



# MINUTES

## Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting

Held **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2026 at 5:30pm**  
Shire of Brookton Council Chamber  
14 White Street, Brookton

These minutes were confirmed at the Bushfire Advisory Committee  
Meeting held on ..... / ..... / .....

Presiding Member: ..... Date: .....

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### **1.09.26 DECLARATION OF OPENING/ATTENDANCE**

The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Travis Eva opened the meeting at 5:50pm and welcomed Councillors, Committee members and Staff.

On behalf of Council, I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the Nyoongar People and pay respect to all Elders, past, present, and emerging. I wish to acknowledge and respect local people's continuing culture and the contribution they make to Country and its life.

#### Elected Members (Voting)

Cr Crouch

#### Committee Members (Voting)

|               |                                       |             |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Travis Eva    | Chief Bushfire Control Officer        | Chairperson |
| Brad Bassett  | Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer |             |
| Tim Evans     | Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer |             |
| Michael Eva   | East Brigade                          |             |
| Jarrad Turner | East Brigade                          |             |

#### Staff (Non-Voting)

|                |                              |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| Gary Sherry    | Chief Executive Officer      |
| Sandie Spencer | Executive Governance Officer |

#### Apologies

|               |                                             |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Cr L McCabe   | Deputy President                            |
| Roger Northey | Acting Community Emergency Services Manager |
| Bevan Walters | East Brigade                                |
| Len Simmons   | West Brigade                                |

#### Other Agencies

|            |                                                        |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Ben Davies | Department of Fire and Emergency Services Area Officer |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------|

### **2.09.26 CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

#### **BFAC 09.26-01**

#### **BFAC RESOLUTION**

**MOVED J Turner                      SECONDED T Evans**

***That the Minutes of the Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting held in the Shire of Brookton Council Chambers, on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.***

**CARRIED**

### **3.09.26 PRESENTATIONS**

Nil.

## 4.09.26. RECOMMENDATIONS & GENERAL BUSINESS

### 4.09.26.01 2026/27 FIRE BREAK NOTICE

Under section 33 of the *Bush Fires Act 1954* (BF Act), Local Governments can require landowners and occupiers to maintain fire-breaks in a Fire Break Notice to residents and landowners. Fire-break notices can be issued in two ways:

- sending the notice to individual owners or occupiers. This is a practical notice; or
- by publishing the notice in the *Government Gazette*. The Shire will likely publish the Fire Break Notice in the *Government Gazette*. This action simplifies the legal requirements in any prosecution.

#### **Content of Fire-Break Notices**

The format and scope of fire-break notices differ across Local Governments.

- Some notices are limited to the requirements of section 33 only.
- Others also include information about other provisions of the BF Act, the *Bush Fires Regulations 1954*, and general bushfire preparedness advice.

#### **Previous Approach – Shire of Brookton**

In past years, the Shire of Brookton's Fire-Break Notice included additional requirements such as:

- Restrictions on the use of mowers in December and January.
- Requirements for properties to have firefighting units.
- A requirement for firefighting units to be present in paddocks during harvest.

These requirements were considered enforceable by the Shire but, in practice, were most likely not enforceable under the Act. The Shire will adopt a compliant Fire-Break Order at its September meeting.

#### **Bushfire Management Plans and Section 33**

Local Governments may also require ongoing compliance with a Bushfire Management Plan (BMP) as a condition of development approval under the *Planning and Development Act 2005*. Previously, Shire staff believed that compliance with a BMP overrode Section 33 fire-break requirements. However, DFES advice confirms that Fire-Break Notices apply to all landowners, even if they already have a BMP in place.

#### **Communication with Landowners**

The Shire of Brookton notifies residents of the annual Fire-Break Notice by mail-out in late September. This mail-out will continue to include:

- The Fire-Break Notice itself;
- Any Fire Prevention Requirement Notices adopted by Council; and
- Advisory information for landowners and residents on topics:
  - Restricted and prohibited burning periods
  - Harvest and vehicle movement bans
  - The Shire SMS service
  - Burning permits
  - Fire danger ratings
  - Contact details of Fire Control Officers (FCOs)

## **2026/27 Shire of Brookton Fire Break Order**

Pursuant to section 33(1) of the Bush Fires Act 1954, the Shire of Brookton gives notice that the owners and/or occupiers of land within the district are required to undertake the following works on land owned or occupied by them –

### **TOWNSITE LAND**

Properties equal to or less than 2,023m<sup>2</sup> in size are required to be fire hazard reduced by:

- Reduction of the vegetation fire hazard to a maximum height of 75mm and all slashed material is to be removed.

Properties over 2,023m<sup>2</sup> in size are required to be fire hazard reduced by:

- Construction and maintenance of a 3m wide minimum bare earth unobstructed trafficable firebreak within 3m of the property boundaries; or
- Reduction of the vegetation fire hazard to a maximum height of 75mm including the removal of slashed material.

### **RURAL LAND**

Properties equal to or less than 100 hectares in size are required to be fire hazard reduced by:

- Construction and maintenance of a 3m wide minimum bare earth unobstructed trafficable firebreak within 30m of the boundary of the property.
- Construction of a 5m wide minimum bare earth unobstructed trafficable firebreak within 15m of and surrounding all buildings, sheds, fuel storage including drums and flammable chemicals, silos and fodder stacks as well as hay stacks within a shed or within 400m from any infrastructure including operational generators and stationary motors.

Properties and aggregated land over 100 hectares in size are required to be fire hazard reduced by:

- construction of a 5m wide minimum bare earth, unobstructed trafficable firebreak within 15m of and surrounding all buildings, sheds, fuel storage including drums and flammable chemicals, silos and fodder stacks as well as hay stacks within a shed or within 400m from any infrastructure including operational generators and stationary motors. Seed cleaners are excluded.
- Hay and straw stacks in open paddock areas awaiting pickup and removal are not required to be surrounded by a firebreak.

### **PLANTATIONS**

A plantation is an area of planted trees, other than a windbreak, within the gazetted townships exceeding 3 hectares and outside of a township exceeding 10 hectares.

Plantations are required to be fire hazard reduced by:

- A. Boundary firebreaks: a 15m clear area is required on all boundaries of plantations and along public roads. This clear area must have a trafficable surface of at least 5m width of clear bare earth and a minimum vertical clearance of 4m. The remaining 10m must be maintained in a low fuel condition.

- B. Compartment firebreaks: internal firebreaks between compartments of up to 30 hectares must be a minimum of 6m wide and for compartments over 30 hectares a minimum of 10m wide. In all cases a 5m trafficable surface and a minimum 4m vertical clearance should be maintained to allow access by firefighting appliances.

#### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That the Bushfire Advisory Committee recommend that the Shire of Brookton adopt the revised Fire Break Notice.

#### **BFAC 09.26-02**

#### **BFAC RESOLUTION**

**MOVED M Eva**

**SECONDED T Evans**

***That the Bushfire Advisory Committee recommend that the Shire of Brookton adopt the revised Fire Break Notice.***

**CARRIED**

#### **4.09.26.02 CESM APPOINTMENT**

The Shire, in partnership with the Shire's of Corrigin and Pingelly and DFES have completed an employment process for permanent position of CESM.

Mark Charles has accepted a three year employment contract and will commence on or about 17 September 2026.

Mark is currently an employee of DFES and is currently acting in the role of CESM at City of Cockburn. Mark is a long term volunteer with the South Coogee Bush Fire Brigade and now a volunteer FCO and burn planner for the City of Cockburn.

The Shire is wanting to set up process to establish Mark in the role once he commences. FCOs and Brigade leadership will also be asked to participate in this.

With the appointment of Mark, Roger Northey's casual employment with the Shire of Brookton will cease shortly after Mark commences. Roger has very successfully acted in the CESM role for over 12 months and has proved valuable service in advancing the Shire of Brookton's volunteer training and coordination. This was a very difficult task to take over the role with the uncertainty after Jason Carrall tenure.

#### **4.09.26.03 FIRE PREVENTION REQUIREMENT NOTICES**

Under Section 27 of the BFA and Regulation 39A of the Bushfire Regulations a local government or a bush fire control officer may prohibit the carrying out of an activity or operation either absolutely or except in accordance with conditions specified in the notice or direction by which the prohibition is imposed or in the regulations.

These notices were previously included in the Shire of Brookton Fire Break Notice. Although no included in the formal Fire Break Notice, they will be included in the materials mailed to all landowners and occupiers.

The Shire will consider any Fire Prevention Requirement Notices at their September Meeting.

#### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That the BFAC recommend that the Shire of Brookton give notice that:

1. The use of slasher and rotary mowers is prohibited:
  - a. from 1<sup>st</sup> December to 28<sup>th</sup> February during the hours of 6:00am to 6:00pm; and
  - b. from 6:00pm on the day before an extreme or above fire danger rating is forecast from Bureau of Meteorology,unless that use is:
  - a. on a property within a townsite, of any size that is reticulated or;
  - b. on a property outside the townsite, with the area being slashed or mowed is irrigated or reticulated and is less than 1 hectare.
2. Landowners must provide an operational, independent, mobile, water filled, firefighting unit with a water capacity of not less than 450 litres at all times on any property of aggregated land over 100 hectares in size throughout the restricted and prohibited burning period.
3. During any period when harvesting operations are being conducted:
  - a. an operational, independent, mobile firefighting unit must be located in the same paddock, or within 50m of the paddock and
  - b. that unit must be kept full of water at all times.The responsibility to supply the firefighting unit is that of the landowner. Harvesting operations includes the use of augers and seed cleaning units, other than when used in a silo compound where surrounded by more than 15 metres cleared area
4. during any operations throughout the restricted and prohibited burning period that may start a fire on any rural property of aggregated land equal to or less than 100 hectares in size, the operation must be accompanied by at least:
  - a. a trailer type fire unit attached to a towing vehicle and/or
  - b. a slip-on fire unit that must be attached to the tray of an operational vehicle in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.Operations likely to cause a fire includes, but is not limited to welding, use of an abrasive cutting disc or driving recreational vehicles through a paddock.

#### **BFAC 09.26-03**

#### **BFAC RESOLUTION**

**MOVED B Bassett**

**SECONDED T Evans**

***That the BFAC recommend that the Shire of Brookton give notice that:***

1. ***The use of slasher and rotary mowers is prohibited:***
  - c. from 1<sup>st</sup> December to 28<sup>th</sup> February during the hours of 6:00am to 6:00pm; and***
  - d. from 6:00pm on the day before an extreme or above fire danger rating is forecast from Bureau of Meteorology,******unless that use is:***
  - c. on a property within a townsite, of any size that is reticulated or;***
  - d. on a property outside the townsite, with the area being slashed or mowed is irrigated or reticulated and is less than 1 hectare.***

2. *Landowners must provide an operational, independent, mobile, water filled, firefighting unit with a water capacity of not less than 450 litres at all times on any property of aggregated land over 100 hectares in size throughout the restricted and prohibited burning period.*
3. *During any period when harvesting operations are being conducted:*
  - a. *an operational, independent, mobile firefighting unit must be located in the same paddock, or within 50m of the paddock and*
  - b. *that unit must be kept full of water at all times.*

*The responsibility to supply the firefighting unit is that of the person conducting harvesting operations. Harvesting operations includes the use of augers and seed cleaning units, other than when used in a silo compound where surrounded by more than 15 metres cleared area.*

4. *during any operations throughout the restricted and prohibited burning period that may start a fire on any rural property of aggregated land equal to or less than 100 hectares in size, the operation must be accompanied by at least:*
  - a. *a trailer type fire unit attached to a towing vehicle and/or*
  - b. *a slip-on fire unit that must be attached to the tray of an operational vehicle in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.*

*Operations likely to cause a fire includes, but is not limited to welding, use of an abrasive cutting disc or driving recreational vehicles through a paddock.*

**CARRIED**

#### **4.09.26.04 APPOINTMENT OF DUAL FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS**

The following are proposed appointment of Dual Fire Control Officers for the 2026/27 fire season. The Shire will make these appointments at their September Meeting.

|                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Shire of Corrigin | Greg Evans, Braden Grylls |
|-------------------|---------------------------|

#### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

That the BFAC recommend that the Shire of Brookton accept the following appointments of Dual Fire Control Officers for the 2026/27 fire season.

|                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Shire of Corrigin | Greg Evans, Braden Grylls |
|-------------------|---------------------------|

#### **BFAC 09.26-04**

#### **BFAC RESOLUTION**

**MOVED B Bassett**

**SECONDED M Eva**

*That the BFAC recommend that the Shire of Brookton accept the following appointments of Dual Fire Control Officers for the 2026/27 fire season.*

|                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Shire of Corrigin | Greg Evans, Braden Grylls |
|-------------------|---------------------------|

**CARRIED**



**4.09.26.05 APPOINTMENT OF FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS & FIRE WEATHER OFFICERS**

At the Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting held on 31 March 2026, the following nominees were endorsed as Fire Control Officers (FCOs) and Fire Weather Officers.

This matter was not presented to Council at that time, as not all of the nominees had completed the required FCO training. Since that meeting several FCO courses have been completed.

| Position                                  | Nominee(s)                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chief Bush Fire Control Officer           | Travis Eva                                                                                           |
| Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer(s) | Tim Evans / Brad Bassett                                                                             |
| FCO's – Central Brigade                   | Blair Montague, Troy Bassett, Brad Bassett, Andrew Pike , Ashley Hobbs, Murray Hall, Anton de Lange. |
| FCO's – East Brigade                      | Bevan Walters, Travis Eva, Darrell Turner, Michael Eva, Jarrad Turner                                |
| FCO's – West Brigade                      | Tim Evans, Mark Whittington, Len Simmons, Ross Evans, Tristan Guinness and Toby Blechynden           |
| FCO – Shire of Brookton                   | Acting CESM – Roger Northy, Sandie Spencer, Jennifer Mason, Gary Sherry                              |
| Fire Weather Officers                     | 1. Tim Evans<br>2. Brad Bassett<br>3. Travis Eva                                                     |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Beverley              | Ashley Hobbs, Blair Montague, Brad Bassett                                                           |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Corrigin              | Bevan Walters, Travis Eva, Darrell Turner                                                            |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Pingelly              | Tim Evans, Murray Hall                                                                               |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Wandering             | Tim Evans                                                                                            |

The Officer's Recommendation below includes nominees for FCOs who have evidence of completion of the FCO training.

The Shire staff included, are not permitted to issue Permits to Burn.

**OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

That BFAC recommend the Shire of Brookton make the following appointments for the 2026/27 fire season.

| Position                                  | Nominee(s)                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chief Bush Fire Control Officer           | Travis Eva                                                                  |
| Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer(s) | Tim Evans / Brad Bassett                                                    |
| FCO's – Central Brigade                   | Troy Bassett, Brad Bassett, Murray Hall, Anton de Lange.                    |
| FCO's – East Brigade                      | Bevan Walters, Travis Eva, Darrell Turner, Michael Eva, Jarrad Turner       |
| FCO's – West Brigade                      | Tim Evans, Mark Whittington, Len Simmons, Tristan Guinness, Toby Blechynden |
| FCO – Shire of Brookton                   | CESM, Sandie Spencer, Jennifer Mason, Gary Sherry                           |
| Fire Weather Officers                     | 1. Travis Eva                                                               |

|                               |                                           |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
|                               | 2. Brad Bassett<br>3. Tim Evans           |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Beverley  | Brad Bassett                              |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Corrigin  | Bevan Walters, Travis Eva, Darrell Turner |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Pingelly  | Tim Evans, Murray Hall                    |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Wandering | Tim Evans                                 |

#### **BFAC 09.26-05**

#### **BFAC RESOLUTION**

**MOVED T Evans**

**SECONDED J Turner**

***That BFAC recommend the Shire of Brookton make the following appointments for the 2026/27 fire season.***

| <b>Position</b>                                         | <b>Nominee(s)</b>                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Chief Bush Fire Control Officer</i></b>           | <b><i>Travis Eva</i></b>                                                                  |
| <b><i>Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer(s)</i></b> | <b><i>Tim Evans / Brad Bassett</i></b>                                                    |
| <b><i>FCO's – Central Brigade</i></b>                   | <b><i>Troy Bassett, Brad Bassett, Murray Hall.</i></b>                                    |
| <b><i>FCO's – East Brigade</i></b>                      | <b><i>Bevan Walters, Travis Eva, Darrell Turner, Michael Eva, Jarrad Turner</i></b>       |
| <b><i>FCO's – West Brigade</i></b>                      | <b><i>Tim Evans, Mark Whittington, Len Simmons, Tristan Guinness, Toby Blechynden</i></b> |
| <b><i>FCO – Shire of Brookton</i></b>                   | <b><i>Mark Charles, Sandie Spencer, Jennifer Mason, Gary Sherry</i></b>                   |
| <b><i>Fire Weather Officers</i></b>                     | <b><i>1. Travis Eva<br/>2. Brad Bassett<br/>3. Tim Evans</i></b>                          |
| <b><i>Dual FCO – Shire of Beverley</i></b>              | <b><i>Brad Bassett</i></b>                                                                |
| <b><i>Dual FCO – Shire of Corrigin</i></b>              | <b><i>Bevan Walters, Travis Eva, Darrell Turner</i></b>                                   |
| <b><i>Dual FCO – Shire of Pingelly</i></b>              | <b><i>Tim Evans, Murray Hall</i></b>                                                      |
| <b><i>Dual FCO – Shire of Wandering</i></b>             | <b><i>Tim Evans</i></b>                                                                   |

**CARRIED**

#### **4.09.26.06 UNREGISTERED VOLUNTEERS AND REGISTERED VOLUNTEERS – RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROTECTIONS UNDER WHS AND FES ACTS**

The way bush fires are managed is changing. Alongside the traditional focus on fighting fires and protecting life and property, there is an increasing emphasis on training, registration, personal protective equipment (PPE), workplace safety and compliance.

#### **Volunteer insurance and spontaneous volunteers**

There is currently some uncertainty across local government regarding the level of insurance coverage available to bush fire volunteers through the local government industry insurance broker, Local Government Insurance Services (LGIS).

This issue has received increased attention following a 2025 fire at Arthur River, where several untrained and unregistered spontaneous volunteers were injured while working on the fire ground under the direction of a registered volunteer. The spontaneous volunteers were backpacker employees of a local farming business who attended the fire with their employer.

LGIS is involved in reviewing the circumstances as part of the insurance claim, while WorkSafe is also considering the incident in the context of its statutory occupational safety and health responsibilities.

LGIS has advised that it is becoming increasingly difficult for local governments to obtain the level of volunteer insurance coverage required for bush fire brigades. This means there is likely to be greater scrutiny of claims involving people who are not registered volunteers, particularly where they are injured while attending a fire.

LGIS has indicated that an unregistered spontaneous volunteer may be covered where the person:

- is acting under the direction of a registered volunteer; and
- has appropriate PPE and appropriate training.

If the required standard of PPE and training is equivalent to the DFES requirements for a firefighter, it is unlikely that any spontaneous volunteers will meet these requirements.

There is also currently some uncertainty about who has legal responsibility for the safety of a spontaneous volunteer attending a fire — the person's employer, the Shire or the person directing their activities on the fire ground. This is an issue that needs to be carefully considered by the Shire brigades, and local employers.

### **What does this mean for Brookton?**

The safest approach is to encourage people who are likely to attend bush fires to become registered and appropriately trained volunteers.

The Shire, Brigade leaders and local employers could consider the following:

- Encourage all fire attendees to register as volunteers. This could include local residents who do not intend to participate with brigades but are likely to assist during an emergency, as well as short-term or seasonal farm employees who may attend fires with their employer.
- Encourage basic training. Anyone likely to attend a fire should have completed at least basic bush fire fighter training before being expected to participate in firefighting activities.
- Keep brigade membership records current. Brigades should make it straightforward for people to become registered volunteers, while also regularly reviewing membership lists and removing people who are no longer available or willing to attend fires.
- Provide training before harvest. The Shire should be making basic firefighter training available immediately before harvest to accommodate new, seasonal and casual farm employees.
- Promote training as an employer benefit. Brigade leaders and the Shire should promote basic bush fire training within the farming community as a practical investment in workplace safety and emergency preparedness.
- Ensure registered volunteers have appropriate PPE. All registered members who may attend a fire should have access to the required PPE.

- Consider a second-hand PPE program. Where PPE has been issued to a casual or seasonal harvest employee for a single season, the brigades or Shire could consider a suitable process for inspecting, maintaining and reallocating that PPE for future use where possible.

### **A changing approach to firefighting**

The traditional approach of neighbours and farm workers simply turning up to help fight a fire remains an important part of the rural community. However, the expectations surrounding who can participate, what training they require, what PPE they must have and who is responsible for their safety are changing.

The Shire, Brigade leaders, volunteers and local employers need to recognise these changing requirements and work together to ensure that people who attend bush fires are appropriately registered, trained, equipped and supervised.

This is not about discouraging people from helping during an emergency. It is about making sure that those who do help are protected and that the Shire, brigades and employers understand their respective responsibilities.

The future approach should be simple: if someone is likely to attend a bush fire, encourage them to become a registered, trained and properly equipped volunteer before the fire occurs.

#### **4.09.26.07 OPERATIONAL BUSHFIRE SEASON BRIEFING**

DFES Upper Great Southern are again holding Operational Bush Fire Pre-season briefings.

These briefings are targeted at CBFCO's FCO's and Captains.

- East Upper Great Southern at Kulin on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> Oct – lead by Blake Halford
- West Upper Great Southern at Williams on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> Oct – Lead by Ben Davies

The agenda includes:

|             |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1230        | Lunch                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 1300-1400   | Welcome and Seasonal Briefing BOM                                                                                                                                       |
| 1400 – 1530 | Standing Discussion Exercise Q&A lead by AO's and using PALM simulation - focus on the season priority: Establishing Control: Identify, Structure/ Sectors, Communicate |
| 1530        | Afternoon Cuppa                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1600-1700   | Information flow with CSO from ComCen                                                                                                                                   |
| 1700hrs     | Conclude                                                                                                                                                                |

#### **4.09.26.08 SHIRE OF BROOKTON BUSH FIRE BRIGADES LOCAL LAWS 2026**

The Bush Fire Brigades local law was passed at the August 2026 Ordinary Meeting of Council. The new local law replaces the existing Shire of Brookton By-law from 1993 relating to the establishment, maintenance and equipment of Bush Fire Brigades.

The existing 1993 by-law no longer adequately reflects contemporary legislative requirements, bush fire brigade administration or operational practices.

The proposed Shire of Brookton Fire Brigades Local Law:

- is relatively simple and practical in application;

- seeks to avoid unnecessary administrative burden on volunteers;
- only requires key brigade appointments such as the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Brigade Captains and Fire Control Officers;
- allows for appointments of Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer and Lieutenant positions where requested by brigade volunteers, without mandating additional administrative roles such as secretary or treasurer;
- recognises that brigades may establish additional positions or internal processes outside the local law if they wish;
- reflects current operational arrangements of volunteer brigades;
- clearly outlines the responsibilities of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Captains and Fire Control Officers;
- establishes minimum training requirements for Fire Control Officers; and
- introduces a clear process for suspension or termination of membership where required.

*BUSH FIRES ACT 1954*  
*LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1995*

SHIRE OF BROOKTON

BUSH FIRE BRIGADES LOCAL LAW 2026

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**BUSH FIRES ACT 1954  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1995**

**SHIRE OF BROOKTON**

**BUSH FIRE BRIGADES LOCAL LAW**

Under the powers conferred by the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, the *Local Government Act 1995* and under all other powers enabling it, the Council of the Shire of Brookton resolved on \_\_\_\_\_ to make the following local law.

**PART 1 - PRELIMINARY**

**1.1 Citation**

This local law may be cited as the Shire of Brookton Bush Fire Brigades Local Law 2026.

**1.2 Commencement**

This local law will come into operation 14 days after its publication in the Government Gazette.

**1.3 Repeal**

The *By-law relating to the establishment, maintenance and equipment of Bush Fire Brigades 1993* is repealed.

**1.4 Application**

This local law applies throughout the district.

**1.5 Definitions**

In this local law unless the context otherwise requires –

***Act*** means the *Bush Fires Act 1954*;

***bush fire brigade*** has the meaning given to it in section 7 of the Act;

***bush fire brigade area*** has the meaning given to it in clause 2.2b;

***bush fire brigade member*** means a volunteer fire fighter having current membership of a bush fire brigade;

***bush fire brigade officer*** means a person holding a position referred to in clause 3.3(1);

***bush fire control officer*** means a person appointed by the local government to exercise the powers of a bush fire control officer or bush fire officer in accordance with the Act and this local law;

***Captain*** means the person holding or acting in that position in a bush fire brigade;

***CBFCO*** means the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer;

***CEO*** means the Chief Executive Officer of the local government;

**Council** means the Council of the local government;

**district** means the district of the local government;

**Lieutenant** means the person holding that position in a bush fire brigade;

**local government** means the Shire of Brookton;

**normal brigade activities** has the meaning given to it in section 35A of the Act;

**President** means President of the Council;

**Regulations** means Regulations made under the Act; and

**volunteer fire fighter** has the meaning given to it in section 35A of the Act.

## **PART 2 - ESTABLISHMENT OF BUSH FIRE BRIGADES**

### **2.1 Establishment of a bush fire brigade**

- (1) The local government may establish a bush fire brigade for the purpose of carrying out normal brigade activities.
- (2) A bush fire brigade is established on the date of the local government's decision under subclause (1).

### **2.2 Name and area of bush fire brigade**

On establishing a bush fire brigade under clause 2.1(1) the local government is to –

- a. give a name to the bush fire brigade; and
- b. specify the area in which the bush fire brigade is primarily responsible for carrying out the normal brigade activities.

### **2.3 Objects of bush fire brigades**

The objects of the bush fire brigade are to carry out –

- a. the normal brigade activities; and
- b. the functions of the bush fire brigade which are specified in the Act, the Regulations and this local law.

### **2.4 Chain of command during normal brigade activities**

- (1) Subject to the Act, the chain of command to apply during normal brigade activities is –
  - a. bush fire control officers in order of seniority;
  - b. bush fire brigade officers in order of seniority; and
  - c. all other volunteer fire fighters.
- (2) The person in command has full control over other persons fighting the fire and is to issue instructions as to the methods to be adopted by the fire fighters and may exercise all the powers and duties provided for by the Act.

### **2.5 Existing bush fire brigades**

A bush fire brigade established prior to the day on which this local law comes into operation –



- a. is to be taken to be a bush fire brigade established under and in accordance with this local law;
- b. the provisions of this local law apply to the bush fire brigade save for clause 2.1; and
- c. any rules governing the operation of the bush fire brigade are repealed and substituted with the provisions of this local law.

## **2.6 Dissolution of bush fire brigade**

In accordance with section 41(3) of the Act, the local government may cancel the registration of a bush fire brigade if it is of the opinion that the bush fire brigade is not complying with the Act, this local law, or is not achieving the objectives for which it was established.

## **2.7 New arrangement after dissolution**

If a local government cancels the registration of a bush fire brigade, alternative fire control arrangements are to be made in respect of the brigade area.

# **PART 3 - ORGANISATION OF BUSH FIRE BRIGADES**

## **3.1 Local government responsible for structure**

The local government is to ensure that there is an appropriate structure through which the organisation of bush fire brigades is maintained.

## **3.2 Appointment of bush fire control officers**

- (1) The local government may appoint bush fire control officers in their absolute discretion and apply conditions as considered appropriate.
- (2) Where only one person is appointed as a bush fire control officer, that person is the CBFCO for the purposes of this local law.
- (3) Where more than one person is appointed as a bush fire control officer, the local government shall determine seniority as CBFCO, Deputy CBFCO, and further seniority as is considered appropriate.
- (4) When considering the appointment of a person as a bush fire control officer, the local government is to have regard to the qualifications, training and experience which may be advisable to fill the position.

## **3.3 Appointment of bush fire brigade officers**

- (1) The local government shall appoint the following bush fire brigade officers in their absolute discretion –
  - a. a bush fire control officer from the bush fire brigade area to be Captain;
  - b. where there are two or more bush fire control officer in a bush fire brigade area, a bush fire control officer from the bush fire brigade area as first lieutenant;
  - c. where there is not more than one bush fire control officer in a bush fire brigade area, an appropriate person from the bush fire brigade area as first lieutenant; and

- b. where there are three or more bush fire control officer in a bush fire brigade area, a bush fire control officer from the bush fire brigade area as second lieutenant;
  - d. where there is not more than two bush fire control officer in a bush fire brigade area, an appropriate person from the bush fire brigade area as second lieutenant.
- (2) When considering the appointment of persons to the positions in subclause (1), the local government and bush fire brigade are to have regard to the qualifications, training and experience which may be advisable to fill each position.
- (3) The local government may remove any appointed person from any position.

### **3.4 Managerial role of CBFCO**

Subject to any directions by the local government, the CBFCO –

- a. has primary managerial responsibility for the organisation and maintenance of bush fire brigades;
- b. is to support Captains and bush fire brigade officers in their roles; and
- c. where a vacancy in the position of Captain appointed under clause 3.3(1)a., or in order of seniority, other appointed bush fire brigade officer willing to act in that position, the CBFCO is to act as Captain until an appointment is made by the local government to the position.

### **3.5 Duties of Captain and bush fire brigade officers**

- (1) The duties of the Captain include –
- a. to provide leadership to bush fire brigades;
  - b. to monitor bush fire brigades' resourcing, equipment and training levels;
  - c. to liaise with the local government concerning –
    - (i) fire prevention or fire suppression matters generally;
    - (ii) directions to be issued by the local government to bush fire control officers (including those who issue permits to burn);
    - (iii) bush fire brigades; or
    - (iv) bush fire brigade officers;
  - d. to ensure that lists of bush fire brigade members are maintained in accordance with clause 4.3(1);
  - e. to report annually to the local government, in a manner and form determined by the CEO, the names the office bearers of the bush fire brigade;
  - e. to ensure fire reports are made;
  - f. to report to the local government not later than 30 April each year, for consideration and appropriate provision being made in the next local government budget, the status of a bush fire brigade's –

- (i) training and readiness;
    - (ii) protective clothing;
    - (iii) equipment; and
    - (iv) vehicles and appliances;
  - g. to consider the nomination of persons to the local government for appointment as bush fire control officers by the local government;
  - h. to arrange for normal brigade activities as authorised by the Act or by the local government;
  - i. where a vacancy occurs in a position appointed under clause 3.3(1)b. or c., to –
    - (i) advise the CEO of the vacancy as soon as practicable ; and,
    - (ii) make alternate suitable arrangements for that position until an appointment is made by the local government; and
  - j. to make recommendations to the local government for endorsement prior to implementation.
- (2) The duties of other bush fire brigade officers are to support the CBFCO and Captain in their roles.

### **3.6 Training of bush fire control officers**

- (1) The local government is to supply each bush fire control officer and Captain with information and training materials which may be relevant to the performance of the bush fire brigade officers' functions, and any amendments made from time to time.
- (2) Bush fire control officers are required to complete appropriate training as determined by the CEO, and which may include recognised prior learning, within 12 months of appointment, unless a course has been completed within the 9 years prior to appointment as a bush fire control officer.
- (3) Bush fire control officers are required to complete appropriate training as determined by the CEO, and which may include recognition of prior learning, at least once every 10 years.

## **PART 4 - MEMBERSHIP**

### **4.1 Types of membership of bush fire brigades**

- (1) The membership of a bush fire brigade consists of:
  - a. fire fighting members;
  - b. associate members; and
  - d. honorary life members.
- (2) Registration as a volunteer fire fighter does not commit the person to participating in all normal brigade activities.

### **4.2 Membership applications**

The decision on admission of a bush fire brigade member for any class of membership, with or without conditions or restrictions, may be made by –

- a. either the Captain or CBFCO; jointly with
- b. either the CEO or President.

#### **4.3 Membership – review, refusal, suspension or termination**

- (1) At least once each year, the Captain is to review the membership and report to the CEO and CBFCO the name and contact details of each bush fire brigade member.
- (2) If circumstances warrant, membership of the bush fire brigade may be refused or suspended or terminated at any time for a period considered appropriate in the opinion of –
  - a. either the Captain or CBFCO; jointly with
  - b. either the CEO or President.
- (3) Membership of the bush fire brigade terminates if the member –
  - a. dies;
  - b. gives written notice of resignation to the Captain or CEO;
  - c. is permanently incapacitated by mental or physical ill-health; or
  - d. is no longer a resident or a landowner or occupier in the district, or for other sufficient reason.
- (4) A decision to terminate membership under subclause (3)c. or (3)d. is to be made by –
  - a. either the Captain or CBFCO; jointly with
  - b. either the CEO or President.
- (5) Where a decision under subclause (2), (3)c. or (3)d. is unable to be agreed, the matter is to be referred to the local government.
- (6) The decision of the local government shall be final.
- (7) Members are eligible to reapply where membership has ceased for any reason.

#### **4.4 Right to object to or review of decision**

- (1) If an application for membership is refused under clause 4.2, the CEO is to notify the applicant in writing as soon as practicable after the decision is made, of –
  - a. the reasons for the refusal; and
  - b. the right to object to the local government within 14 days of the date of notice.
- (2) If it is proposed that a bush fire brigade member is to be suspended or terminated under clause 4.3(2) or terminated under clause 4.3(3)c. or 4.3(3)d., the CEO is to notify the

bush fire brigade member in writing as soon as practicable after the decision is made, of –

- a. the reasons for the intention to suspend or terminate the bush fire brigade member;
  - b. the opportunity to respond and answer any matters which might give grounds for suspension or termination –
    - (i) in person or in writing to the CEO; or
    - (ii) to meet with a minimum of any three of the Captain, CBFCO, CEO; or President; and
  - c. the right to object to the local government within 14 days of the date of notice, or such other time as may be agreed.
- (3) The decisions of any meeting in accordance with subclause (2)b.(ii) of a bush fire brigade member with a minimum of any three of the Captain, CBFCO, CEO; or President –
- a. are to be made by simple majority; and
  - b. may revoke, vary or confirm the original decision to suspend or terminate the bush fire brigade member.
- (4) The bush fire brigade member is to be notified in writing as soon as practical after a decision under subclause (3) is made, of –
- a. the decision and the reasons for the decision; and
  - b. the right to object to the local government within 14 days of the date of notice.
- (5) The local government may dispose of an objection by –
- a. dismissing the objection;
  - b. varying the decision objected to; or
  - c. revoking the decision objected to, with or without –
    - (i) substituting for it another decision; or
    - (ii) referring the matter, with or without directions, for another decision by a minimum of any three of the Captain, CBFCO, CEO; or President.
- (6) If a person makes an objection under subclause (4)b. the local government shall give written advice of any decision made under subclause (5) to the person.

#### **4.5 Existing liabilities to continue**

The resignation, suspension or termination of a member under clause 4.3 does not affect any liability of the bush fire brigade member arising prior to the date of resignation, suspension or termination of membership.

#### **4.6 Disagreements**

- (1) Any disagreement between bush fire brigade members regarding normal brigade activities may be referred to the Captain.
- (2) Where a disagreement in subclause (1) is considered by the Captain to be of importance to the interests of the bush fire brigade, then the Captain may refer the disagreement to the CBFCO or to the local government.
- (3) Where a disagreement is referred to the CBFCO, the CBFCO may –
  - a. determine the disagreement; or
  - b. refer the matter to the local government.
- (4) The local government is the final authority on matters affecting the bush fire brigade, and may resolve any disagreement referred to it.

## **PART 5 - GENERAL**

### **5.1 Administration**

All administrative matters of a bush fire brigade are to be managed by the local government, other than bush fire brigade specific internal arrangements.

### **5.2 Finances**

All financial matters of a bush fire brigade are to be managed by the local government, other than bush fire brigade specific internal arrangements.

### **5.3 Equipment**

All equipment purchased by the local government is the property of, and shall be insured by, the local government.

### **5.4 Consideration in the local government budget**

In addition to funding made available through emergency services grants, the local government may provide further funding depending upon the assessment of budget priorities for the year in question.

Dated

The Common Seal of the Shire of Brookton was affixed by authority of a resolution of Council in the presence of –

President  
Chief Executive Officer.



#### **4.09.26.09 OTHER GENERAL BUSINESS**

Nil.

#### **5.09.26 REPORTS**

##### **5.09.26.01 CHIEF BUSHFIRE CONTROL OFFICER – TRAVIS EVA**

- Thank you to Roger for his time as the Shire of Brookton CESM. Roger has provided valuable training opportunities for members and has always been available to offer support when needed.
- Welcome to Mark in the position. We look forward to working with you.
- Are there reports available from the the truck servicing?
  - Sandie to follow up.

##### **5.09.26.02 DEPUTY CHIEF BUSHFIRE CONTROL OFFICER – BRAD BASSETT**

Nil

##### **5.09.26.03 WEST BRIGADE – CAPTAIN TIM EVANS**

- 14 October 2026 – hands on day at the West Shed.
- Gosnells volunteers came through to each station (25 members).

##### **5.09.26.04 EAST BRIGADE – CAPTAIN BEVAN WALTERS**

Apologies for not being able to attend and thanks to Micheal Eva and Jarrad Turner who are representing the East Brigade at this meeting.

Minimal activity over Autumn and Winter, but the shed has been utilized many times by Roger.

We are in the planning stages of organising the “Hands on” training day in September. Thanks to Roger Northey for his assistance during his time as acting CESM and his input in all he does at the Fire shed with running training days. Greatly appreciate his enthusiasm and encouragement to direct and utilize these new facilities.

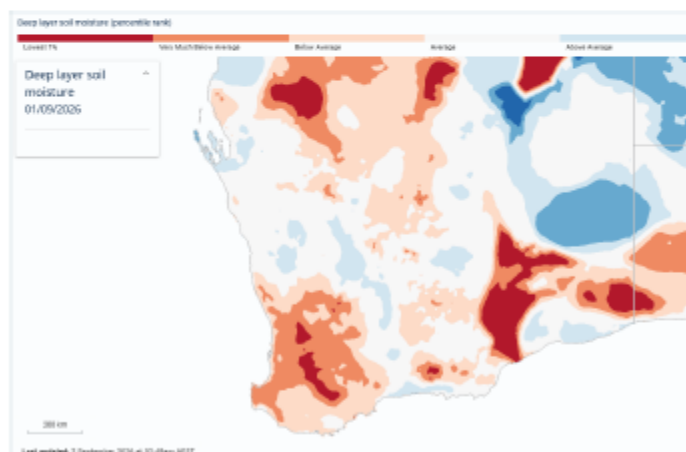
## Seasonal Outlook

The 2026/27 bushfire season is shaping as a significant concern across the Upper Great Southern, driven by elevated fuel loads, increasingly dry conditions and reduced water availability. Rainfall earlier in the year supported strong vegetation growth across much of the region; however, these fuels are now beginning to cure as rainfall declines and temperatures increase. AFAC's Spring 2026 Bushfire Outlook identifies parts of Western Australia as having an increased bushfire risk due to elevated fuel loads and dry soil conditions.

A major contributor to this outlook has been the exceptionally dry winter period. July 2026 was the fourth driest July on record across Western Australia, with statewide rainfall 67% below the long-term average. Across parts of the Great Southern and South Coastal districts, July rainfall was the lowest on record, resulting in reduced soil moisture, lower fuel moisture levels and significantly reduced water availability in farm dams and private storages. This reduction in available water may impact both firefighting operations and agricultural activities across the region.

Seasonal forecasts indicate a warmer and drier than average spring, while a developing El Niño may contribute to hotter and drier conditions through late spring and summer. Current assessments show below-average soil moisture across much of south-west Western Australia, increasing the likelihood of rapid fuel curing and more active fire behaviour. Grain industry reporting also indicates crops across much of the Wheatbelt are approximately one month ahead of normal development, suggesting harvest and curing may commence earlier than average and extend the period of elevated bushfire risk.

**Key Message:** Current indicators suggest the Upper Great Southern should prepare for a potentially above-average bushfire season. Elevated fuel loads, record-low July rainfall, declining soil moisture, reduced water availability, earlier crop curing and harvest activity, and a developing El Niño pattern are all expected to contribute to increased bushfire risk during the 2026/27 season.



### Establish Control - Identify. Resource. Sectorise.

Know who is in control, think ahead and request support early, and share the workload by managing the incident as a team.



## Lessons Identified from the 2025/2026 Season

The 2025/26 season included several significant incidents across the Upper Great Southern, including the Newmont Bushfire, Dunn Rock Bushfire and Boddington Complex Fires. Reviews and operational debriefs highlighted many examples of strong local response, interagency support and resource coordination. A common theme identified across a number of incidents was the importance of **establishing control early and transitioning from firefighting to incident management as incidents increased in size and complexity.**

### What Worked Well

- Strong local brigade response and commitment.
- Early resource requests and utilisation of support resources.
- Effective public information and community warnings.
- Strong cooperation between Local Government, volunteers and supporting agencies.

### Key Learning

As incidents escalated, the most successful outcomes were achieved where Incident Controllers were able to:

- Clearly identify who was in control.
- Establish effective communication with Comcen.
- Think ahead and request resources early.
- Delegate responsibilities and sectorise the fireground.

**Where these actions occurred early, incidents were generally easier to manage, support resources were mobilised sooner, and Incident Controllers were better able to focus on the overall situation rather than individual firefighting tasks.**

### Operational Focus for 2026/27

The regional focus for the 2026/27 season is:

#### Establish Control

1. **Identify** who is the Incident Controller and communicate it.
2. **Resource** the incident by thinking ahead and requesting support early.
3. **Sectorise** the fireground and share the workload.

## Establishing Control

A recurring theme identified through recent operational debriefs has been the importance of **establishing control early**. Strong incident control improves situational awareness, crew safety, resource coordination and decision-making. When a fire starts to grow, focus on three key actions:

### 1. Identify

Identify who is the Incident Controller and communicate it.

One of the first priorities at any incident should be clearly identifying who is acting as the Incident Controller (IC). All responding crews should know who is in charge, and this should be communicated to DFES through an initial PAFTACS or Sitrep so Comcen and the Regional Duty Coordinator (RDC) can support the incident appropriately.

This can be as simple as: "FCO Green is the Incident Controller."

**Consider** using Incident Controller tabards, vehicle magnets, fireground radio communications, WhatsApp groups or other local processes to clearly identify who is managing the incident.

#### **Establish Control - Identify. Resource. Sectorise.**

Know who is in control, think ahead and request support early, and share the workload by managing the incident as a team.

**Key Question:**

*Does everyone on the fireground know who the Incident Controller is?*

**2. Resource**

Think ahead and request support and resources early.

Once control has been established, consider the current and potential impacts of the incident and whether additional resources may be required. Consider:

- Additional appliances.
- Machinery.
- Aircraft.
- Asset Protection.
- Public Information and Warnings.
- Bushfire Liaison Officer support.

Support should be requested early. It is far easier to stand resources down if they are no longer required than it is to obtain additional resources during a rapidly escalating incident. Ensure Comcen receives timely PAFTACS and Sitreps so support requests can be actioned and resources mobilised as soon as possible.

**Key Question:**

*Do I have the resources I need now, and will I have the resources I need in two hours?*

**3. Sectorise**

Delegate and sectorise the fireground to help manage the incident as a team.

As incidents grow, it becomes increasingly difficult for one person to manage all aspects of the response. Consider assigning Fire Control Officers, Brigade Officers or experienced firefighters responsibility for different areas of the fireground. Examples may include:

- East Flank
- West Flank
- Asset Protection Sector
- Machinery Sector

Delegating responsibilities allows the Incident Controller to focus on the overall incident while maintaining situational awareness and supporting crews.

**Key Question:**

*Have I stepped back and looked at the whole incident, or am I still focused on putting out spot fires? Am I managing the fire, or am I just reacting to it?*

**The Two Tank Rule**

One practical trigger being adopted by several Local Governments is the **"Two Tank Rule"**.

If a Fire Control Officer is required to refill their firefighting appliance for a second time and the fire remains uncontrolled, consideration should be given to stepping back from direct firefighting activities and assuming the role of Incident Controller.

At this point the FCO should:

- **Identify** who is the Incident Controller and communicate it through a Sitrep to Comcen.
- **Resource** the incident by assessing current and future requirements and requesting support where needed.
- **Sectorise** the fireground by delegating responsibilities and sharing the workload.

**Establish Control - Identify. Resource. Sectorise.**

Know who is in control, think ahead and request support early, and share the workload by managing the incident as a team.

## PAFTACS

Providing timely incident information and Sitreps to DFES Comcen is critical to ensuring support can be coordinated effectively. The Regional Duty Coordinator (RDC) monitors incidents across the region and relies on accurate and timely information to assess risk, allocate resources and provide operational support. The earlier incident information is received, the sooner assistance can be coordinated and mobilised.

**Controlling Agencies are required to provide incident information to DFES Comcen in accordance with the State Hazard Plan – Fire. Timely reporting also enables DFES to provide appropriate resources, intelligence and operational support.**

**Sitreps** (As soon as practical)

**PAFTACS provides a structured format for communicating key incident information:**

**Position:** Confirm the fire location, direction of travel and any immediate threats to life, property or infrastructure.

**Area:** Estimated fire size.

**Fuel Type:** What is burning? For example, standing crop, stubble, bushland, plantation or scrub.

**Time to Control:** Is the fire controlled? If not, provide an estimated time to containment if known.

**Assistance Required:** Additional appliances, aircraft, machinery, DFES Officer, Incident Weather Forecast or other support requirements.

**Command and Control:** Who is the Incident Controller? Are sectors established? What radio channel is being used?

**Safety and Winds:** Safety concerns, powerlines, hazards, significant weather changes, and current wind strength and direction.

## Public Information and Warnings

As Incident Controllers, it is important that timely and accurate Public Information is provided. Being proactive with alerts and warnings can save lives.

| Bushfire Alerts and Warnings |                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Warning Level                | When to Issue Warning                                                                                                                        |
| ADVICE                       | There is an active incident in the area. There is no immediate danger. The Community needs to stay up to date in case the situation changes. |
| WATCH AND ACT                | There is a possible threat to lives and homes.<br>The Community needs to take actions now to stay safe.                                      |
| EMERGENCY WARNING            | There is an immediate threat to lives and homes.<br>The Community is in danger and need to take immediate action.                            |

### Issuing Alerts and Warnings

Bushfire alerts and warnings are issued through the **DFES Coordinator of Public Information**, who can assist Incident Controllers with the development, review and dissemination of warning messages.

A **Bushfire Warning Trigger Point Flow Chart** is available to assist Incident Controllers in determining the appropriate warning level and when warnings should be considered. This tool provides guidance on escalating community risk and supports timely decision-making.

If you are unsure whether an alert or warning is required, contact the **DFES Public Information Line** or the **Regional Duty Coordinator (RDC)** for advice. Early discussion is encouraged, as warnings can be developed and issued quickly if conditions deteriorate.

### Establish Control - Identify. Resource. Sectorise.

Know who is in control, think ahead and request support early, and share the workload by managing the incident as a team.



## Transfer of Control

Under the Bush Fires Act 1954 and the State Hazard Plan - Fire, Local Government is the Controlling Agency for bushfires occurring outside a Gazetted Fire District. In certain circumstances, control of an incident may be transferred to another agency.

### Reasons for Transferring Control

A transfer of control may be considered when:

- At the request of the Current Controlling Agency
- Beyond the capacity of the Controlling Agency
- Level 3 incident
- Complexity of the incident / multiple hazards
- Multiple local government areas
- DFES Officer authorised under section 13 of the Bush Fires Act 1954

### LG to DFES (Section 13)

A transfer of control to DFES can only occur under **Section 13 of the Bush Fires Act 1954** and requires authorisation by the DFES Duty Assistant Commissioner (DAC).

### The process involves:

1. Incident must be recorded (000), Incident sitrep and up to date details of incident provided to ComCen
2. The Current Incident Controller can request a DFES Bushfire Liaison Officer attend for support, if rapidly escalating incident and potential for a Level 2 Incident or if a Change of Control is going to be requested.
3. The Local Government CEO/CBFCO or the Incident Controller contacts the DFES RDC and requests a Transfer of Control (s13). A DFES BFLO at the incident can assist with this request and may speed up the process.
4. The RDC then puts request through the correct chain to the State Level.
5. The Change in Controlling Agency/s13 is accepted or declined by the Duty Assistant Commissioner, Controlling Agency advised of outcome.

**Important:** Local Government remains the Controlling Agency until a Section 13 transfer has been formally approved and communicated. A transfer of control is not automatic, and approval may not be granted in every circumstance.

### 4.1.4 Controlling Agencies

Controlling Agencies for fire suppression are determined by their area of responsibility in accordance with Western Australian legislation.

Where the response requirements exceed the owners and/or occupier's capabilities, the relevant Controlling Agency takes control in accordance with their legislative responsibilities.

Table 2: Initial controlling agencies

| Area of responsibility                                                                             | Initial Controlling Agency |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Within Gazetted Fire Districts                                                                     | DFES                       |
| On DBCA managed land outside Gazetted Fire Districts                                               | DBCA                       |
| Within local government districts outside of Gazetted Fire Districts and outside DBCA managed land | Local governments          |

### Establish Control - Identify. Resource. Sectorise.

Know who is in control, think ahead and request support early, and share the workload by managing the incident as a team.

#### **LG to DBCA (Section 45A)**

A transfer of control to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) may occur under **Section 45 of the Bush Fires Act 1954**, generally where the incident predominantly involves DBCA-managed land.

The Incident Controller may contact the DBCA Duty Officer directly or seek assistance from the RDC to facilitate the process.

**Note:** While this process occurs between Local Government and DBCA, DFES Comcen should still be notified and kept informed. **(Ensure this process is communicated to all and documented)**

#### **Fires on UCL/UMR and DBCA Tenure**

Operational debriefs have identified several instances where response actions were delayed because crews were uncertain about land tenure. Under the Bush Fires Act 1954, Bush Fire Brigades may enter land, reserves or other tenure areas to prevent the spread of fire, provided reasonable care is taken and landowners or occupiers are notified where practicable.

**Key Message:** Do not delay suppression activities while determining land tenure. Focus on preventing the spread of fire, communicate with relevant land managers as soon as practicable.

### **Asset Protection and Incidents Requiring Additional Capability**

#### **Asset Protection**

Asset Protection involves the deployment of specialist resources to protect homes, critical infrastructure and other assets threatened by fire.

If property or critical infrastructure is likely to be impacted, Asset Protection should be considered early and requested through DFES Comcen or the Regional Duty Coordinator (RDC). Where assets are under threat, Incident Controllers should also consider community warnings and Emergency WA messaging.

**Key Message:** Request Asset Protection early. It is easier to stand resources down than source specialist capabilities during an escalating incident.

#### **Incidents Requiring Additional Capability**

Some incidents may require specialist capabilities not normally available within local bushfire resources, including:

- Vehicle fires
- House and structure fires
- Rubbish fires
- Lithium-ion battery incidents
- Incidents requiring Breathing Apparatus (BA)

Where a capability gap exists, the Incident Controller should request FRS/FES resources through DFES Comcen. Attendance is not automatic and should be specifically requested.

**Note:** BA operations generally require a minimum of two appropriately equipped crews to maintain firefighter safety.

**Key Message:** If specialist capabilities are required, identify the need early and request support through Comcen. Early requests improve resource availability and incident outcomes.

#### **Establish Control - Identify. Resource. Sectorise.**

Know who is in control, think ahead and request support early, and share the workload by managing the incident as a team.

## **DFES Support for BFBs/LGs**

### **Regional Duty Coordinator**

The DFES Regional Duty Coordinator (RDC) is responsible for maintaining situational awareness across the region and coordinating support to incidents as required. The RDC monitors regional risk, reviews operational conditions, manages on-call arrangements and may activate additional resources during periods of elevated fire danger.

The RDC relies on timely and accurate incident information to assess risk and coordinate support. For this reason, Incident Controllers and Controlling Agencies should ensure PAFTACS, Sitreps and incident updates are provided to DFES Comcen as early as possible.

### **Other Support Available**

| <b>Support/Request:</b>                               | <b>Who to Contact:</b>    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Air Support                                           | Comcen or RDC             |
| Alerts and Warnings                                   | Public Information or RDC |
| Incident Weather Forecasts                            | Comcen                    |
| Fire Predictions                                      | Comcen or RDC             |
| Additional Resources                                  | Comcen                    |
| Bushfire Liaison Officer                              | Comcen or RDC             |
| Mobilising Regional Starlink or Mobile WAERN repeater | RDC                       |
| Machinery                                             | LG 1st, Then RDC          |

## **Requesting Aviation Services / Air Support**

It is important to paint a picture of the incident and push information up to the DFES Comcen. This is where those initial sitreps are important. As we can start mobilising resources early.

As these resources cover the whole state, we are unable to have them at every incident. When requesting Air support there are set Criteria. One or more of these criteria should be met. This allows the state the ability to mobilise and prioritising Air Support requests.

### **Criteria for requesting:**

- Public safety at risk
- Fire crews in imminent Danger
- Assets at imminent risk
- Known high fuel loads and excessive rate of Spread or Extreme FBI

### **Air Support requests can be made to:**

- Comcen during a Sitrep or Incident Update
- Direct to the Regional Duty Coordinator

### **When requesting Air Support, ComCen or RDC will request the following information:**

- Incident Controller
- Criteria for Requesting (above)
- Ground Controller

### **Establish Control - Identify. Resource. Sectorise.**

Know who is in control, think ahead and request support early, and share the workload by managing the incident as a team.





# Bushfire Operations Committee Communique

**Meeting date:** Friday, 27 June 2025

**Location:** Gosnells Emergency Operations Centre, Beckenham

## CBFCO Forum 2025

*Presentation by Great Southern member Rob Lynn*

- The Chief Bush Fire Control Officers (CBFCO) forum was held over 3 days from 11 to 13 June 2025 at the Bushfire Centre of Excellence, with a similar format to the previous forum two years ago.
- Approx 70 Chiefs, their deputies or nominated members attended.
- The opportunity for deputies and up and coming volunteers to attend, was well received and provided an opportunity to enhance understanding.
- There was considerable interaction with Chiefs in the lead up to the conference to determine suitable dates and importantly to identify subjects of interest to be covered.
- Local Government/LGIS panel session demonstrated the essential role of LG's and was very well received.
- The Keynote address by David Nugent was also a highlight of the event.
- There were excellent networking opportunities throughout, encouraging collaboration and the chance to share experiences and lessons learnt.

## Level 1 PPC Washing accessibility and 4.4 Fleet Reduction

*Presentation by DFES Asset Design and Fleet Delivery Superintendent Ryan Murray*

- The Assets Operational Fleet and Facilities Feedback form has been implemented to gather input and identify issues with current operational fleet, equipment on fleet, facilities and personal protective clothing (PPC). The QR code is now up and running through the Volunteer hub. QR code stickers will be distributed to all local governments with a letter to advise of the implementation.
- Washing Machines are an LGGS eligible item and Level 1 PPC (tunic and cargo pants) are approved for laundering on station. The difference in performance, cost and durability of domestic versus industrial washing machines was noted in discussion.
- The Fleet update included Increases to build costs, Replacement timeframes, Tanker capability updates and Tanker updates.
- Discussions included the option of LGs applying to meet criteria for certain vehicle specifications and the use of the Resource to Risk process in determining need.
- There are currently four 4.4 Tanker types with an additional four options. The cost of updating four specifications is considerable. The BOC were requested to consider the reduction of 4.4 Tanker Types, taking into consideration the cost of the Tatra is 1.5 times more expensive than the Isuzu.
- It was agreed by consensus to the removal of the 4.4 Tanker Iveco chassis type.

## AFDRS 'End of Season' Update

*Presentation by DFES Bushfire Technical Services Director Jackson Parker*

AFDRS system improvements included:

- AFDRS biannual fuel type refinement updates:
  - Integration of Crop/Pasture cover dataset from Digital Agricultural Services (DAS) for the fuel type map.
  - Refined Fuel type interpolation method implemented in Fuel State Editor – now based on dominant fuel type.
  - Model updates for Shrubland (heathland) and Malee Heath.
- Fire Danger Viewer improvements included single sign on alleviating access issues, themed menus, set up bookmarks, downloadable Meteograms (graphs), and new layers.
- Grassland observer app for mobiles allows offline observations.
- Increase to Cameras and weather stations.
- The number of observations and queries have dropped over the 3 year period suggesting less anomalies in the system with continuous enhancements.

## Volunteer medical cover - LGIS

*Item raised by BOC Deputy Chair Craig Stewart & guest attendance by Carrisa Chung LGIS representative*

- The need for clarification on volunteer medical cover for both PTSD and Cancers was raised following media reports on a volunteer who's medical was deemed to not be covered.
- Carrisa Chung the LGIS Portfolio Manager for WorkCare and Bushfire Volunteers was able to provide the following clarification on cover for Local government Bushfire Volunteers.
  - Part 6B Compensation for injury, loss or damage under Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998, s36ZM injury has the meaning given the Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 2023.
  - Injury is either a personal injury or a disease, or the recurrence, aggravation, or acceleration of pre-existing disease. If a volunteer suffers a psychological injury (PTSD) which is proven to be arising from their activities as a brigade volunteer, it is highly probable this would be a compensable claim.
  - Presumptive PTSD for brigade volunteers presumes that all PTSD claims are related to their brigade activities. Should this occur, the remaining Australia reinsurer has indicated that they will need to review the conditions of cover including reduction in limits.
  - Presumptive disease (cancers) is listed in the Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 2023 and Workers Compensation and Injury Management Regulations 2024. Each cancer has a corresponding qualifying period prescribed by regulations for that cancer. Each cancer has a corresponding qualifying period prescribed by regulations for that cancer.
  - To meet the eligibility criteria the claimant is required to have 5 consecutive years of attending hazardous fires during their whole of service. Hazardous fires rely upon subject matter experts to ascertain the nature of the fires attended.
  - This must also be supported by the attendance of hazardous fire report provided by DFES and local governments. Note initial reports of attendance at hazardous fires from local governments are generally limited in information and have to be



supported by DFES data. Good record keeping practices is vital as it assists with the claim management process.

- The list of presumptive diseases (cancers) is applicable to diseases contracted whilst undertaking firefighting activities in Western Australia. There is currently no precedent on presumptive cancers contracted whilst volunteering in the other States.
- For further information Carrisa can be contacted at [WorkCare@lgiswa.com.au](mailto:WorkCare@lgiswa.com.au)

## LGGS Working Group

*Presentation by BOC Deputy Chair Craig Stewart*

- The working group's LGGS interim report was circulated to the members for feedback.
- The report focuses on the five topics taken from the previous WALGA submission and audit reports. The recommendations from those reports are still current.
- Report common themes:
  - Inequities of overspend and underspend
  - The importance of the CESM role and their impact on outcomes and equity
- The final report will now be escalated through DFES to inform the LGGS reform project currently underway, noting that this is a live document and further changes will occur as required.

## Doctrine support for Local Governments

*Presentation by DFES Bushfire Centre of Excellence Chief Superintendent John Tillman*

- LG access to doctrine is currently being addressed. LG and WALGA identified an inability to access DFES doctrine, procedures and guidelines.
- At the request of LG CEOs that participated in the 2024 and 2025 WALGA Bushfire Management Roundtables, DFES Bushfire Centre of Excellence has developed a summary of doctrine relevant to LGs administering BFBs, to enable LGs to consider, adopt or adapt as local policy/procedures. This was widely supported by LG CEOs.
- The summary of DFES doctrine has been categorised as:
  - Directly relevant to LGs
  - LG to consider relevance
  - LG awareness
- The summary of DFES doctrine relevant to LGs was included with the agenda for the BOC's review.
- Th BOC endorsed the proposal to communicate the Doctrine summary to LG CEOs and facilitate access to the relevant DFES Doctrine.

## Sector Commander Training and Level 1 IC Course review

*Item raised by Metropolitan DOAC member Chris Wells*

- Information on course changes provided by DFES Learning and Development Team (CLaD)
- The new Sector Commander course is now available to volunteers. It is a full 2 day course with an additional 90min assessment for each student to be booked in post course.
- The new volunteer pathways will be implemented in the coming month to show the new courses and pre-requisites.
- The New Map Interpretation (online) (the old pre-course to Sector Commander) is available to all volunteers to be completed any time prior to Sector Commander.

- The SME group for Sector commander comprised of current trainer assessors and Operations Officers of both Fire and Natural Hazards and they provided the information and context for the package. The package was designed to fill gaps in training that have been identified at incidents by Operations Officers and DIV commanders.
- The SME group met multiple times Face to Face but the majority of the content was reviewed and compiled on a Teams site throughout the review.
- Proposed changes to volunteer pathways, pre-requisites and trainers qualifications took a lot of time to be approved and are still ongoing. The old course was still available to deliver up until the day it rolled over to the new course. Some regions chose to not teach the old one due to the aged content and instead waited for the new one.
- The first course will be delivered on the 19th July, CLaD will be asking for feedback and finalising delivery time frames. They will look at feedback over the next two seasons and make any changes required. It is hoped to bring it back to 2 days face to face in the long run and hope to streamline it into a new version in a year or two.
- Incident Controller Level 1 will undergo a rewrite; and it is hoped to split the current 4 day course into two 2 day courses to make it easier for volunteers to attend.
- The new IC1 package will focus on strategic incident management rather than tactical which is now covered in the new Sector Commander package.
- The new courses are still in early draft and may take a year or two to finalise. First two days (Incident Management Level 1) second block of 2 days will be hazard specific Incident Controller Level 1
- There will be multiple scenarios and activities; and include discussions on Legislation, Handover of control, Section 13, Incident level declarations, preparing for Level 2, Road Closures (Police Requests), Liaisons, Fatigue, Welfare, Safety and Media and warnings, Reinstatement, demob, and handover.
- Practical tools to help identify escalation triggers, manage key stakeholders, and make timely, informed decisions at this incident level. As we all know every incident starts as a Level 1 until it becomes a Level 2 so although once you get to FCO/DCBFCO/CBFCO level you might need a high level of understanding on how to run an escalating or complex high end Level 1 considering moving into L2 territory.
- The BOC discussed both training packages and raised concerns with lack of volunteer consultation during the development of the new Sector Commander training package, with the higher level of course content, the increased course length and added complexity, with regions tailoring the course to suit their needs. Discussion on Level 1 IC included the suggestion to section the course to reflect the different levels of Level 1 incidents.
- Agreement to escalate this feedback through the Training Advisory Group.

## Western Power Pole Top Fires

*Item raised by Mid-West Gascoyne member Ben Plozza*

- Significant number of Western Power pole top fire incidents and the risk to landowners as incident managers for Western Power pole top fires. Noting the impact to their business and personal safety and the protracted response required to mitigate reignition.
- This ongoing issue will be escalated to Western Power through DFES.

The next BOC meeting will be scheduled for October 2025.



**SBAC**  
State Bushfire Advisory Council

## COMMUNIQUE

The State Bushfire Advisory Council (SBAC) met at the DFES Bushfire Centre of Excellence in Nambeelup for their second quarterly meeting of 2025.

### Bushfire Places of Last Resort (BPLR)

At their last meeting, the SBAC provided feedback recommending further preliminary engagement was needed prior to progression of the BPLR Guidelines and process. The project team provided an update on the development of the guidelines following further stakeholder engagement.

Next steps will include policy development and testing with key stakeholders and a 14 week consultation period on the draft BPLR guidelines. The SBAC noted the progress of work and proposed next steps.

### Strategic Priorities working group update

The working group met in mid-May to discuss and agree updates to the workbook items following the planning session at the March SBAC meeting. The updated workbook was circulated to Council for comment prior to the meeting. The Chair noted a number of today's agenda items have been progressed from the Workbook.

The Minister for Emergency Services has recently issued an updated Statement of Expectations which includes a revised list of SBAC priorities. The Chair advised the updated priorities as follows:

- Facilitate constructive consultation on the Consolidated Emergency Services Bill.
- Oversee the development of guidelines and processes for Places of Last Resort in Bushfire Prone Areas.
- Ensure consistent processes for bushfire mitigation on Rail Corridors.
- Development of a discussion paper to inform advocacy options for improving accessibility and affordability of Insurance cover for bushfire mitigation.

The SBAC will update their workplan to include the Minister's priorities.

### Fuel Management Activities Report overview

The DFES Office of Bushfire Risk Management provided an overview of their Annual Fuel Management Activities report. This report surveys key stakeholders from State Government, local governments and private land managers on their fuel management programs and activities.

In 2023-24, 110 organisations reported on their fuel management programs, collectively describing 8.3 million hectares of planned burning and 22116ha and 3825 kms of other fuel management activities.

The SBAC noted the presentation and will schedule invitations to organisations identified in the report to present on their fuel management activities.



## Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) 'end of season' update

The presentation by Bushfire Technical Services included AFDRS system improvements including:

- AFDRS biannual fuel type refinement updates:
  - Integration of Crop/Pasture cover dataset from Digital Agricultural Services (DAS) for the fuel type map;
  - Refined Fuel type interpolation method implemented in Fuel State Editor – now based on dominant fuel type;
  - Model updates for Shrubland (heathland) and Malee Heath;
- Fire Danger Viewer improvements included single sign on alleviating access issues, themed menus, set up bookmarks, downloadable Meteograms (graphs), and new layers;
- Grassland observer app for mobiles, allowing offline observations.
- An increase in number of remote Cameras and weather stations to assist with observations.

The number of observations and queries have dropped over the 3 year period, suggesting less anomalies in the system with continuous enhancements.

The SBAC noted the improvements to the system and reduction in anomalies and queries and closed this item on their workplan.

## The Yamatji Nation Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) - Strategic Work Priority

The SBAC members received a comprehensive overview of the Yamatji Nation Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) which covers some 48,000 square kms of land in the State's mid-west region. It was noted that the implementation of this ILUA would eventually see the creation of a new Yamatji Land Estate, comprised of some 14,500 ha freehold land and a further 134,000 ha of Crown land, with the first 10 of some 1,386 identified land parcels having already been transferred to Yamatji control.

The SBAC noted the need to ensure relevant provisions being transitioned from the existing Bushfires Act 1954 to the consolidated emergency services legislation under development had been suitably updated to reflect the vast new land estates to emerge from the implementation of the Yamatji Nation ILUA and other similar agreements to follow.

The SBAC agreed to consider the way Crown land in occupation will be dealt with going forward, and develop a suitable policy model which supports a seamless transition of fire mitigation responsibilities as land is progressively transferred from State Government control, whilst also ensuring ongoing community confidence in associated arrangements.

The next SBAC quarterly meeting is scheduled for 9 September 2025 at the offices of the Dept of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

For SBAC related information or enquiries, please email [RuralFire@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:RuralFire@dfes.wa.gov.au)

### 7.09.26 NEXT MEETING & CLOSURE

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2027.

There being no further business, the Chief Bushfire Control Officer Travis Eva declared the meeting closed at 7:15pm.