

SHIRE OF KOJONUP



Kojonup Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting

MINUTES

7:00pm Wednesday, 14 February 2024

BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Established under *Section 67 of the Bush Fires Act 1954*.

Terms of Reference

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee is established for the purpose of:

- a) Advising the Shire regarding all matters relating to the preventing, controlling and extinguishing of bush fires.
- b) The planning of the layout of firebreaks in the district.
- c) Prosecutions for breaches of this Act.
- d) The formation of bush fire brigades and the grouping thereof under group brigade officers (in accordance with any local laws).
- e) Recommendations on Fire Control Officer positions.
- f) Feedback on the Council's Fire Break Notice.
- g) Specific requirements from each brigade with regard to:
 - Protective Personal Equipment.
 - Equipment and vehicles resources required; and
 - Training Requirements.
- h) The ensuring of cooperation and coordination of Bush Fire Brigades in their efforts and activities; and
- i) Any other matter relating to bush fire control whether of the same kind as, or a different kind from, those specified in this subsection.

Other:

- a) The Bush Fire Advisory Committee shall include an elected member of the Council.
- b) The committee shall elect one of their members to be chairman.
- c) The quorum required for the transaction of business at meetings of the committee is set at 50%

Membership

Voting Members (9 in total)

- Councillors x2 (Currently Cr Radford and Cr Benn).
- The President of the Kojonup Bushfire Association.
- The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.
- The Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.
- Senior Fire Control Officer (Zulu)
- Senior Fire control Officer (Zulu)
- Secretary of the Kojonup Bushfire Association
- Captain of the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service

Observers

- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- Shire Delegates x2
- Muradup Town Fire Control Officer (FCO)

MINUTES OF A KOJONUP BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD 14 FEBRUARY 2024

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M I N U T E S

1. DECLARATION OF OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF GUESTS

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Grant Thompson, declared the meeting open at 07:05pm and advised that the BFAC was required to appoint a new chairperson as per current regulations.

Cr Ned Redford stood down as the previous chairperson and nominations were opened to the floor. Cr Ned Redford was nominated by Denise Berryman and declined the nomination. Cr Radford nominated Cr Roger Bilney, Cr Bilney accepted.

COMMITTEE DECISION

Moved Cr Radford

Seconded Tony Fisher

That Cr Roger Bilney be appointed chairperson for the Bush Fire Advisory Committee.

CARRIED 10/0

The CEO vacated the chair and Cr Bilney took over proceedings.

2. ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

MEMBERS

Digby Stretch	President Kojonup Bush Fire Association
Denise Berryman	Secretary of the Kojonup Bush Fire Association
Tony Fisher	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO)
Ross Fryer-Smith	Senior Bush Fire Control Officer
Nick Trethowan	Senior Bush Fire Control Officer
Ben Blewett	Senior Bush Fire Control Officer
Roger Bilney	Councillor/Chairperson
Ned Redford	Councillor
Paul Webb	Councillor
Mick Mathwin	Councillor

OBSERVERS

Grant Thompson	Chief Executive Officer
Stephanie Swain	Shire of Kojonup Ranger
Shane Harris	Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) - minute taker
Robert Jehu	Manager Regulatory Services

APOLOGIES

Derek Jones	Department Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) District Officer
Matthew Crabb	Kojonup Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
Emelee Peet	Bush Fire Risk Planning Coordinator
Estelle Lottering	Project Manager and Community Services

3. **SUMMARY OF RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE**

Nil

4. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Nil

5. **APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Nil

6. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 14 November 2023 were previously circulated under separate cover.

COMMITTEE DECISION

Moved Cr Radford

Seconded Tony Fisher

That the minutes of the Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting held 14 November 2023 be confirmed as a true record.

CARRIED 10/0

7. **ANNOUNCEMENTS** by the Presiding Member without discussion

The Presiding member thanked the Zulus and all the bush fire volunteers for their hard work and support; stating that the Community and Council do appreciate it.

8. **PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS & PRESENTATIONS**

Nil

9. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Nil

10. **STATUS REPORTS**

10.1 2023/2024 Fire Season Update

As at 3 January 2024, there had been the following fires reported within the Shire:

Shire of Kojonup – Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – 14 February 2024

Incidents within the Shire of Kojonup by Financial Year *current FY incomplete

Incident Type	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Called Off - No Attendance	0	0	1	1	2
False Alarm - System Initiated	1	5	1	3	1
False Call - Good Intent	5	1	5	5	0
False Call - Malicious	0	0	0	0	1
Fire - Bushfire (lge)	3	5	4	7	7
Fire - Bushfire (sml)	14	8	19	10	10
Fire - Other/Rubbish/Vehicle	2	2	5	4	0
Fire - Structure	0	1	0	1	1
Hazardous Situation	2	1	0	2	0
Rescue & Medical	1	0	0	2	0
Road Crash & Rescue	2	3	9	7	1

Incidents: Year to Date Comparison: July 1 to January 4

Incident Type	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Average Excluding 2023/2024	% TREND this year
Called Off - No Attendance	0	0	0	1	2	0.3	0.00%
False Alarm - System Initiated	0	3	0	3	1	1.5	-33.33%
False Call - Good Intent	2	1	2	0	0	0.8	0.00%
False Call - Malicious	0	0	0	0	1	0.0	0.00%
Fire - Bushfire (lge)	2	4	4	2	7	3.0	133.33%
Fire - Bushfire (sml)	6	1	1	4	10	3.0	233.33%
Fire - Other/Rubbish/Vehicle	0	1	1	0	0	0.3	0.00%
Fire - Structure	0	1	0	0	1	0.3	0.00%
Hazardous Situation	1	1	0	2	0	0.5	0.00%
Rescue & Medical	1	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.00%
Road Crash & Rescue	0	2	6	4	1	3.0	-66.67%
Totals:	12	14	14	16	23	12.5	132.00%

% TREND compare this FY to the Average.

11 GENERAL ITEMS

11.1 CESM - Shane Harris

- Bush fire alerts and warnings - the importance of getting these communications out for general public awareness and safety;
- Fire weather officer gazettal has now been completed and Tony Fisher has been officially gazetted (refer to attachment);
- Process for ordering private contractors/machinery at Local Government (LG) fires needs to be approved by DFES if the local government wants DFES to pay for the costs. This is done through the Albany Regional Duty Coordinator.

Question from the floor: Is Klopper Contracting a DFES approved contractor, do they have the correct training, and does their equipment meet DFES requirements? CESM to take this on notice back to DFES to seek clarification.

- Importance of incident numbers and why we need to log jobs (statistics, getting support, air and ground, insurance);
- Bushfire Risk Management Plan: Emelee was looking after this and was an apology for tonight's meeting; therefore, no update was available. Digby Stretch made comment that no changes have been made as provided by Digby some time ago. CESM to follow up with Emelee for an update;
- Online Rural Fire Awareness course: do we want to use this or continue running the course as normal? Thought was to use the online training for seasonal workers that will not stay on as permanent Volunteers and would only be here for a short period over Harvest. Face to Face would be the preferred preference for long term Volunteers;
- Importance of wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): for protection and, also importantly, insurance claims. Clarified that long pants, shirt, and boots meet PPE standards, do not need to be the yellow PPE the Shire provides (General Hard Yakka type clothing is acceptable), masks, gloves and helmets are still required as a minimum PPE requirement;
- Volunteer membership - removing members that are no longer serving (we are paying insurance for these members). Agreed that Brigade secretaries need to update their volunteer lists and let Denise Berryman know so non-serving members can be removed from the Volunteer list.
- Volunteer Induction will be introduced in the coming months and it will be a requirement for all Volunteers to complete the induction and be signed off, this is part of the WHS legislation. Consensus was to hold a training day that all volunteers could attend, followed by a BBQ lunch;
- Skills maintenance training for all Volunteers would be offered throughout the year for Volunteers to attend and continue upskilling their pathways, or refresher training to maintain current skills. CESM advised that there was a local Great Southern Training calendar and a state calendar that Volunteers could access through eAcademy to view courses and apply for them.

11.2 DFES - Derek Jones

1. Kojonup Seasonal Update – A DFES View

- Congratulations on work in keeping Comcen updated as incidents reported and progress.
- Effort and work in this space has been very good – thanks to those involved.
- Appreciate that the 'lightning storm' that went through late January threw a few challenges.
- The storm was 'weathered' (pun intended) but no doubt it was a challenging afternoon/evening for all.

2. Public Warnings - Emergency WA

- Commissioner's priority for this season.
- Emergency WA is the central public warning messaging system in WA.
- Upgrade became a significant project as other agencies came on board.
- New functionality will include phone app, nationally consistent warnings, translated messaging to accommodate multi-national community, watch zones, integration with other devices.

- Aiming for mid-2024 roll out of new website.
- Filling the niche requirement of the public needing to know more.

3. Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) Review

- Mild summer last year – did not see full impact of AFDRS.
- Ongoing review.
- Fuel Loads key component – agency has accepted a single photo representing LG ‘average fuel loads’.
- Will need ‘evidence’ as we cannot ‘fudge’ figures and increase risk to community.
- Meeting with Zulus tomorrow to work through options for permit management in ‘high’ fire danger ratings.

4. Mitigation Works

- Just dusting off plans ahead of intended burning late Autumn/early winter.
- Will liaise with Tony ahead of dates.
- Gazetted UCL/UMR – happy to burn. Need advance notice 12 months.

5. Regional Operations Advisory Committee

Starting to form up an agenda for April.

11.3 Manager Regulatory Services - Robert Jehu

Update on communications tower - tower has now been erected and is just waiting until after the fire season for change over from old to new.

11.4 Ranger - Stephanie Swain

- Fire order changes have been made, main changes are the Prohibited Burning period (was 14th February and has been changed to 28th February). This now represents the gazetted date (refer to attached order); this has been gazetted under legislation and approved by the Fire and Emergency Services (FES) Commissioner. If we want to change the prohibited dates, we will need to have this approved through the FES Commissioner and re-gazetted. Discussions with the CBFCO was to leave the date as the 28th;
- Dates also amended in the prohibited burning time to align with the gazetted date (refer to attached order);
- Date changes made to restricted burning times to align with the prohibited burning times (refer to attached order);
- Change of wording in the rural land section to make it easier to read and understand (refer to attached order);
- Some minor tweaks within the firebreak order also made to make the order easier and more direct to read and interpret (refer to attached order).

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Moved Ben Blewett

Seconded Tony Fisher

To recommend to Council to amend the firebreak order, as determined, following amendments being checked.

CARRIED 10/0

11.5 Matthew Crabb

One fire season sign has been erected near the wool wagon and the other has been approved by the Catholic church to be put on its land soon - opposite Pensioner Rd between the old Carnival Chicken building and the Roadhouse units.

11.6 CBFCO Tony Fisher

Tony gave an update on the nature of the season.

12 OTHER

- Question was raised from the floor - should children be allowed on the fire ground? Consensus was that children should not be on the active fire ground, the fire ground is a workplace and falls under the Shire's responsibilities.
- What is the minimum age for a member to become a Volunteer? CESM confirmed it was 16 years but need parent's consent up to the age of 18. This raised another question about a 16-year-old driving on the fire ground? Again, as much as it is legal if they are accompanied by a fully licenced driver to drive off the fire ground as an L-Plater, it was noted that the fire ground would not be the best place to have an inexperienced driver.
- Drinking on the fire ground was brought up for discussion; it is very clear that the Shire is responsible for Volunteers actively working on the fire ground and Volunteers must adhere to the Shire's regulations as a Shire employee which is zero tolerance of alcohol while working. The CBFCO and the BFCA Committee were very supportive of the Shire's stance on alcohol while working. CBFCO will take this matter up with those Volunteers that have been seen drinking alcohol while on active duty.

13 MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

Nil

14 LATE ITEMS

Nil

15 NEXT MEETING

TBA

16 CLOSURE

There being no further business to discuss the Presiding Member thanked the members for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 10.03pm.

Confirmed as true and correct:


Chairperson

08/05/2024
Date