

SHIRE OF KOJONUP

# Kojonup



## Kojonup Bush Fire Advisory Committee

MINUTES  
RECEPTION ROOM

7:00 pm Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026

## **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 3 (Currently Cr Radford, Cr Mathwin, Cr Mitchell)
- 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 3 FEBRUARY 2026**

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## MINUTES

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

The Presiding Member declared the meeting open at 07:07 pm and alerted the meeting of the procedures for emergencies including evacuation, designated exits and muster points.

### 2. ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

#### **MEMBERS**

Denise Berryman	Secretary of the Kojonup Bush Fire Association
Matthew Crabb	Kojonup Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
Tony Fisher	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Ross Fryer – Smith	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Paul Norrish	Senior Bush Fire Control Officer
Ben Blewett	Senior Bush Fire Control Officer
John Binns	President – Kojonup Bush Fire Association
Mick Mathwin	Councillor / Chairperson
Ned Radford	Councillor
Craig Mitchell	Councillor

#### **SUPPORTING TEAM MEMBERS**

Grant Thompson	Chief Executive Officer
Estelle Lottering	Manager Regulatory Services
Deb Walker	Ranger – Shire of Kojonup
Phill Gunn	Community Emergency Services Manager
Paul Leiper	DFES - A/District Officer Great Southern Rural
Sean Bleach	Kojonup Volunteer Fire and Rescue – Apparatus Officer

#### **APOLOGIES**

Sean Winter	Wagyl Kaip - Cultural and Statutory Fire Coordinator
Roy Parsons	DFES Area Officer Great Southern Rural

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 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025 were previously circulated under separate cover.

**COMMITTEE DECISION**

**That the minutes of the Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting held 11 November 2025 be confirmed as a true record with changes as requested.**

**Moved by Matt Crabb and seconded by Ned Radford**

**Carried 10/0**

7. **BUSINESS ARISING**

Paul Norrish – Starlink for brigades

- Please follow up again on this issue.
- **Grant THOMPSON** – The shire would have to do some analysis on the costs.
  - Separately, the Shire is advocating to install a phone tower in the Muradup area.
  - Shire can draft a letter to the DFES Commissioner asking for an explanation as to why this is not an option.
- **Phill GUNN** – Starlink is not eligible for funding under the LGGS funding scheme.
- **Paul LEIPER** – Government contracts come at a high cost to be installed across the organisation.
- **Mick MATHWIN** – We need to look into other funding avenues
- **Paul NORRISH** – There are other options on the market, not just with Starlink

**MOTION**

**Recommendation to council to investigate Starlink as a Communication option for the ZULUs**

**Moved by Paul NORRISH, Seconded by Ross FRYER-SMITH**

**Carried 10/0**

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 – Phill Gunn**

11.1.1 Report attached – Report Tabled and read by officer.

11.1.1.1 6 Applications for Funding from Western Power and the Volunteer Bushfire Association, 1 of which was successful. The successful application was for 3x Handheld radios. Matt BILNEY (Kojonup BFB Captain) has stated they will only need 1, with 2 radios to be distributed at the Zulus discretion.

11.1.1.2 Shire of Gnowangerup under investigation following the fatality of a volunteer firefighter during firefighting operations. Questions were asked regarding whether the volunteer had undergone the minimum training required. No formal directives have been made, but the CEO of Kojonup has the final duty of care for all volunteers operation in the Shire. We need to be certain that our volunteers are adequately trained, signed off on the WHS induction and are operating under direction of the Incident Controller.

- **Mick MATHWIN** – is there a list of the volunteers who have not undergone the training which can be circulated by brigade captains or FCO's? **P.GUNN** – yes there is, the list cannot be circulated amongst the public. **M.MATHWIN** - Can this be brought up at an end of season debrief?
- **Tony FISHER** – This information needs to go out to the brigades and be driven from the ground up. The issue remains that the brigades are having such a high turnover of members, training becomes an issue. We also have an issue with vehicle radio operators and completing scheds in the mornings, some operators that have vehicle radios have not responded to the morning sched at all this season. We should streamline this into 3 radios only per brigade, with people who are willing and able to do this as operators.
- **Paul NORRISH** - Training needs to be completed, they need to complete it to become compliant. Can we hold a training course on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November each year to capture the seasonal volunteers.

- **Grant THOMPSON** - Inductions to be rolled out and returned. This is a legal requirement. Please support and drive the induction process within the brigades.
  - **Paul LEIPER** – In regards to the reopening of the roads after they have been affected by a fire, due diligence needs to be taken by the Officer in Charge and the road owner.
- 11.1.1.3 **P.GUNN** – PPC continues to be issued, with a back order on PPC at the moment.

## 11.2 Shire of Kojonup - Chief Executive Officer – Grant Thompson

### 11.2.1 Addressed the Action Register

#### 11.2.1.1 Skytrust – induction to send out

#### 11.2.1.2 Joint Volunteer Service Centre

- **Matt Crabb** – Feedback from Wayne Green, the joint centre in Denmark is made up of funding predominantly from LGGS, but not from DFES, Kojonup VFRS is number 20th on the list for new station. Know Jane has been speaking to drafters to bring the project more to life.

#### 11.2.1.3 Shire of West Arthur, CEO to discuss camp ground cooking fires and the Shire of West Arthurs exemptions of those fires during HVMB's, **Grant THOMPSON** – Have not had had the opportunity to action this as yet.

#### 11.2.1.4 Kojonup Fuel Load. **P.GUNN** has completed this, can be removed from the action register.

#### 11.2.1.5 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Training.

- Darren PRIOR attended the Shire and instructed members of the BFAC on looking up areas of importance.
- **G.THOMPSON** appreciates how the Myrtle Benn fire was managed.
- **Tony FISHER** – after requesting assistance from Wagyl Kaip. Also considerable wait time when seeking approval to bring in machinery to the reserve, with concerns about legal action.
- **G.THOMPSON** - if there is an imminent threat to life and assets you may need to do it.
- **M.MATHWIN** – can't do a break on a piece where there is no fire, but if there is a tree on fire you can go ahead and put dozer through
- **P.GUNN** – The Bushfires Act holds considerable weight in those conditions, but you will need to reasonably justify your actions.
- **T.FISHER** – Had a meeting with Sean Winter of Wagyl Kaip, Pauline Michael and Ross Fryer-Smith regarding future actions in the Myrtle Benn Reserve. Cleared up actions and responsibilities moving forward. **G.THOMPSON** – can we please get that in writing?
- **T.FISHER** - Wing attack support for that area (if there is fire in other areas), we will be struggling to get assistance.
- **T.FISHER** - Will have a conversation again with Sean and Pauline, and community members to do a burn through with assistance from the BFB's.
- **G.THOMPSON** – DPLH has confirmed that the survey approval is still continuing.

- 11.2.1.6 Community Preparedness Meetings – Ran 3 in August, lacklustre attendance from the community, **P.GUNN** – to run more in the lead up to the 26/27 fire season.
- 11.2.1.7 **P Norrish** – When driving in South Australia, they have big signs stating ‘this is the place of last resort’. Big signs, is this something we can look into?
  - **Paul L** – Current Project for places of last resort, presented to State Hazard Plan - Fire. DFES, with all the other states, shires, WALGA etc. Currently in concept stage. If it’s a point of interest here, to go to WALGA and ask for info.
- 11.2.1.8 Excel farms – **T.FISHER & R.FRYER-SMITH** Met with management and inspected, they have fire units in place

### **11.3 Kojonup Chief Bushfire Control Officer – Tony Fisher**

- 11.3.1 5 fires in SOK so far, other that brigades attended to assist other shires (with good numbers)
- 11.3.2 Would like to congratulate Ben and Nod for their exceptional work, excellent on the radio especially with info that goes back to CBFCO
- 11.3.3 Myrtle Benn –, no other sign of lightning etc. Police involved, with cameras, this did highlight the issues/ problems we have at Myrtle Benn, Meetings with Sean and Pauline – good to catchup and straighten things out.
- 11.3.4 Header Fires and Side by Sides causing fires in paddocks, all pieces of machinery need to be fitted with a fire extinguisher, with all activities in the paddocks or croplands need to be accompanied by a fire unit. This includes fencing etc, very simple request.
- 11.3.5 Issue with Radio operators, all brigades need to be notified that you don’t just rotate people, it’s a waste of time to call people who are never there during radio scheds. If no one wants to take the position on, then drop back to two active radios. By not being active they are a hinderance. Get out and be active, we need to be a guide for the future for us as a bushfire association.
- 11.3.6 Like to thank all active members, Zulu’s and Ross, Ross has been doing a lot of the work.
- 11.3.7 Fast fills, we need to get something happening, put it to Paul Leiper and Phill Gunn, to update some of the fast fills, they’re old and been around quite a while.
- 11.3.8
- 11.3.9
- 11.3.10 Myrtle Benn fire, thanks to the VFRS, who volunteered to shuttle up the water, also to Les Lomas who called to bring the shire water truck up asap.
- 11.3.11 The Shire of Wagin has a 30 000l tanker available for any farmer to collect during a fire which is fitted with two standpipes and sponsored by the shire and can be picked up at any time. Anything is better than nothing, is this something that can be sponsored by the Shire of Kojonup?

### **11.4 Kojonup Bushfire Association President – John BINNS**

- 11.4.1 Read to Report - Attached

### 11.5 Kojonup Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service – Matt Crabb

11.5.1 Few fires and crashes since last meeting, nothing out of the ordinary.

11.5.2 House fires, outside of the gazetted town site, VFRS trucks don't have any water, we are happy to run the job, just need the BFB's assistance to ferry water. **G.THOMPSON** – DWER have installed tanks around the Shire for our use in firefighting operations, they are not full as we have not had a rain season yet. **P.NORRISH** – Changerup Hall has a tank installed to the hall and the gutters are falling off. DWER are replacing the gutters.?

### 11.6 General Business:

11.6.1 **T.FISHER** – Businesses deliberately disregarding the community in Tony's eyes, Council needs to set these rules. It's not the Zulu's work, powers taken away from Zulu's, but when there is a fire, then they have the powers again. This needs to come from a pro-active council to the act that was written in 1954.

**G.THOMPSON** – been in conversation for some time, the act limits what we can and can not do.

- We have tried to get agreements in place between the organisations and Tony, Ross and president.
- **T.FISHER** - the representative of the organization, he's not going to be the person that signed an agreement.
- **G.THOMPSON**, the agreement gives you at least some agreed powers.
- **M.MATHWIN** Community Services legislation is being reviewed and will go to VROC, with a document, there is a group to look at it before it becomes legislation and an act. Trying to put these emergency services acts together.
- Same people using unapproved land, using it for factories and businesses.
- We are also looking at discussing with the planning minister, to rate those plant differently, on unimproved land, we should be able to rate that differently.
- **T.FISHER** – in our situation we are in the business of volunteers putting fires out. Red alarm bells.
- **M.MATHWIN** – focus on question – can we under the bushfire act – No the powers are limited where the management of Plant is a consideration..

**T.FISHER** – one is fantastic, the other one is no where close to being compliant, under total harvest vehicle movement ban we can't have two trucks going past each other.

11.6.2 **Deb WALKER** – This is her first bushfire season as the ranger for the Shire of Kojonup, would like to discuss the points put forward in the agenda;

- The fire break notice states that fire breaks are 3M wide, with no description on height of fire breaks, I suggest that for the next fire break notice we add in that firebreaks need to be 4M in height also.
- The townsite and rural area inspection times are different; can we bring those dates into line at the start of November? Inspection times in December are too late in the season. **G.THOMPSON** – Can we undertake the aerial inspection earlier? **R.FRYER-SMITH** – We should leave the inspection times as is.
- In the rural areas, Asset Protection Zone states 20M, at what height?
- Have issues 30 warnings with 14 infringements, predominantly absentee landowners.
- If you see someone undertaking works during a TFB or HVMB, then take a photo and send through to the Ranger or WAPOL to be processed and fined.

11.6.3 **P.GUNN** – Conversation around LGGS finding offer for the 26/27 period. Capital funding is for items costing \$5000 and over. This is where we apply for new fire appliances, brigade sheds and fast fill trailers. If you want to apply for funding for a Joint Emergency Services building, then this is the place for it. I will assess the Fast Fills the shire has over the next 3-4 weeks to assess what needs replacing and apply for those units to be replaced. Justification of the units needing replacement will need to be included in the application.

## 11 OTHER ITEMS

## 12 MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

Nil

## 13 LATE ITEMS

### 13.1 **DFES District Officer Great Southern Rural, Paul LEIPER**

Read to report, attached.

Noted from his report; The High Season aerial support fleet remains in Albany, 2 Water Bombers, just need to have good SITREPS to COMCEN, a ground controller and an action plan for their use.

## 14 NEXT MEETING

5<sup>th</sup> May 2026

## 15 CLOSURE

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Shire of Kojonup – Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting – 3 February 2026

There being no further business to discuss the Presiding Member thanked the members for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 09:15 pm.

Confirmed as true and correct:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Member

5-5-26  
Date