not undertake as a Fire Control Officer (refer to attached)

7.4 Review of Harvest Ban Policy

That Council amend the Shire of Northam "**Policy on Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Bans**" so that any future Bans are implemented in the whole of the Shire (as per the attached Policy amendments)

7.5 Fire Break Order

That Council adopts the Firebreak Order as attached to this agenda subject to any changes highlighted for the 2010 / 11 fire season.