



# Shire of Irwin Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) Meeting

held in the Council Chambers

Monday, 9 August 2021

at 6.02pm

## Minutes

### 1 DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

G Crabb, Presiding Member opened the meeting at 6:02pm and welcomed all members and representatives to the meeting.

### 2 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

#### Members Present

Mr Geoff Crabb – *Presiding Member*

Mr M Teale

Mr Murray Butcher

Mr James Butcher

Mr Stephen Boyd

Mr Jonathan Moss

Mr Andrew Gillam

Mr Peter Summers

Cr Michael Smith – *Shire President*

#### Representatives

Jessica Henriques – Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions

#### Visitors

Fran McAllen – Secretary Dongara Town Bush Fire Brigade

#### Apologies

Mr H Campbell

Mr Shane Ivers – *Chief Executive Officer*

Mr Felix McQuistan – DFES District Officer

### 3 BUSINESS ARISING

#### 3.1 Confirmation of previous minutes

No Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) Meeting was held in 2020. In the absence of the BFAC meeting a Brigades Leadership meeting was held on 21 September 2020. Minutes have been distributed to members.

Confirmation of the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting held 20 June 2019.

**COMMITTEE DECISION 010821:**

**MOVED: P Summers**

**SECONDED: J Moss**

**That the Minutes of the 20 June 2019 BFAC Meeting, as previously circulated, be adopted as true and accurate recording of that meeting.**

Confirmation of the minutes of the Brigades Leadership Meeting held 21 September 2020.

**COMMITTEE DECISION 020821:**

**MOVED: P Summers**

**SECONDED: J Moss**

**That the Minutes of the 21 September 2020 Brigades Leadership Meeting, as previously circulated, be adopted as true and accurate recording of that meeting.**

**3.2 Action items from previous minutes**

Nil.

**4 CONFIRMATION AND APPOINTMENT OF BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES**

**4.1 Current Members**

<b>Members</b>	
Chairperson – Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Geoff Crabb
Shire President	Michael Smith
Shire of Irwin Chief Executive Officer	Shane Ivers
Community Emergency Services Manager and Fire Control Officer	Mark Teale
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Murry Butcher
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Andrew Gillam
Fire Control Officer & Shire of Irwin Ranger	Community Rangers
Fire Control Officer	Stephen Boyd
Fire Control Officer	Hugh Campbell
Fire Control Officer	Peter Summers
Captain Irwin Bush Fire Brigade	Jonathan Moss
Captain Dongara Town Bush Fire Brigade	James (Jimmy) Butcher
Captain Dongara Volunteer Fire & Rescue	Brodie M'Leane

<b>Representative</b>	
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	Representative
Department of Fire & Emergency Services	Representative

**COMMITTEE DECISION 030821:**

**MOVED: M Smith**

**SECONDED: S Boyd**

**That the Committee appoints the recommended members to the Bush Fire Advisory Committee.**

## 5 BUSH FIRE BRIGADE AGM MINUTES/MOTIONS RECIEVED

### 5.1 2021 Brigade Annual General Meeting (AGM) Minutes

Irwin North Bush Fire Brigade AGM Minutes  
Irwin South Bush Fire Brigade AGM Minutes  
Dongara Town Bush Fire Brigade AGM Minutes

#### COMMITTEE DECISION 040821:

**MOVED: M Smith**

**SECONDED: J Butcher**

**That the AGM Minutes of each Brigade be confirmed and received by the BFA Committee and the elected officers and BFA Committee representatives be acknowledged.**

### 5.2 Motions received from the Bush Fire Brigades for BFAC advice

Nil.

## 6 APPOINTMENT OF FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS & FIRE WEATHER OFFICERS

Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Geoff Crabb
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Andrew Gillam
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Murray Butcher
Fire Control Officer Dongara Town	Hugh Campbell
Fire Control Officer Dongara Town	Stephen Boyd
Fire Control Officer Irwin	Peter Summers
Fire Control Officer	Shane Ivers
Fire Control Officer	Mark Teale
Fire Control Officer Ranger	Community Rangers (Currently Vacant)
Fire Weather Officer East	Andrew Gillam
Fire Weather Officer West	Geoff Crabb

Committee Comments – Fire Weather Officer positions to be changed to Andrew and Geoff. Two new weather stations were recently installed by the Shire and there has also been a What's App group established for the FCO's/BFB Leaders. This group will allow wider consultation of the members, so informed decisions can be made. With James now holding the position of Captain at Dongara Town, training can be undertaken in the future with the potential for him to be appointed as a Fire Control Officer.

#### COMMITTEE DECISION 050821:

**MOVED: S Boyd**

**SECONDED: A Gillam**

**That the above positions be recommended for appointment by Council and all previous appointments be revoked.**

## 7 REVIEW OF RESTRICTED AND PROHIBITED BURNING TIMES

The Committee to review the below Restricted and Prohibited Burning annually. Any amendments to be recommended to Council.

Restricted 15<sup>th</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> October  
Prohibited 1<sup>st</sup> November – 28<sup>th</sup> February  
Restricted 1<sup>st</sup> March – 7<sup>th</sup> April

The committee reviewed the above dates and does not have any further recommendations or feedback at this time.

## **8 REVIEW OF FIRE BREAK REQUIREMENTS**

The Committee to review the Annual Fire Break Notice and provide feedback and recommendations to Council.

*Fire Break Notice provide as an attachment to this Agenda.*

### Committee Comments

Geoff Crabb – Would like to see fire breaks installed all the way along Brand Highway and Midlands Road. Appear to be getting more and more fires starting on the roads and coming off into the bush. Geoff also spoke about the confusion between some of the requirements and potential interpretations.

All members noted that consideration needs to be made for weed and erosion concerns.

Stephen Boyd – A suggestion to provide more examples by the way of photos, which can either be included in the firebreak notice or linked to the Shire website.

Mark Teale – Advised that the changes to the Restricted and Prohibited burning times will be amended on this year's notice. Contact details for all the FCO's to be added to notice.

Mark Teale – Advised that there was not enough time to allow for a more comprehensive review of the requirements, as the notices need to be sent out with rates very soon. He advised that wider consultation and feedback should be gathered and presented at the next Bushfire Advisory Committee meeting, with the hope that any recommendations be included in next year's notice.

## **9 REPORTS**

### **9.1 CHIEF BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS REPORT**

Our last bushfire season was reasonably quiet in this Shire with just several fires. A couple of fires down along the Brand near Peter's property. One-Two fires north of town. One Large shed fire at a farming property where we had the VFRS and Geraldton Career Fire Station involved. Personal Protective Equipment was an issue at the incident and Geoff found there was some difficulty getting compliance with its use.

We had some trouble with DFES comms in Perth whereby they could not action a call out as they needed the exact location. Geoff has spoken with them and working towards solutions. Irwin Brigade has cranked up thanks to Jono and Paul. It's great to see Dongara and Irwin working well. Finances looking good in the donation space. Have completed two Green Waste burns for the Shire. Will need to be vigilant this year as there is extra fuel around the Shire.

### **9.2 DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (DFES) REPORT**

No report received and no representative present.

#### **DEPARTMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, CONSERVATION AND ATTRACTIONS (DPAW)**

DBCA Jurien office has had a few changes with a new District Manager Chris Stewart and a new Geraldton Fire leader. District is now referred to as the Turquoise Coast District. Simon and Jess still based out of Jurien. 150km of Firebreaks have been installed in Mt Adams and we are targeting another 50km+.

Regarding prescribed burning, 10,500 has been burnt in whole district. In Irwin we had just under 200ha in Mt Adams UCL. There will be no spring burning this year but in autumn we will be looking at Beekeepers and Mt Adams. Busy season for fires, in terms of size. Beekeepers fire 26,000ha. Arrowsmith fire we assisted the Shire with some crew and machinery. If there are any areas that Parks need looking at get, please get in touch.

### **9.3 BUSH FIRE BRIGADE REPORTS**

#### **9.3.1 IRWIN NORTH**

Thanks to Dongara Fire Brigade in their assistance in getting funds started. We have been getting things tidied up and conducting joint training. Thanks for everyone assistance.

#### **9.3.2 IRWIN SOUTH**

Nil.

#### **9.3.3 DONGARA TOWN**

James (Jimmy) has taken over as Captain of the Bushfire Brigade. Approx. 30 members.

### **9.4 SHIRE OF IRWIN REPORT (CESM)**

Mark Teale thanked all members present for their ongoing commitment and assistance last year. I have been appointed to the role for the next three years and look forward to working with the team again.

Encouraged the brigades to get in contact with any training requests or suggestions.

Building up a store of spare PPE. There is plenty of funding for PPE for all volunteers. Please get in contact with any requirements you have.

If any Brigades have any Capital Works requests for next year, please get in touch so we can start working on a project plan.

Awaiting grant approval from DFES for two fire water tanks to be strategically located in the Shire. Will be in touch once approval has been given.

The Shire of Irwin has been allocated \$47,610 this financial year via the DFES Local Government Grant Scheme.

Currently working on the Shires Bushfire Risk Management Treatment Plan and looking at mitigation requirements for this upcoming season.

The Shire will be reviewing the BFB Local Laws, Operational Procedures and Response Plans over the next 12 months. Encourage all members to provide feedback when consultation and feedback begins.

## **10 GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **10.1 WHS Changes to Legislation**

Mark spoke about the harmonisation of Operational Health and Safety laws happening in WA. The Shire will be developing a fit for purpose approach for Bushfire Brigade WHS requirements and will be in touch with the brigades regarding. Mark encourages all members present to ensure we are all working safely and that as leaders of the Bush Fire Brigades response, we will all have a role to play in this space.

## 10.2 Amalgamation of Irwin North and South Bush Fire Brigade

At the Irwin North and South AGM the two Bush Fire Brigade Captains and members present voted to amalgamate the two Bush Fire Brigade's to become Irwin Bush Fire Brigade. The Irwin Bush Fire Brigade will encompass the two response areas. Please see attached minutes.

### COMMITTEE DECISION 060821:

**MOVED: A Gillam**

**SECONDED: P Summers**

**The BFA Committee recommends to Council the amalgamation of the Irwin North and South Bush Fire Brigades to form Irwin Bush Fire Brigade.**

## 10.3 Water Bomber Reloading

Mark advised there were some minor issues this year when a request was made to activate the water bombing, at the Dongara Air Strip. No process had been documented for exactly what to do. A contact list will need to be developed in collaboration with DBCA to ensure trained volunteers and shire staff contact details are captured. In the event of activation, and if DBCA resources are not available, this document will assist the Shire and Fire Brigades in activating the site.

## 11 CLOSURE

With there being no further items for discussion the meeting was closed at 7.45pm.