

Shire of Denmark Minutes



BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD IN COUNCILS RECEPTION ROOM,
953 SOUTH COAST HIGHWAY, DENMARK,
THURSDAY 20TH JUNE 2019.

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1. DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

In absence of the Chair and Council Representatives the committee accepted Cr Gearon as the Presiding Person for this meeting. Cr Gearon opened the meeting at 6.20pm.

2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCEMEMBERS: (Voting)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Lez Baines	C.B.F.C.O
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Bryce Edwards	D.C.B.F.C.O
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Craig Lilley	Kordabup FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Murray Brooker	Mt Lindesay FCO (arrived 6.26pm)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Joe Baker	Ocean Beach FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Ivars Sulcs	Peaceful Bay FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Kevin Hard	Parryville FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Callum Baxter	Somerset Hill FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Lee Shelley	VFRS Captain/FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Carl Wesley	Mt Shadforth FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Simon Coppock	William Bay FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Adrian Kranendonk	F.W.O.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Craig Hughes	Carmarthen FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Brian Vigus	Tingledale FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Sid Marshall	Scotsdale FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Alex Williams	Hazelvale FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Patrick Mcconigley	East Denmark Proxy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Graham Thallon	Auxiliary FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Peter Winch	Harewood Proxy

MEMBERS:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Tristan Farmer	(Non-Voting) DCBA PaWS Fire Coordinator
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Wes Bailye	Area Officer Department of Fire and Emergency Services

STAFF:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mrs Charmaine Shelley	(Non-Voting) Senior Ranger
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr David Schober	Manager of Community Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ms Melanie Haymont	Bushfire Risk Planning Coordinator

VISITORS:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Cr Ceinwen Gearon	Shire President/Acting Chair
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Marcus Owen	FCO Nominee Ocean Beach
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Patrick Mcconigley	FCO Nominee East Denmark
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Paul Harbron	FCO Nominee Denmark VFRS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Nigel Marsh	Mt Lindesay BFB
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Geoff Bowley	Scotsdale/Shadforth BFB
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Richard Stanley	Denmark Support

APOLOGIES:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Cr Mark Allen	Council Delegate / Chairman
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Don Atkinson	Town FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mike Hills	Harewood FCO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Scott Medhurst	Community Emergency Services Manager
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Roger Seeney	Council Delegate

ABSENT:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mr Paul Ashton	Australian Bluegum Plantations
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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Nil

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PERSON PRESIDING

Nil

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**4.1 Committee Meeting Minutes**

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION	ITEM 4.1
MOVED: BRIAN VIGAS	SECONDED: ADRIAN KRANENDONK
That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Annual General Meeting held on the 7 th March 2018 be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.	
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: 19/0	

5. OFFICER REPORTS**5.1 Department of Fire and Emergency Services**

DFES Area Officer Wes Bailye provided a verbal report to the Committee.

- *Well done to all Brigades and Shire for the recent June fires.*
- *50 fires across the region, which were managed well by all concerned.*
- *Mr Bailye will call all Brigades and visit shortly to discuss resourcing.*
- *The role is here to assist and includes incident management when required. Mentoring is a key component.*

Mr Bailye then accepted questions from the floor.

- Mr Graeme Thallon – Esperance resourcing. What has DFES learnt and will apply in the future to incidents such as Esperance?
Mr Bailye provided a detailed response on the challenges of large, extended fire events and how DFES managed and intends to manage into the future.
- Mr Peter Winch – Can you explain what will come from the Coroners Investigation?
Mr Bailye indicated he will need to wait until the report is released, read and understood before making any comment. He is happy to review with BFAC into the future.
- Mr Lez Baines – More training has been good but eAcademy is challenging. What are DFES doing about making it easier to use?
Mr Bailye acknowledged the challenges and is working with the Regional team and State office on how it can be best applied.
Extended discussion with Mr Alex Williams summing up that any feedback should be directed in the right and appropriate manner.
- Mr Sid Marshall – What plans are in place for East River Road?
This was addressed by Melanie Haymont (Shire Bush Fire Planning Coordinator).
- Mr Bryce Edwards – commented on the professionalism and way the recent Esperance fires were managed that he attended.

5.2 Department of Biodiversity Conservation & Attractions

DBCA District Fire Coordinator Tristan Farmer provided a verbal report to the meeting.

- *A few near misses recently.*
- *DBCA appreciate the support of the Brigades*
- *MOU is in place between Plantations Local Governments and DFES.*

Mr Farmer then took questions from the floor.

- Mr Lez Baines asked what DBCA's policy is regarding burning of slashed heaps. Mr Farmer responded that the current management policy is to burn.

5.3 Australian Bluegum Plantations

No report available.

5.4 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Mr Lez Baines to provide the following report to the Committee

The Shire has not received many calls for assistance since April 1st. A few calls were expected when the Restricted Period ended but other than the first few days all has been quiet. The Following Incidents then occurred.

- *May 3rd 2 Fires, Lapko Road and Lights Road*
- *May 4th 2 Fires. Wentworth Road and Suttons Road*
- *May 5th 2 Fires, Walter/Scotsdale Road and South Coast Hwy*
- *May 30th 2 Fires, Board Road and South Coast Hwy*

JUNE 5th, 6th and 7th fires

After receiving adverse incoming weather reports, including high winds with gusts expected to exceed 80 kph and after consulting with Albany DFES, The decision to invoke section 46 of the Bush Fires Act 1954 prohibiting the lighting of fires on June 5th, 6th and 7th June 2019 was made.

Whilst it was prohibited to light fires, there were several conversations with FCOs where it was explained that it was unrealistic to extinguish all fires; however if we could calm down those fires before Wednesday night, 5th June, that would be preferable.

There was a gap in how this information reached the public and therefore all we could do is to ask the owners to extinguish any fire that they had lit during these three days and if they were unable or unwilling to do that, the Brigades would do so to try to avoid escapes.

After visiting some active incidents, Operations were moved to the Incident Room in the Shire offices on the 6th June. The room was also staffed by Denmark Support and also Shire staff. At one stage there were seven incidents running at the same time.

The job was made easier by good ICs at each incident. They gave clear sitreps when asked and accurate descriptions of what was happening at each fire. Several crews worked throughout the night. The standard of teamwork and dedication was impressive.

We averted a major problem with the Mooney Valley incident which the crews managed to contain within the set area. A Watch and Act for this incident was issued which was later reduced to Advice during the night of 6th June then removed during the following day.

Special thanks also to the Rangers for running around and Caltex who supplied the food.

INCIDENTS OVER 5th & 6th JUNE

*Fernley Rd/Scotsdale Rd – deemed suspicious and investigated by Denmark Police.
Mooney Valley Place, Ocean Beach
Pates Road, Parryville*

South Coast Hwy, William Bay
 South Coast Hwy, William Bay
 Kernutts Road, East Denmark
 Jarrah Close, East Denmark
 South Coast Hwy, Mehniup
 South Coast Hwy, William Bay
 Happy Valley Road/Zig Zig Road, Somerset Hill

All jobs were closed off on the 7th June.

- Question from Mr Marcus Owen – Has there been any outcome from the investigation of the Fernley/Scotsdale Rd fire?

Mr Baines responded that Police had investigated and were unable to make any findings due to lack of evidence.

Mr Bryce Edwards has stepped up as Fire 2 and has been a real asset to the Shire. He is advancing his training to raise his skills. It is particularly refreshing to have younger members who are willing to step up into command positions as well as wishing to improve their skills.

Mr Baines then took questions/comments from the meeting.

- Mr Craig Hughes stated he had concerns that land owners (and residents) don't have the means to control and extinguish.
There was extended discussion around this issue and on Section 46 of the Bush Fire Act.
- Mr Murray Brooker noted FCO's on the Fire Management Notice have control and the ability to extinguish fires as deemed necessary.
- Mr Bryce Edwards noted the need for more Bush Fire Ready Coordinators.
- Councillor Gearon commended DFES on the Bush Fire Ready groups which have grown significantly across the Shire.
- Mr Patrick McConigley stated the role Social Media can play.
- Mr Alex Williams noted serial offenders need attention.
Shire staff noted that a number of infringements have been (or will be) issued as a result of the June fires.

5.5 Community Emergency Services Manager

Mr Lez Baines provided the following report to the Committee on behalf of Mr Scott Medhurst who was an apology (unwell).

Prevention

- *Mitigation works are ongoing in the Shire, We are currently seeking more funding for UCL/UMR works and MAF funding for other works.*
- *Contractors have been engaged for works in the Parry's area to assist with the upcoming burn Parks will be doing in the area with our assistance.*
- *Kenton Estate mechanical works were recently completed to reinstate*
- *Water Corp Burn in town expected to go ahead once prescription is finalised at a local and state level.*
- *Prescribed Burning – There are several prescriptions in various levels of completion currently. There is a significant amount of work that goes into these prescriptions from site visits to consultations with community groups. With the introduction of the new Fire Mitigation Working group we are hoping that will lead to a stream lining of the consultation process. Some of these prescriptions are more suitable for spring burning or rely on mechanical works to be completed before they can take place. The Shire is committed to working on completing these works in line with the BRMP that Mel has put together to ensure an efficient use of the available funding. This includes liaising with external stakeholders such as DBCA to assist them or have them assist us when they are burning land in their tenure within the Shire. With all of the above considered we are hopeful that*

mitigation be it by burning or other means will continue to be a best practice approach within the Shire

Community Engagement

- *We continue to make massive leaps and bounds in this space and The Shire will continue to support brigades and individuals with programs in this space. It is encouraged all brigades to support the community engagement processes like Bush Fire Ready, Fire Chat and similar initiatives.*
- *DFES Digital Media are planning a workshop in the Great Southern this year which will assist brigades with Social Media and how to make the most of it. I will be in contact when there is more info available.*

Preparedness

- *Please remember to submit any vehicle faults and repairs needed so these can be planned for over the cooler months. Fault books are available at the depot if you don't have one let me know so they can be added when the appliance is serviced this year.*
- *AVL Testing. Please remember this needs to be done monthly and it is audited. If you are at the station for training or after a job it takes about 2 minutes to complete.*

Training

- *Training courses for the year are progressively being added to eAcademy. Please take advantage of them. I have tried to offer a good range of courses this year to ensure that our members skills are accurately reflected.*
- *Please remember all members need to have completed VFF1 to go on the fireground. It is appreciated that some members may have the skills but not the qualifications on paper. Please contact me directly about this and we will work to have their skills recognised officially.*
- *Training for 2019/2020 – it is starting to get towards the time of year where the region is preparing the next years training calendar if you would like to have input in shaping this calendar please contact me. Obviously, we need to work to the pathways but I would like to see courses on offer that are useful.*

PPC/PPE

- *Expecting an order in this week which should clear a lot of the backlog.*
- *Please remember to wear all PPC appropriately its not going to protect you if its not worn properly and may have implications for you if you get hurt.*
- *Financial year is almost upon us which means a new allocation of funding. Hopefully this will lead to those outstanding orders being filled and replacing older gear.*

Response

- *There have been a few turnouts to fires since the last meeting with the events of the 5/6th of June leading to the AGM/Meeting being rescheduled. It was an amazing effort by all involved with all the situations being handled professionally. As a result of these incidents several infringements have been issued and where applicable contractor costs will be forwarded to the owners for payment.*
- *Triple Zero is the most effective way to report of fire/smoke/unauthorised burning if you are advised of these by a member of the public or another brigade member you should be referring them Triple Zero or make the call yourself then advise up the chain as appropriate. This allows visibility of incidents at a local, Regional and State level and allows for the most efficient dispatch of resources from within the Shire. People are still calling the Shire or FCOs to report fires and this leads to a delay in response. Remember to educate people that 000 is the number to call for all fires.*

Other

- *Thank you to Lez and Bryce for stepping into the respective roles over the past few months since Ross headed off. It has been a smooth transition and the events of 5/6 June were a reflection on the skills and professionalism of not only Lez and Bryce but all those that were involved.*
- *The Shires new Incident Control Room was used for the first time during a significant incident and it performed well, as expected there were a few teething issues but these have been identified and will be rectified where possible. It should also be mentioned that the staff involved in the operation of the room were pulled from their normal duties and performed extremely well in a foreign/challenging environment.*
- *LGGS/ESL Funding The 2019/2020 Grant has been submitted and further funding requested above the suggested allocation by DFES. This includes additional funding for vehicle maintenance and insurances as well as PPE, Fire Fighting Equipment and Supplies. A reallocation of Dual Cab Heavy Appliances for all future fleet additions and an application for a 12.2 Bulk Water Carrier Appliance which would be a regional resource based in Denmark that could be turned out to Albany or Mt Barker to assist.*
- *Congratulations to Nornalup and Peaceful Bay on their new appliances*
- *All Fire Shed locks have been replaced or rekeyed as the result of another break in at Mehniup. The Shire has also purchased a remotely mounted camera that moves around the Fire Sheds to capture any suspicious behaviour.*
- *Media - Please remember that when you are representing the BFB's that you are representing the Shire. Any requests from the media are to be directed to the CEO or DFES as appropriate for approval.*
- *Ocean Beach Fire Shed the tender was awarded to Weststruct Pty Ltd a local Denmark company. The shed is expected to be completed by November 2019 at the latest. There have been some hurdles with the site containing unconsolidated fill that may slightly delay the process. However, both the contractor and Shire are committed to delivering the shed before the next high threat period.*
- *Mr Lee Shelley provided an update of the Ocean Beach Fire Shed redevelopment.*

ACTION – The Ocean Beach new appliance is to be moved to the Shire Depot.

5.6 Bushfire Risk Planning Coordinator

Ms Melanie Haymont provided the following report to the Committee.

- **Bushfire Ready Contact for Brigades**

Through the Bushfire Risk Management planning project, risk on private property and risk to property owners has been identified as one of the key areas of concern for the Denmark Shire 26% of our shire is managed by private landholders as opposed to 3% of Local government land.

All tenure managers are required to contribute to the management of bushfire risk in our community.

Our community safety, with respect to bushfires, cannot be managed by physical treatment alone. We need a mechanism within in our structure, to assist residents with their understanding and management of risk on private property.

The Brigades do a fantastic job of protecting life and assets within our Shire. They are looked upon in the community as experts in the Bushfire field, and are respected avenues for information regarding personal property preparation.

Bushfire ready groups are an efficient means for individual communities to coordinate their personal preparatory activities. These groups can do a lot of the ground work for responding agencies before an incident through- self-evacuation, improved communication channels and property preparation. This will also aid in faster community recovery post incident.

We have had great success with current groups in the Shire, but to be an effective tool across the whole shire we need more groups established.

To lend weight to this program in our community, we would like all brigades to consider nominating a Bushfire ready contact within their brigade. This person would be the community contact for all property preparation, community advice for your Brigade and with the assistance of our Bushfire ready Facilitators, DFES and the Shire of Denmark officers, support bushfire ready groups within the Shire. <https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/safetyinformation/fire/bushfire/Pages/bushfirereadygroups.aspx>

This position may suit a current member wishing to still be an active within the brigade, but unable/unwilling to be on the fire ground or an auxiliary member wishing to taken on another role. This position could be shared amongst neighbouring brigades if practical

There is training and support available for this role if there are interested members.

- **Bushfire Mitigation Working Group**

The Bushfire Mitigation Working Group has been created to consider and review the Shires current and future bushfire mitigation plans to ensure we deliver best practice outcomes that improve the bushfire safety and resilience in the Shire of Denmark. The Working Group is a consultative group and has the ability to provide recommendations but will not hold any decision making powers. The terms of reference for the Working Group are attached.

The Working Group will require representation form the Central, Eastern and Western zones. So, if this is something you may be interested in or you are aware of someone suitable, please contact me directly for future consideration.

The meeting determined the following FCO's would represent the following districts:

Central Zone	Mr Craig Hughes
Nominated by	Mr Murray Brooker
Seconded by	Mr Alex Williams
Western Zone	Mr Alex Williams
Nominated by	Mr Adrian Kranendonk
Seconded by	Mr Bryce Edwards
Eastern Zone	Mr Adrian Kranendonk
Nominated by	Mr Lez Baines
Seconded by	Mr Murray Brooker

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

Mr Scott Medhurst – Fire Management Notice

There has been significant feedback from the community and external stakeholders regarding the Shires Fire Management Notice (Section 33 Notice) whilst the content of the notice has formed part of the feedback the main issue is with the layout and readability of the notice. The Shire will be seeking to make the notice more user friendly with a new Draft Notice available at the next BFAC meeting. The Shire acknowledges previous work done by everyone involved in the current notice and will be focusing on making the layout more user friendly rather than changing the content.

Action: It was resolved that staff use the Mundaring Fire Management Notice as a template and distribute for comment.

Mr Lez Baines – Roadside Verge Burning Policy

The need for reduction of fuel loads on roadside verges has long been recognised by Brigades and rural landowners. These often-high fuel loads are compounded by the apparent Shire practice of pushing fallen trees (including Karri) and branches off roads and leaving them permanently on the road verge.

The perceived high risk of ignition with consequent fire risk to adjacent bush areas, properties and infrastructure such as fences, leads to community concern, frustration and an ongoing practice of unauthorised burning of verges.

In addition, it has been recognised that these high verge fuel loads may pose a significant risk to people evacuating along these roads in the event of a fire emergency.

For these reasons, I strongly believe that a workable policy needs to be adopted by the Shire that facilitates managed fuel reduction on roadside verges making a safer environment within the Shire of Denmark. There is no doubt that it will not be practical to burn all roadside verges and that adequate safety precautions will need to be put into place whilst burns are taking place, especially regarding smoke concerns and traffic management. The Policy would be expected to include the requirement of a permit and appropriate traffic management for any verge fire with the permits to be issued by CESM, CBFCO, DBFCO and Rangers.

Mr Scott Medhurst advised that he was in support of a workable policy surrounding roadside verges as it is accepted that most rural landowners are expected to maintain their verges and have the ability to do so safely. However, upon investigating solutions surrounding roadside verge burning was meeting several issues that needed to be worked though. Which include things like clearing permits, traffic management, infrastructure (Shire and External), tourist roads and water catchments. Mr Medhurst advised that he has reached out to other Shires regarding how they have combatted these issues in an effort to find a workable solution.

There was general discussion around the issue and what could be achieved.

Ms Mel Haymont provided a comprehensive report around the legal and technical issues posed.

It was resolved that BFAC write a letter of support to the Shire which could be submitted to DFES for consideration.

Mr Murray Brooker – Charity Status

Mr Brooker asked other Brigades if they were still registering themselves as a Charitable entity. The meeting confirmed at least 2 other Brigades were still also completing this declaration.

Mr Craig Hughes – Water access and standpipes

Mr Hughes asked for an update regarding the maintenance of standpipes as it appears several are without water.

There was general discussion around the issues of theft, commercial use and the new charges the Department of Water is applying to Local Governments.

It was noted that if Brigades note water levels are low to please inform the Shire immediately.

Mr Lez Baines – Fittings on water cartage vehicles

It was agreed to review all water fittings on water cartage vehicles.

Mr Carl Wesley

Has the Shire looked into a “booster” for Mt Shadforth? CESM will review and liaise back with Mr Wesley.

Expo for Emergency Services to raise profile.

It was agreed to send this idea to LEMC for support.

Mr Bryce Edwards

Could the Shire please send a letter of thanks to Rodericks and Ken Chrimes for their assistance during the June fires.

7. NEXT MEETING

It is recommended that the next meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee be held on Thursday 5th September 2019 at the Shire of Denmark Reception Room that will commence at 6.30pm.

8. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business to discuss the Presiding Person closed the meeting at 8:09pm.

These minutes were confirmed at the meeting of the _____

Signed: _____

(Presiding Person at the meeting at which the minutes were confirmed.)