

SHIRE OF KOJONUP

Kojonup



Kojonup Bush Fire Advisory Committee

MINUTES
RECEPTION ROOM

7:00 pm Wednesday, 7th May 2025

BUSHFIRE 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 (11 in total)

- Councillors x4 (Currently Cr Bilney, Cr Radford, Cr Webb and Cr Mathwin)
- 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

Supporting Team Members

- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- Shire Delegates x 4

MINUTES FOR THE KOJONUP BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD 7 MAY 2025

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MINUTES

1. **DECLARATION OF OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF GUESTS**

The Presiding Member declared the meeting open at 07:01 pm and alerted the meeting of the procedures for emergencies including evacuation, designated exits and muster points. A special welcome to John Binns who has been appointed the President of the Kojonup Bushfire Association, succeeding Digby Stretch as President.

2. **ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES**

MEMBERS

John Binns	President Kojonup Bush Fire Association
Denise Berryman	Secretary of the Kojonup Bush Fire Association
Matthew Crabb	Kojonup Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
Tony Fisher	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Roger Bilney	Councillor / Chairperson
Mick Mathwin	Councillor
Paul Webb	Councillor

SUPPORTING TEAM MEMBERS

Grant Thompson	Chief Executive Officer
Shane Harris	Community Emergency Services Manager (Minute taker)
Estelle Lottering	Project Manager and Community Services
Du-wayne Lottering	Property Services Manager and NRM

APOLOGIES

Ben Blewett	Senior Bush Fire Control Officer
Ross Fryer – Smith	Senior Bush Fire Control Officer
Nick Trethowan	Senior Bush Fire Control Officer
Paul Norrish	Senior Bush Fire Control Officer
Darryn Watkins	Manager Works and Services
Ned Radford	Councillor

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 Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 12 February 2025 were previously circulated under separate cover.

COMMITTEE DECISION

That the minutes of the Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting held 12 February 2025 be confirmed as a true record with changes as requested.

Moved by Mick Mathwin and second by Matthew Crabb

Carried 7/0

Changes to Minutes

Cr Paul Webb requested two changes to the minutes and referred to two questions asked at the Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting held on the 12th February 2025 that was not recorded in the minutes.

Question one: Did the Shire receive the MAF Grant money for the Myrtle Benn Reserve?

Question two: Can the Shire hold Department of Fire and Emergency Services accountable for the correct process not being followed when the Shire did the bush fire mitigation at Myrtle Benn Reserve?

Cr Webb requested these be noted in the minutes.

7. **BUSINESS ARISING**

Cr Paul Webb requested that the two questions from a previous meeting held on the 12th of February 2025 require an answer.

Question one: Did the Shire receive the MAF Grant money for the Myrtle Benn Reserve?

Answer: The Shire has received the first tranche payment of the Grant funding. There are two tranches.

Question two: Can the Shire hold the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) accountable for the correct process not being followed when the Shire did the bush fire mitigation at Myrtle Benn Reserve?

Answer: The process failures are the accountability of the mandated landowner, which in this case is the Shire. Advice can be received from third parties however it is the Shires responsibility to fully comply with the regulations.

- Further to Cr Webb's questions, Tony Fisher raised the issue that the town's risk profile is extreme if Myrtle Benn Reserve burns. Neighbouring farmers already are expressing concerns especially when cropping is taking place. A mechanical caused fire can easily spread into the bush at Myrtle Benn which will put the town of Kojonup and its residents at risk.
- Cr Mathwin explained that unfortunately it is not a group of people that is stopping the mitigation to go ahead but the Aboriginal Heritage Act.
- Shire President and CEO further explained that the Shire will continue to drive a process of surveying the reserves and seek DPLH permission to undertake further mitigations.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nil

9. PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

Nil

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil

11. STATUS REPORTS / GENERAL ITEMS

11.1 Shire of Kojonup – Community Emergency Services Manager – Shane Harris

11.1.1 Shire of Kojonup Fire Break Order:

Remove the paragraph containing:

"Where chemical spraying is the method chosen as the means by which firebreaks are constructed, this is to be completed to the Shire's satisfaction by 15th September.

Firebreaks must be maintained throughout the dates of this notice. If not, the Shire will do the work at the landowner's expense."

Reason for change is to non restrictive on how residents manage their obligations as long as the property is compliant by the gazetted date.

Changes to the date on Restricted Burning time was changed to the 1st of March instead of the 1st of April.

Reason for change was an edit to align the seasons dates and correct the required date.

Changes to the date on the Fire Control Officers and Brigades was changed from 2024/2025 to 2025/2026.

Reason for change was a correction to an error in publishing the dates.

Various request to do more education in and around town was mentioned by Matthew Crabb. Roger Bilney mentioned a big screen that was planned by the Football Club could be utilised to put messages on during the season. Shire to review pre-season messaging.

A special notification to all landowners with property bigger than 4000m² in the gazetted townsite of Kojonup that they will need to be compliant with a 3m fire break around the properties.

However, if a crop cannot be harvested by the deadline gazetted in the Fire Break Order, property owners can request an extension from the Shire on the height requirements which will be considered by the Chief Executive Officer and either approved or not-approved.

The CEO (Grant Thompson) mentioned that the Council has the desire for landowners within the townsite to be encouraged to develop land for housing and development.

COMMITTEE DECISION

The Committee endorses and recommends to Council the Fire Break Order 25/26 as Presented with the recommended changes as presented.

Moved by Mick Mathwin and second by Tony Fisher

Carried 7/0

11.1.2 Fire Incidents by Brigade for 2024-2025

Brigade	Fire Incidents by Brigade for 2024 - 2025												
	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	Total
Boilup	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Boscabel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Changerup	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
Cherry Tree Pool	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Jingalup	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
Kojonup	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	6
Lumeah	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mobrup	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	5
Muradup	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Orchid Valley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Qualeup	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ryans Brook	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	1	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	0	0	22

From the report above it's noticeable that the number of fires in the 2024/2025 season are quite a lot less than the previous years.

11.1.3 Report – DFES - Attached

- Soil dryness index still around 160, still quite dry.
- AFDRS – course now online – will be put under review again.
- Australian Warning System – course now online
- Discussion on Aboriginal Heritage Act, currently causing concerns for all Shires managing bushfire mitigations. Bush Fires act supersedes the Aboriginal Heritage Act only if there is a fire and imminent threat to lives.
- CESM has submitted the LGGS Grant application for funding, requested more than the previous years, still waiting on feedback.
- Need list of names of individuals who require FCO training (Denise Berryman could confirm that there are at least 4 new candidates that will need the training). The date and time will be made public once seeding is done roughly in July.
- There is interest for a 'Women in Kojonup' training session. This should be done annually and not every few years.

11.2 Shire of Kojonup -Chief Executive Officer – Grant Thompson

11.2.1 SoKo BFAC Issues / Action Register – discussion on items that are completed. Shire of Kojonup Bushfire Action Register tabled and discussed. Refer to current status report for changes

11.2.2 Shire in the fortunate position, in conjunction with the Department of Water and Environment Regulation, to receive funding for approximately 14 new water tanks in and around Kojonup to assist with Drought and Community resilience.

11.2.3 At the LEMC meeting prior in the week, a desktop exercise was undertaken on the evacuation of Muradup townsite. In the training it was established that St Johns Ambulance crew will not assist with evacuations, however if they are required in

emergency situations, a long lead time and notification is required of an hour and half. Also the St Johns Ambulance crew requires notification of all incidents and fires.

11.2.4 Shire to place St Johns number on the SMS alerts system.

11.3 Kojonup Chief Bushfire Control Officer – Tony Fisher

11.3.1 SoKo Permits issued in 2024/2025

160 Permits was written this year; most people did a good job.

11.3.2 Chief Bushfire Control Officer Report

- Season is now open, and the Shire of Kojonup is in non-restricted burning time. Only a few fires outside of Kojonup has happened in the non-restricted burning time where the Kojonup Brigades assisted.
- The 2024/2025 was a good season with only 18 fires from which the largest one was about 200ha. Quite a good roll up of volunteer fire fighters to these fires, with exceptional teamwork especially in the mop ups.
- The new communication tower is working very well, taken out a few black spots and giving good results and coverage.
- In the organisation a few changes took place. Nick Trethowan stepped down from his position as Zulu 3. Ben Blewett moved up into this position with Paul Norish stepping into Zulu 4's position.
- A new president was elected, John Binns, who's taking over from Digby Stretch. The Team is excited to work alongside the new members and looking forward to another season going forward.

11.4 President of Kojonup Bushfire Association – John Binns

11.4.1 Presentation of the Bushfire Association AGM held on the 7th of April 2025. and the endorsement of newly selected FCO's, Zulus and all other newly selected nominees.

COMMITTEE DECISION

To receive the minutes of the Bushfire Association AGM held on the 7th of April 2025.

Moved by John Binns and second by Denise Berryman

Carried 7/0

11.4.2 The Kojonup Bushfire Association presents the following newly selected Fire Chief Officers, Zulu's and other nominees.

- Tony Fisher - Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and Bush Fire Weather Officer;
- Ross Fryer-Smith - Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and Deputy Fire Weather Officer;
- Paul Norrish and Ben Blewett - Senior Bush Fire Control Officers;
- The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer be appointed as authorised officers to issue permits to burn for the collection of clover seed in the Shire;

- The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and the two Senior Bush Fire Control Officers be authorised to recommend to the Chief Executive Officer of the Shire of Kojonup on the imposition of Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans.
- The following Fire Control Officers per brigades:

Ben Johnston	Captain/FCO, Boilup Brigade
Craig Ivey	Captain/FCO, Boscabel Brigade
Murray Magini	Captain/FCO, Changerup Brigade
Peter Kowald	Captain/FCO, Cherry Tree Pool Brigade
Chris Wright	Captain/FCO, Jingalup Brigade
Matt Bilney	Captain/FCO, Kojonup Brigade
Lochi Thorn	Captain/FCO, Lumeah Brigade
Digby Stretch	Captain/FCO, Mobrup Brigade
Kent Stone	Captain/FCO, Muradup Brigade
Griff Chomley	Captain/FCO, Orchid Valley Brigade
Shannon Binns	Captain/FCO, Qualeup Brigade
Stuart Tohl	Captain/FCO, Ryan's Brook Brigade
Bevan Brown	FCO, Kojonup Town

COMMITTEE DECISION

To recommend to Council the selected Fire Chief Officers and Zulus for endorsement, as presented.

Moved by Mick Mathwin and second by Tony Fisher

Carried 7/0

11.5 Kojonup Volunteer Fire Rescue Services – Matt Crabb

- Fire signs – new number printed and will replace the old emergency number.
- Bushfire skills toolkit – new fat book, it's electronic, quite relevant and comes from DFES.
- Satisfied with the ranger taking on the tasks of writing infringements this year to non-compliant property owners.
- Update on the Electric Vehicle / Lithium battery fires – SOP's will be handed out.
- Call out to house fire in Woodanilling, backed up Wagin team. Had a similar incident to a previous house fire where the team had to wait for water to arrive.
- Grant Thompson asked if the Muradup standpipe water pressure is sufficient for the VFRS. It's determined that solutions should be reviewed by the Shire Property Services Manager.

11 OTHER ITEMS

Nil

12 MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

Nil

13 LATE ITEMS

Nil

14 NEXT MEETING

6 August 2025

15 CLOSURE

There being no further business to discuss the Presiding Member thanked the members for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 9:08 pm.

Confirmed as true and correct:

Chairperson

Date