Shire of Brookton

# MINUTES

## Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting

Held on **Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 7:00pm**
West Brookton Fire Shed
York-Williams Road, Brookton

These minutes were confirmed by Bushfire Advisory Committee as true and correct record of proceedings by the Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 27/ 8 /25

**Presiding Member:** ..... **Date:** 27 August 2025

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## 1.03.25 DECLARATION OF OPENING/ATTENDANCE

The Presiding Member Cr Cr McCabe opened the meeting at 7:00pm 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 L McCabe

Elected Members (Non-Voting)

| | |
|---|---|
| Cr K Crute | Shire President |

Committee Members (Voting)

| | |
|---|---|
| Murray Hall | Chief Bushfire Control Officer |
| Travis Eva | Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer |
| Blair Montague | Central Brigade |
| Brad Bassett | Central Brigade |
| Ashley Hobbs | Central Brigade |
| Shanahan Fowler | East Brigade |
| Darrell Turner | East Brigade |
| Jarrad Turner | East Brigade |
| Michael Eva | East Brigade |
| Tim Evans | West Brigade |
| Holly Blechynden | West Brigade |
| Len Simmons | West Brigade |

Staff (Non-Voting)

| | |
|---|---|
| Gary Sherry | Chief Executive Officer |
| Sandie Spencer | Executive Governance Officer |
| Jason Carrall | Community Emergency Services Manager |

Other Agencies

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

Apologies

| | |
|---|---|
| Cr de Lange | Deputy President |
| Bevan Walters | East Brigade |
| Scott Atkins | Brookton Volunteer Fire Rescue Service |

## 2.03.25 CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

***BFAC 03.25-01***
***BFAC RESOLUTION***
***MOVED M Hall SECONDED T Eva***

***That the Minutes of the Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting held in the Shire of Brookton Council Chambers, on 27th August 2025, be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.***

***CARRIED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE***

## 3.03.25 PRESENTATIONS

Nil.

## 4.03.25. APPOINTMENT OF FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS

In 2024/25 the Shire of Brookton made the following appointments permit writing Fire Control Officers.

| Position | Appointment |
|---|---|
| Chief Bush Fire Control Officer | Murray Hall |
| Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer | Travis Eva |
| FCO's – Central Brigade | Anton de Lange, Troy Bassett, Brad Bassett. |
| FCO's – East Brigade | Bevan Walters, Michael Eva. |
| FCO's – West Brigade | Tim Evans, Mark Whittington. |
| FCO – Shire of Brookton | Jason Carrall |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Beverley | |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Corrigin | |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Pingelly | |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Wandering | |

The Shire of Brookton request that the Shire CEO and Ms Jennie Mason be appointed Fire Control Officer, with limits to conduct Fire Break and other enforcement activities.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That the BFAC recommend that the Shire of Brookton make the following appointments for the 2025/26 fire season.

| Position | Nominee(s) |
|---|---|
| Chief Bush Fire Control Officer | |
| Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer | |
| FCO's – Central Brigade | |
| FCO's – East Brigade | |
| FCO's – West Brigade | |
| FCO – Shire of Brookton | |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Beverley | |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Corrigin | |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Pingelly | |
| Dual FCO – Shire of Wandering | |

***BFAC 03.25-02***

***BFAC RESOLUTION***

***MOVED M Hall SECONDED B Bassett***

***That the Bushfire Advisory Committee recommend that the Shire of Brookton:***

1. ***make the following Fire Control Officer appointments for the 2025/26 fire season, subject to that all nominees satisfy the completion of the Fire Control Officer course.***

| *Position* | *Nominee(s)* |
|---|---|
| *Chief Bush Fire Control Officer* | *Travis Eva* |
| *Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer* | *Tim Evans*<br>*Brad Bassett* |
| *FCO's – Central Brigade* | *Blair Montague, Anton de Lange, Troy Bassett, Brad Bassett, Andrew Pike, Ashley Hobbs and Murray Hall, Neville Messenger.* |
| *FCO's – East Brigade* | *Bevan Walters, Travis Eva, Darrell Turner, Michael Eva, Jarrad Turner* |
| *FCO's – West Brigade* | *Tim Egans, Mark Whittington, Len Simmons, Ross Evans, Trystan Guiness and Toby Blechynden.* |
| *FCO – Shire of Brookton* | *Jason Carrall* |
| *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, Neville Messenger* |
| *Dual FCO – Shire of Wandering* | *Tim Evans* |
| *Fire Weather Officers* | *Travis Eva – CBFCO*<br>*Tim Evans – Deputy 1*<br>*Brad Bassett – Deputy 2* |

2. ***appoint the Shire CEO and Ms Jennie Mason be appointed Fire Control Officers with limits on their appointment to only conduct Fire Break inspections and other Bush Fire Act enforcement activities.***

***CARRIED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE***

## 5.03.25 GENERAL BUSINESS

### 5.03.25.01 FIRE BREAK NOTICE & ENFORCEMENT - 2024/25

The Shire CEO outlined enforcement process in 2024/25 including:

1. Inspection
2. Letters issued to potential non-compliance properties requiring action in 14 days to meet compliance;
3. Re-Inspection of potential non-compliance properties;
4. Issue infringement to non-compliant properties and letter requiring compliance or Shire will respond; and
5. Shire completing on-ground activities.

| | Inspected | Letters issued | Infringements issued | Non-Compliant |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Residential | 415 | 36 | 3 | 1 |
| Rural | 89 | 37 | 10 | 0 |

### 5.03.25.02 FIRE BREAK NOTICE & ENFORCEMENT - REQUIREMENT FOR INSPECTIONS

FCOs (and only FCOs) have authority under Section 14 of Bush Fires Act to enter land for the purposes of the Act.

Volunteer FCOs and the Shire CESM don't have time to inspect fire breaks in November.

Therefore there is a requirement to have either a staff member/or Shire Contractor appointed as a FCO with limits to review fire break order compliance. This allows the staff member/or Shire Contractor to have the authority to enter property to inspect fire breaks.

**Bush Fires Act**

**14. Certain persons may enter land or building for purposes of Act**

(1) A person employed in the Department who is authorised by the FES Commissioner so to do, a bush fire liaison officer and a **bush fire control officer, designated or appointed in accordance with the provisions of this Act**, and, subject to subsection (1A), a member of the Police Force, is empowered to enter any land or building at any time to—

- (a) examine a fire which he has reason to believe has been lit, or maintained, or used in contravention of this Act;
- (b) examine a fire which he believes is not under proper control;
- **(c) examine fire breaks on the land;**
- **(d) examine anything which he considers to be a fire hazard existing on the land;**
- (e) investigate the cause and origin of a fire which has been burning on the land or building;
- **(f) inspect fire precaution measures taken on the land;**
- (g) investigate and examine the equipment of a bush fire brigade;
- **(h) do all things necessary for the purpose of giving effect to this Act.**

(1A) Despite subsection (1), a member of the Police Force is not empowered under this section to enter any land or building for any purpose other than those specified in subsection (1)(a), (b) and (e).

(2) A bush fire liaison officer or a member of the Police Force exercising the power conferred by subsection (1)(e) may remove from the land or building, and keep possession of, anything which may tend to prove the origin of the fire.

## 5.03.25.03 HARVEST AND VEHICLE MOVEMENT BANS

The meeting discussed weather conditions and if they are adequate for the Shire of Brookton and clarification on what a harvest and vehicle movement ban (HVMB) means.

**Agreed - BFI of 40 is a good indicator of the level required to impose a HVMB.**

## 5.03.25.04 TOTAL FIRE BAN

The meeting discussed the meaning of a total fire ban to members and the community.

## 5.03.25.05 MITIGATION BURNING

Jason Carrall outlined planned mitigation burning to take place for the Waste Disposal Site, Golf Club and site on Lennard Street, Brookton.

- Waste Disposal Site – Commence Friday 28th March 2025 and continue of the weekend. Roleystone to assist.
- Golf Course – before 12th April 2025.

## 5.03.25.06 APPLIANCE MAINTENANCE – AFTER INCIDENT

At a recent incident, a fire appliance turned out with no water in tank.

- Ensure appliances are filled with water.
- Tyres damage, pressure.
- Pumps have fuel.
- Appliance is fuelled.

Travis Eva requested the Shire investigate the purchase of a Turret Engineering foot valve. This equipment allows the pumping of water from very shallow dams/streams.

## 5.03.25.07 BALCO – HARVEST AND VEHICLE MOVEMENT BAN

Cr McCabe enquired about the HVMB for Balco. As his understanding that there was an agreement in place in 2010 that permitted trucks to be unloaded at the hardstand into A shed and B shed, a lot has changed in the last 15 years at Balco with more sheds and changed location of hardstand for container loading, there seems to be a lack of records kept on lots of things by Balco, the Shire and DFES and there are concerns that neighbouring farmers, Balco, the Shire and DFES all have different ideas of what the current arrangement is.

Cr McCabe would like to see it discussed with a clear outline on a map as well as what the conditions are (for example a spotter manning a fire unit).

- Jason Carrall to organise a site visit with the Chief Bushfire Control Officer to inspect the Balco site.
- CEO outlined that other rural industrial operations have Fire Management Plans under their Shire Development Approval. Balco is one such operation. The Shire of Brookton does not have good records of the approved Fire Management Plans and needs to approach the operations to renew the plans.

## 6.03.25 REPORTS

## 6.03.25.01 CHIEF BUSHFIRE CONTROL OFFICER – MURRAY HALL

Mr Murray Hall delivered his final report as Chief Bushfire Control Officer.

2024/25 so far has seen most of our larger campaigns being contributions to neighbouring shires.
The Fire season in Autumn 2024 extended with restricted season extended until May 5 where rain across the Shire saw conditions ease. There were more permits written than most seasons given the extension.

This enabled some of the heaviest fuel loads to be reduced by pre planned mitigation in the recreation reserve near the country club very successfully. Careful burn plan saw very little scorch on large vegetation and shouldn't stimulate heavy grass understory. Thankyou Jason Carrol CESM in the groundwork.

There was a burn carried out before the rain nearby, by private operators under permit that caused discussion around the intensity of the burn and potential risk. This stimulated a review of how permits are issued across the Shire. FCO's are requested to refresh their FCO training now and we have had a pre-restricted season meeting to set out some base guidelines on permits minimums with two templates created for low and higher risk periods.

We welcomed the opening of the Brand-New West Brigade on 13th September 2024. Unfortunately, I was an apology for the opening of the shed, but it was well attended by all accounts. This will be a great asset to the West Brigade and bringing the 2 trucks together in a central location is already seeing more efficient deployment of the trucks and volunteer support. The well-set offices and kitchen has been well utilised since and has created a great community networking centre. Thank you to Shire of Brookton and their staff facilitating the build and liaising with DFES over funding and fitting out.

The East Brigade is well on the way to receiving their shed – I would hope that its ready for the upcoming Fire season.

Prior to these Brigade sheds being built the trucks were kindly hosted by the Roberts Family and Craig Family out West and the Turner Family out East. I extend my personal thanks to these people for their generous contribution to our volunteer network.

The return into the Spring Restricted season saw rangers conducting extensive inspections or rural with a range of fire break compliance and some infringements.
Thank you to those that put the efforts in to make yourselves safe and assists firefighters immensely if they must defend property.

We purchase FLIR handheld thermal cameras – these were put to significant use at the Pike fire and rubbish tip fire. Andrew Pike and Ash Hobbs put some valuable time in calibrating one to better suit our vegetation types. Again tested at the local tip fire.

As stated last year I will retire this year as Chief.

It has been a privilege to be Chief and have been supported by fantastic volunteers who are the backbone of our defence of any situation either fire and other incidents that require a

group of dedicated, organised and hard working volunteers. I've watched generation of firefighters retire and seen many more be recruited.

I often watch a fire ground from a vantage point for decision making and communications and am always humbled by the bravery, dedication, sweat and skill that is on show. There are many people that contribute in all areas in an event – from those at front line, others at fill stations, others at road blocks and some thinking about sustenance and drinks for crew all the way to the less active that offer to fuel and clean a trucks after a campaign.

I would like to also thank the Shire of Brookton that have supported our volunteers and funded and woven through the various legislation and Community requirements.

We have grown immensely under the current administration and council with the engagement of the position of a CESM , fire shed built, equipment replaced and kept up in 1st class condition. Gary and his staff never hesitate to put aside time for me or our members if there are issues to be delt with and we have a great rapport with councillors and a special mention to President Katrina Crute along with Gary Sherry canvasing Government Minsters and DFES to secure the position of CESM for Brookton Pingelly and Corrigin. This position bought in CESM Jason Carrall who has been , fantastic in his roll hitting the ground in mitigation work all around the shire and adding essential equipment, catching up brigade compliance in everything from uniforms to training. Not to mention attracting funding for the two new fire sheds just built and soon to be built.

During my tenure there has been a huge change in the fire landscape. Be-it legislation, (communications esp., phones, Apps, social media) evolving weather, (the days are hotter for longer with more wind – or maybe I'm showing some softness as years roll on) equipment, farming practices and community engagement.

But somethings never change.

- Fire is life threating dangerous and challenges the best when affected.
- Volunteer Firefighters are resolute at their attack on fire and their bravery and effort is never in question.
- Never forgetting the families and partners that are left at home wondering of the safety of their volunteer partners.
- And the victims of fire where we strive to limit damage.

I am proud to have served in a fantastic Community.

**6.03.25.02 DEPUTY CHIEF BUSHFIRE CONTROL OFFICER – TRAVIS EVA**

Mr Travis Eva thanked Murray for his 13 years of service as Chief Bushfire Control Officer. Murray has been a wealth of knowledge and Murray's experience cannot be replaced.

**6.03.25.03 WEST BRIGADE – CAPTAIN: TIM EVANS**

Tim Evans thanked Murray for his service.

This year the West Brigade:

- had the opening of the new Fire Station;
- attended 6 fires. Having a centrally located Station has made an incredible difference for access.

- Are waiting for the Fire Station carpark completion. This is planned for to occur with works on the York Williams Road.
- Is concerned about the vegetation encroachment and washouts on rural roads. Tim will provide a list to CEO.
- the West Brigade holding funds for other brigades for the completion of fire mitigation works.

The West Brigade has made the following appointments:

Captain – Tim Evans
Vice-Captain – Cullum Pech
FCO's – Tim Evans, Mark Whittington, Len Simmons, Ross Evans, Toby Blechynden, Trystan Guinness.
Lieutenants – Eric Pech, Rick Meecham, Peter Brechin, Mark Blechynden.

**6.03.25.04 CENTRAL BRIGADE – CAPTAIN**

The Central Brigade has made the following appointments:

Captain – Blair Montague
FCO's – Troy Bassett, Brad Bassett,

Central Brigade Captain Blair Montague:

- Thanked Anton de Lange for his time serving as Captain;
- Thanked Murray Hall for his service and mentoring of volunteers.

**6.03.25.05 EAST BRIGADE**

Central Brigade Vice - Captain Jarrad Turner advised of the following appointments:

Captain – Bevan Walters
Vice-Captain – Jarrad Turner
FCO's – Bevan Walters, Travis Eva, Darrell Turner, Jarrad Turner, Dennis Wilkinson, Michael Eva
BFAC proxy – Jarrad Turner

Jarrad Turner advised that:

The East Brigade had had a quieter year. Only 2 incidents. One was a Header fire and the other was a deliberate rubbish bin fire in the truck bay.

This year the East Brigade:

- was on stand-by a few times.
- Some members were busy assisting surrounding area callouts.
- Still waiting for fire shed to be completed. Will be more convenient for member hands-on training days in the future.
- Had concerns with security of the new fire station. The shed erectors installed their own surveillance after the first night.
- Suggested that Aldersyde water tanks at CBH have satellite water level monitoring installed. This would allow easy monitoring. The Brigade still has concern on reliability of water supply security in fire season when the tank is deemed community use.
- Had concerns that the fire mitigation around Aldersyde townsite was done too late in the season. CESM acknowledge that the DFES planned mitigation was not carried out and discussion had already occurred with DFES to ensure that this did happen this year.

## 6.03.25.06 DFES – BEN DAVIES AREA OFFICER

**Busy Fire Season** - There has been many Fires across the region, many of which have been controlled quickly by the efforts of Local Government Bushfire Brigades and Farm Response. There have been a few incidents where the Department of Fire and Emergency Services have provided assistance and assumed control under Section 13 of the Bushfires Act 1954 due to the size and scale of incidents.

- **Thank you for the Assistance** – Thank you to all crews who have attended fires in and outside of there normal area of responsibility. These include Hastings, Dunleath and West Arthur fires on top of your own busy season.
- **Debriefing** - Post these incidents the Local Crews, Leaders and DFES Officers have conducted After Action Reviews.

A few Key Points relevant to the BFAC following those After-Action Reviews:

- **Operation Information Flow –** Ensuring that Sitreps and Incident information are being communicated to the DFES Comcen (first 15 mins), the quicker they get information the better informed we are, and we can ensure you are being supported and resources appropriately.
- **Personal Protective Equipment –** Please ensure BFB members and Volunteers have Personal Protective Equipment and Clothing issued to them and they are wearing it at incidents.
- **AIIMS Training and IMT (Incident Management Team) –** One of the key themes out of a few debriefs have been around IMT structures and when to start delegating functions and roles. One process that some Shires are implementing is the 2 tanks rule for FCO's. Meaning if an FCO is having to leave the fire ground to fill their fire unit up and the fire is still not contained or controlled, then that FCO should step back and assume the role of an Incident Controller and start delegating some tasks and functions, as other FCOs should be doing the same.
- **Training Standards** - Ensuring you have training members to undertake key tasks and roles such as Incident Controller and Sector Commanders.
- **Communication** – A few Challenges around communication in remote areas, use of WAERN radios and Comms plans – pre-set sectors and use of command channel key.
- **Cross Border Arrangements** – Establishing Cross Border Arrangements with neighbouring Local Government Areas prior to an incident starting.
- **BFB/FCO Powers** – There has been a few instances where fires have not actioned due to Brigades not knowing whose land it is, ie. being in a reserve or near DBCA land, Under the Bushfires Act 1954, the Bushfire Brigade can enter tenure and property to prevent the spread of fire as long as they are taking due care and informing the property owners of attendance.
- **Handing over Incidents** – Incidents that occur outside of the Gazetted Fire District (Townsite) are the responsibility of the Local Government; these fires are managed under the Bushfires Act 1954, however, if the Fire is in DBCA Land a Section 45 can be completed for DBCA to manage. This process needs to involve the LG IC and DBCA . Section 13 is the same process to go from LG to DFES.

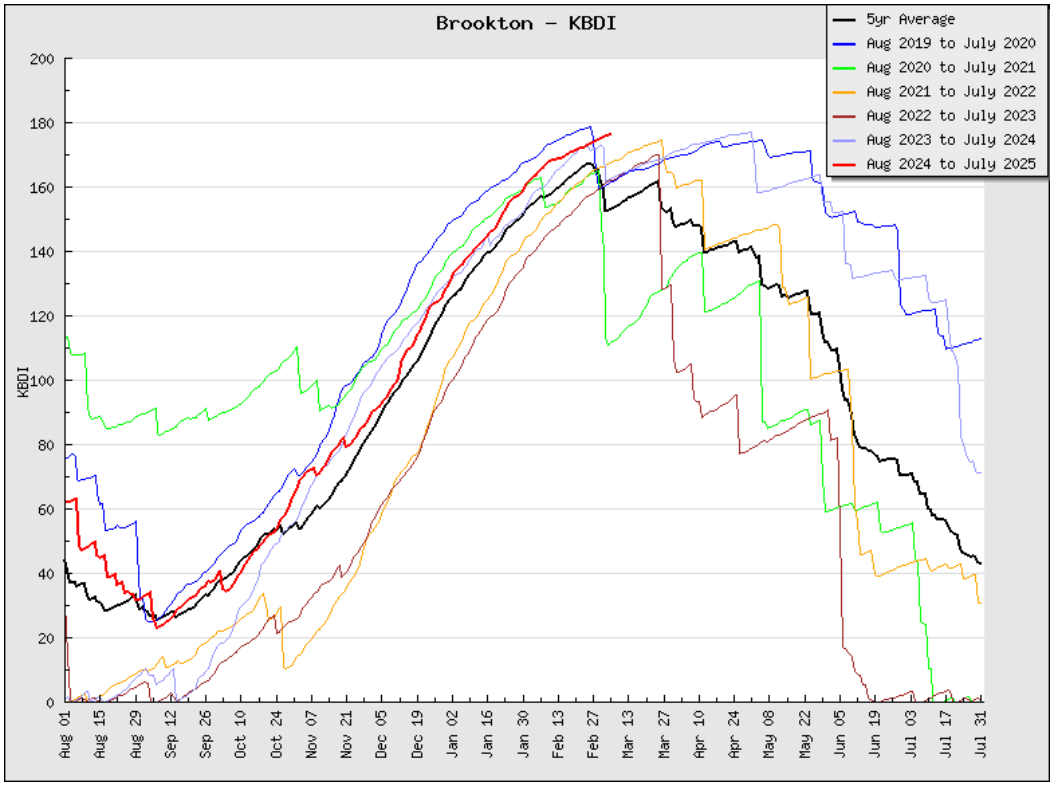
  Here are some of the reasons a Fire can be handed over for the following reasons:
  - At the request of the Current Controlling Agency
  - It's Beyond the capacity of the current Controlling Agency
  - It's a Complex Incident
  - Over multiple Local Government Areas

**Seasonal Outlook**

**KBDI Graph** - The Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) is a numerical value reflecting the dryness of the top layer of soils, deep forest litter, logs and living vegetation. The KBDI is expressed as a scale from 0–200, where the number represents the amounts of rainfall (in millimetres) to return the soil to saturation.

The index is calculated daily using:

- the areas mean annual rainfall
- the maximum temperature for the day
- the previous 24 hours' rainfall
- the previous day's drought index value.




**Review of Brookton's KBDI** – With the current Graph and Seasonal conditions it appears the soil dryness is well above the 5 year average and would require an additional 10+mm of rain in the landscape to bring the current soil dryness to the 5 year average. For Reference the region will generally enter High Threat Period when the Scale reaches 120mm and generally exits HTP around 120mm.

**Additional Updates**

- **Local Government Grant Scheme** – Reminder for Local Governments that Submissions due 28th March, The Regional is here to assist where possible.
- **Fire Break Notices** – Reminder to review Fire Break Notices.
- **Restricted Burning Period** – As most Shires start to exit Restrict Burning Period, Just a reminder that entering restricted but "not writing permits" does not prevent fire in the landscape. Campfires and other fires are allowed, this may be an issue. Best practice is to extend the Prohibited period, noting that it can be moved 14 days, however, notice must be given prior to changing.
- **Emergency WA** – Use Emergency WA as your source of Truth for Incident Information. Stay up to date with Emergency WA, with the New Emergency WA App now available on IOS and Android devices. Allowing you to stay up to date with real-life live data and updates. Able to set watch zones and receive updates if an incident occurs nearby.

**Preparedness**

- **Rural Fire Awareness Course** – Rural Fire Awareness Training Course is still available online – This is the minimum recommended requirement for Farm Response Unit. Training Link Here.
- **Guideline for Operating Private Fire Equipment at Fire** – Useful resource available to Local Governments and Farm Response Members Here.
- **Training Calendar** - As we exit Bushfire Season, the DFES Narrogin Team start the Training season, with the Upper Great Southern Training Calander now being published and will be circulated to Local Governments. Training Calendar Here.
- **Training Standards** - A reminder that the recommended minimum training for LGs/BFBs is below: Reference Link Here.
- **High Season Appliances -** The Region has allocated High Season fire appliances across the region to areas based upon risk and appropriately trained members to crew appliances.

**Response**

- **Not out of High Threat Period Yet** - We are still in High Threat Period for Bushfire; this means that there is still a risk of fire escalating.
- **Calling 000** - Please ensure all fires and incidents are being called through to 000 to ensure they are captured, managed and resourced appropriately. By logging each job we are ensuring that incidents are being captured, this supports big picture stuff like funding and additional appliances and requests.
- **Communication** - Please ensure LG/BFBs attending incidents are providing incident details to the DFES Comcen as soon as possible (first 15 minutes) so we can ensure the incident is being supported and resourced appropriately.
- **Checklist** – A range of helpful checklist have been developed to assist you in reporting incident details.
- **Personal Protective Equipment** - Please ensure that Personal Protect Equipment and Clothing is being supplied to Bushfire Brigade members and is being wore on Fire Grounds, there have been a few recent safety.
  incidents where Brigade members have been injured due to lack of PPC.
- **Public Information** – Ensuring that we are contacting Public Information to issue relevant warnings. A Bushfire Trigger Point Document is available here.
- **Safety** - Safety is the main priority, there have been a few incidents where members have been injured due to complacency, please ensure your LG/BFB members are taking care at incidents.

## 7.03.25 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES MANAGER (CESM)

Jason Carrall:

- Thanked brigades for being patient during my time off this season;
- encouraged all brigades to have members obtain the required PPE.
- Advised Mitigation activities have commenced in Brookton.
- Thanked Murray Hall for your time as CBFCO and support of Jason in his role.

## 7.03.25.01 TRAINING UPDATE

- Location all three Shires have availability.
- FCO course it priority.

## 7.03.25.02 CESM STATUS TABLE

| Action | Task | Current Status | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| **General Duties** | Brookton Mitigation program 2024-2025 | Current | 37 new treatments approved total sum awarded $350,150.00. Please refer to works program provided. Request for quote completed and sent to CEO for approval to send out to contractors. Location Maps completed. All new treatments mapped in fire mapper and pre photos taken with GPS time date etc on them. Request for tender completed and advertised and waiting for contractors to complete tender process before engaging a contractor. January progress report now completed and sent to DFES> multiple email reply's and information provided for contractors tendering on works. bush land to north of town near Brookton HWY traffic bridge burn prescription. bush land to west of tip burn prescription. made contact with main roads and will discuss further about burning road verge in this section. Traffic management plan completed and will forward to main roads. tendering process completed and council agender item created. contractor engagement within next week. Program reporting spreadsheet now completed. |
| | Shire of Brookton ESL 2024-2025 and Brigade purchases. | Current | Approved funding $90,000.00. Truck maintenance completed and ready for fire season. New Brookton West fire shed cleaning products ordered and sent to Jenny for pick up. All fire trucks yearly service completed before fire season and B class service forms filled out and saved in shire system. Water purchased and delivered to central fire station, West fire station, and east fire truck. extra water purchased and delivered to central fire brigade and 10x packs to storage container. Foam delivered to west shed x10 and x5 to central shed. Hydrate sachets ordered and delivered to all 4 fire trucks. thermal image cameras delivered to west shed and central shed. Star link now installed in new west fire shed. new radio for west shed ordered and follow ups done with no success yet of installation will continue to follow up. Central fire truck brake down at Beverly fire organised for pick up and fixed. request for quote sent for PPE order for Graeme Elliott. PPE for West Brookton ordered and in process of being delivered. PO sent for PPE order. New PPE request came in and request for quotes have been requested. |
| | Shire of Brookton BFAC | Current | BFAC to be held 27th August. CESM report completed and sent to Sandie for agenda. BFAC has been set for March 25th 2025. Agenda items sent to Sandie. |
| | Shire of Brookton LEMC | Current | Shire of Brookton LEMC to be held 10th September. Communication exercise created and sent to Sandie for agenda. |

| Action | Task | Current Status | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Training Program | Current | August 5th 6th Bushfire safety Awareness Corrigin,<br>13th 14th bushfire safety awareness Brookton,<br>19th 20th bushfire safety awareness Pingelly<br>29th 30th Bushfire safety awareness Aldersyde.<br>September 3rd 4th firefighting skills Corrigin<br>9th 10th firefighting skills Brookton<br>16th 17th firefighting skills Pingelly<br>25th 26th Structural firefighting Aldersyde,<br>October 2nd Rural Fire Awareness Corrigin x2,<br>7th rural fire awareness Brookton x2,<br>14th rural fire awareness Pingelly x2,<br>21st rural fire awareness Aldersyde.<br>New options for online training have been produced and looking at changing training to this structure. Training courses cancelled until further notice. online training being created were possible. FCO course request sent to DFES to be created. ran rural fire awareness training shire of Corrigin works department. FCO competencies reports created for three shires and one member from Corrigin has been notified to do course. other two shires to be completed soon. |
| | Shire of Brookton Brigade lists updates | Current | West Brookton members list updated and no correct. Central spreadsheet sent to captain and awaiting changes to be sent back for updating. |
| | Shires high seasonal fleet applications | | Shire of Brookton application completed and sent off to Adam Whitford. Shire of Pingelly application completed and sent off to Adam Whitford. Shire of Corrigin will be done direct through VFRS as they will man LT if required. This will be managed through VFRS. High seasonal fleet now delivered and in fire sheds. |
| | Brigade meetings | Current | Pre season brigade meetings will commence end of September going into October. Pingelly Central AGM Monday 17th March 2025, West Brookton AGM Thursday 20th March 2025, East Pingelly AGM Wednesday 26th March 2025, West Pingelly AGM Thursday 27th March 2025. |
| | Shire of Brookton ESL 2025-2026 Submission | Current | 2025-2026 ESL Flyer Distribution Requirements survey completed. |

| Action | Task | Current Status | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| **SPECIAL PROJECTS** | Brookton West BFB Shed | | plans reviewed and suggested changes made through Kevin Project manager Brookton. Meeting with contractor to go over plans and suggested final changes. Construction of shed has started with concrete slab being installed. Shed well underway with all frames installed, roofs completed and cladding being finalised. Fast fill trailer shed now completed, water tank has been installed. Construction completed and fit out being organised. opening of shed to be held Friday 13th September. radio installations have been organised and will be installed Wednesday 5th March. |
| | Brookton East Fire Shed | Current | with shire to continue Site has been cleared. Under construction |
| Incidents 2024-2025 | Incident 697023 - Brookton Corrigin road | Closed | farmer response extinguished no requirement of myself to attend. |
| | Incident 699200 - 223 Wilkinson Rd Kweda | Closed | 2HA stubble fire extinguished with local crews no requirement for myself to attend. |
| | Incident 700926 - 2145 Bullaring road East Pingelly | Closed | stubble fire 30HA local crews extinguished no requirement for my attendance. |
| | Incident 702927 - Brookton Tip. | Closed | rubbish dumped the day before combusted and caused rubbish fire. VFRS took control due to Hazmat fire. Local crews and shire equipment used to extinguished. Support provided by myself onsite. |
| | Incident 705197 - Yealering-Kulin road Bullaring | Closed | bush fire caused by lightening. Local crews extinguished and no requirement of assistance from myself. |
| | Incident 705213 - Doyle rd Bullaring | Closed | stubble fire caused by lightening. Local crews extinguished with no requirement of assistance from myself. |
| | Incident 706713 - Brookton Corrigin road Corrigin | Closed | verge fire on side of road. Extinguished via local crews. No requirement of myself for this incident. |

## 8.03.25 FOR INFORMATION/CIRCULARS

## 8.03.25.01 BUSHFIRE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE

WALGA

# Bushfire Operations Committee Communique

**Meeting date:** Friday, 28th February 2025

**Location:** Geraldton Multipurpose Centre, Geraldton

## ESL/LGGS updates

### LGGS reform

*Presentation by Assistant Commissioner Asset Management Peter Sutton*

- An overview of the LGGS reform package was provided to the BOC. This package is currently being reviewed within DFES prior to stakeholder engagement.
- The package seeks to enhance the LGGS program, funding model, application of funding, governance and decision making, and performance reporting.
- Once finalised, the LGGS reform is intended to be run as a project over a two year period.
- A presentation will be given at BOC once the project is formalised.

### LGGS Working Group

*Presentation by BOC Deputy Chair Craig Stewart*

- The working group have drafted an interim report which was circulated to the members.
- 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 members will provide feedback prior to finalising the report for escalation through DFES.

### LGGS eligible items – Fast fill trailer specifications

*Presentation by DFES Rural Fire Division Executive Director Murray Carter*

- The BOC formed a working group to provide guidance in developing a minimum standard, noting the significant number of requests to fund fast fill trailers received and the variability in cost and specifications.
- The working group met in early February and a draft list of minimum specifications was agreed.
- At this meeting, members discussed the specifications list and options with a number of members providing comment on their region's current trailers and history of individual brigades resourcing.
- The BOC endorsed the list of minimum specifications for escalation back to DFES.

For BOC related information or enquiries please email Jo.Harding@dfes.wa.gov.au

July 2024

## LGGS applications Great Southern regional trial

*Presentation by Great Southern member Rob Lynn*

- The Great Southern region has recently trialled a whole of region approach to Capital Grants applications with positive feedback and results.
- Once the concept was approved through the ROAC and Local Government (LG), a working group was established with a Terms of Reference to oversee and assist LGs with the process. The working group consisted of Chiefs and CESMs from across the region.
- The process included examining resources to identify gaps and then to rank priorities from a regional perspective.
- Checklists which aligned to the assessment criteria were circulated to LGs through CESMs.
- A regional LGGS endorsement subcommittee was nominated, and they evaluated and ranked the applications prior to submission.
- This approach improves the probability of successful submissions and identifies and informs of regional facility and appliance requirements to the region and the LGGS Capital Grants Committee.

## CBFCO Forum 2025

*Presentation by DFES Rural Fire Division Executive Director Murray Carter*

- The BCoE propose to host a 3-day CBFCO forum in June 2025 at the Bushfire Centre of Excellence, with a similar format to the previous forum.
- The forum will be open to all CBFCOs and will be encouraged to send a proxy if they are unable to attend.
- The forum will encourage collaboration across the CBFCO network by offering the opportunity to share experiences and lessons learnt.
- The forum aims to be an information sharing and professional development, rather than a decision-making forum.
- The BCoE propose to hold an online session in March 2025 to share the plans of the 2025 forum with the CBFCO cohort, encouraging attendance and exploring forum topics.

## Starlink mini – availability request

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

- Request information on the availability of Starlink mini kits through the LGGS.
- The US is currently shifting satellite to phones. Elon Musk has partnered with T-Mobile and are offering 6 months free access with immediate access for plan users, with no upgrade to phones with compatible hardware and settings.
- Optus will be the first Australian provider and are currently working with SpaceX, with rollout expected this year. Telstra are also working to the same plan.
- It is anticipated that Starlink kits will become obsolete in this process, with big changes over the next 6 months.
- With this huge shift about to take place, at this stage approval of Starlink kits will be on hold until more is known.

For BOC related information or enquiries please email Jo.Harding@dfes.wa.gov.au

July 2024

## Doctrine support for Local Governments

*Item raised by DFES Rural Fire Division Executive Director Murray Carter*

- LG access to doctrine is currently being addressed. LG and WALGA identified an inability to access DFES doctrine, procedures and guidelines with the original issue being raised with access to the Volunteer hub.
- Communication to LG CEOs last year received positive feedback.
- This would allow a consistent approach across LGs including minimum training standards, noting Section 33 guidelines provide best practice.
- Members discussed concerns with minimum training standards
- A working group will be created from ROAC/DOACs, a representative WALGA and an LG CEO. Nominations will be sought from ROAC/DOACs.

The next BOC meeting will be scheduled for July 2025.

For BOC related information or enquiries please email Jo.Harding@dfes.wa.gov.au

July 2024

Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Fire & Emergency Services**

DFES
Department of Fire & Emergency Services

**DFES General Circular No: 19/2025**
File: 25/026697

**11 February 2025**

Aurora Fire Behaviour Calculator now includes Incident Weather Forecasts

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**Key Message**

The Aurora Fire Behaviour Calculator provides enhanced situational awareness for planned burns and bushfire response. Outputs include graphed fire weather and behaviour metrics. Until now, these outputs have been based on the Bureau of Meteorology's (BoM) Australian Digital Forecast Database (ADFD) gridded weather. An enhancement released this week allows Bureau of Meteorology Registered Users to now also select the current Incident Weather Forecasts (IWF) for outputs.

**What are the advantages?**

The Aurora Fire Behaviour Calculator uses published fire behaviour models for the predominant bushfire vegetation types. Outputs include the fire weather forecast, fire behaviour index, potential rates of spread, fire line intensity, flame length and head fire direct attack considerations. The calculator is publicly available and mobile device friendly https://aurora.landgate.wa.gov.au/fbc/#!/

IWFs are incident-specific forecasts issued by the BoM to assist emergency services with decision making when planning and undertaking bushfire operations. IWFs are provided upon request by emergency management agencies for bushfires, planned burns, structural fires, HAZMAT operations or for training purposes.

IWFs provide greater detail than the ADFD datasets alone, with additional text-based information on temporal and spatial uncertainty as well as forecasts tailored for local topography and other effects by fire weather meteorologists. An urgent IWF can be received within one hour of receiving the request. In contrast, the complete ADFD gridded forecasts are routinely updated twice per day in the early morning and afternoon.

**What does it mean for me?**

The option to select the current IWF data in the allows users to access and compare these site-specific forecasts with the ADFD and calculate key fire behaviour metrics. On the main menu of the Aurora Fire Behaviour Calculator BoM Registered Users can now chose to 'View Incident' and login to BoM Incident Weather using their BoM Registered User credentials. All current IWFs now appear in the 'Available Incidents' drop-down menu. Users can select the incident and calculate fire behaviour metrics using the default fuel type and model parameters or by defining their own.

For more information and advice, please contact Bushfire Technical Services on environment@dfes.wa.gov.au

**JACKSON PARKER**
**DIRECTOR BUSHFIRE TECHNICAL SERVICES**

# afac Seasonal Bushfire Outlook

## Autumn | 2025

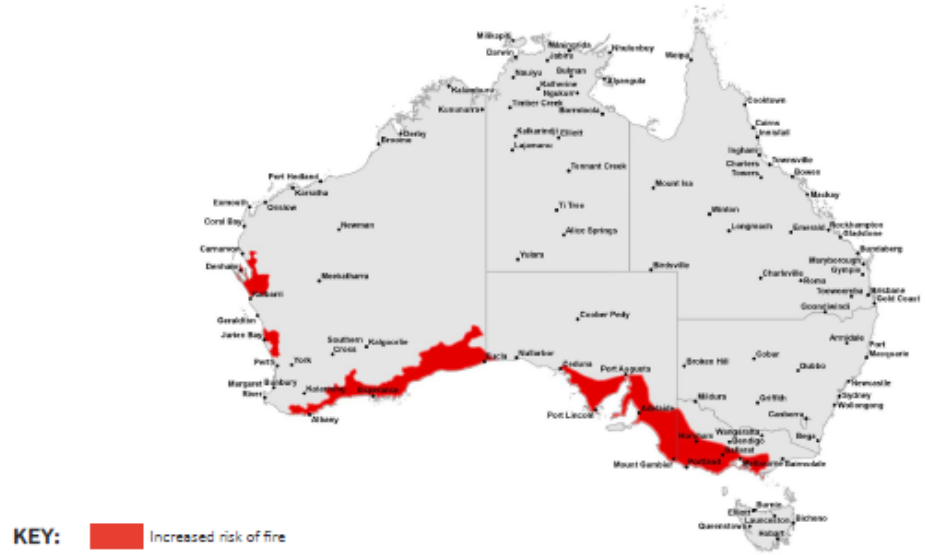


*Figure 1 Seasonal Bushfire Outlook Autumn 2025. Areas are based on the interim biogeographic regionalisation for Australia and other geographical features.*

**Increased risk of fire is the likelihood of an increased number of significant bushfires occurring in the outlook period compared to average.**

## Overview

The Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for autumn 2025 identifies a heightened risk of fire for patchy areas between Perth and Carnarvon in WA, and stretching across most of the Australian mainland's southern coastline to southwest Gippsland in Victoria.

From August 2024 to January 2025, very much below average rainfall fell across much of the southern coastline of Australia. Rainfall patterns were average to above average across much of the remaining parts of WA and coastal Queensland.

In that same August to January period, mean temperatures for Australia were generally well above average with large areas recorded their warmest period on record. The area-averaged temperature for Australia was the highest on record since records began in 1910.

Looking ahead, an increased chance of above average rainfall has been forecast for parts of northwest Australia over autumn, while there is an increased chance of below average rainfall being forecast for parts of the northeast.

Temperatures are very likely to be above average across most areas, with an increased chance of unusually high maximum temperatures for most of Australia south of the tropics. There is an increased chance of unusually high minimum temperatures nationwide.

Communities are encouraged to be vigilant and stay alert this autumn, even in areas of Australia that show a normal risk of fire this season. Under the right fuel and weather conditions destructive fires can occur during normal bushfire seasons across Australia.

The Seasonal Bushfire Outlook combines expert analysis of bushfire fuels, past rainfall and temperature, and climate outlooks prepared by the Bureau of Meteorology.

## About the Outlook

Fire management is a year-round process. The Seasonal Bushfire Outlook reflects the priorities in each state and territory for the coming months given the expected climate conditions. It identifies areas of increased risk of fire so communities are aware and primed to take appropriate action. It is not intended as a prediction of where and when bushfires will occur.

Fire risk can vary greatly, even at the smaller scale, between bordering states and territories. Each state and territory's assessment takes into account different land use types and vegetation types. This is influenced by different forecasts for temperature and rainfall over these regions. It should be noted that forecasting for longer time periods can be less accurate as the atmospheric system is dynamic; the more time passes, the less certain forecasters can be of its state.

A significant bushfire is defined as being of such size, complexity, duration or other impact that requires resources (from both a pre-emptive management and suppression capability) beyond the region in which fires originate. Increased bushfire risk depends on many factors including weather and climate, fuel amount and availability, recent fire and disturbance history, natural and human barriers, and how quickly and effectively firefighting resources are able to suppress fires in an area.

*AFAC is the National Council for fire and emergency services, supporting the sector to create safer, more resilient communities. AFAC drives national consistency through collaboration, innovation and partnerships. It delivers enhanced capability by developing doctrine and supporting operations.*

## New South Wales

*Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Autumn 2025 in New South Wales*

### Summary

- The rainfall forecast for early autumn is expected to maintain generally normal fire potential across most of NSW.
- Parts of northern and western NSW have high grass fuel loads and are currently drier than usual. These areas will remain at risk of difficult-to-control fires until they receive significant rainfall.

For further information see: rfs.nsw.gov.au

NSW experienced varied rainfall throughout spring, leading to increased grass and crop growth in some areas. Summer also saw mixed rainfall, with the northeast receiving high totals. However, a drier period in early summer led to several fires in eastern and northern NSW over the Christmas and New Year period.

Meanwhile, parts of the northwest slopes and far western NSW continue to receive below-average rainfall, leaving them drier than usual for this time of year.

Above-average rainfall is forecast for early to mid-autumn, which should generally maintain normal fire potential across most of NSW but may hinder prescribed burning efforts.

Autumn temperatures are expected to be higher than normal, increasing the risk that areas receiving little rainfall may remain dry or become drier. The northwest slopes (around Tamworth) and far western NSW currently have above-average grass fuel loads and are drier than usual. If these areas continue to miss out on rainfall, they could face challenging fire conditions.

Additionally, grasses west of the Great Dividing Range are dry (cured). Until these areas receive sufficient rainfall to support new grass growth, they could remain at risk for fast-moving, intense grass fires.

## Australian Capital Territory

*Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Autumn 2025 in Australian Capital Territory*

### Summary

- There is a normal risk of bushfire expected for the ACT this autumn.
- The long-range outlook for autumn forecasts warmer than usual conditions with above average rainfall somewhat likely.
- Fire agencies and land managers will continue to implement mitigation activities during autumn where conditions allow.

For further information see: esa.act.gov.au

The ACT experienced above average rainfall in summer after dry conditions in winter and spring 2024. The rainfall has allowed continued grassland fuel growth. Despite increased fuel loads, the ACT can expect a normal risk of bushfires during autumn.

The long range outlook for autumn in the ACT forecasts above average, even unusually warm, day- and night-time temperatures. Above average rainfall is somewhat likely, but unusually wet weather is not likely.

If below average rainfall is received in the first part of autumn, with the increased fuel loads and warm conditions, there could be more risk of bush and grass fires.

To manage bushfire risk, fire agencies and land managers will continue to implement mitigation activities, including prescribed burns, physical removal, and grass slashing or grazing, throughout the season. ACT residents can keep track of planned and ongoing prescribed burns through the ACT Emergency Services Agency and ACT Parks and Conservation Service websites or the Hazards Near Me NSW app.

It is important for community members to continue to be emergency ready by maintaining the preparedness of their properties and creating or updating their survival plans. For information on how to prepare for bushfires, visit esa.act.gov.au.

By staying informed and prepared we can collectively work towards minimising the impact of potential bushfires. Let's prioritise safety and ensure a proactive approach to safeguarding our community and environment.

## Victoria

*Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Autumn 2025 in Victoria*

### Summary

- An increased risk of fire is indicated for the western and central parts of Victoria as well as south and west Gippsland during early autumn.
- Fire authorities will continue to monitor conditions for any changes in fire risk.

For further information see: emergency.vic.gov.au

Severe rainfall deficits over the last 12-to-24-month period have affected much of western and central parts of Victoria, where increased fuel availability in forests and heathlands has resulted in significant fires across the Grampians and the Little Desert. Central parts of Victoria and southeast Gippsland have shown a strong drying signal over the past year, resulting in increased vegetation drying.

Recent rainfall patterns have continued to follow the long-term drying trend, with January rainfall totals ranging from 50-100mm in the far east and less than 10mm in the far west. Most of southwest Victoria has experienced well below-average precipitation, while the remainder of Victoria has received average rainfall for January

While the outlook has a higher chance of warmer maximum temperatures, the rainfall outlook does not indicate a wetter or drier signal in the forecast. As a result, an extended drying pattern may translate to continued increases in fuel availability in the west and central parts of the state. Without significant rainfall, the flammability of fuels in forests, woodlands and heathlands will remain high with elevated potential for fires to start and spread into early autumn. As a result, most of western and central parts of Victoria, along with south and west Gippsland, are identified as areas of increased risk during the early autumn outlook period.

Elsewhere across the state, the fire risk potential is assessed to be normal, noting that, at any time, areas dominated by dry or cured vegetation can support fast running fires under the onset of hot, dry and windy weather conditions. Landscape conditions will be monitored to identify any significant changes to fire risk.

The autumn break is likely to start slightly later than usual, which may delay the emergence of planned burning in some parts of the state while raising opportunities elsewhere to target areas that are not usually available for burning under autumn conditions.

## Tasmania

*Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Autumn 2025 in Tasmania*

### Summary

- Normal bushfire risk is expected for autumn.
- Grassland curing is well advanced across the state. Dry forests are available to burn in the east and parts of the west.
- An early commencement for planned burning is expected in the east and north of the state.

For further information see: fire.tas.gov.au

Tasmania experienced relatively quiet fire conditions during December and January as mild temperatures and moderate rainfalls generally slowed landscape drying and grassland curing across the island. There was not sufficient rain to recharge the underlying deep soil dryness in western Tasmania which has persisted for several years.

A short drying spell in late January increased the availability of wet and moist forest fuels as well as organic soils. A significant fire in the Snug Tiers in late January was followed by over 20 lighting ignitions on the West Coast in early February. The Western Complex of fires became a significant interagency campaign and is likely to require management for many weeks.

As summer ends, grassland curing is well advanced across the state and on the Bass Strait islands. Dry forests are fully available to burn in the eastern half of the state and to a lesser extent in the west. As a result, landscape connectivity is high in the east and along the northern coastal strip.

Autumn is unlikely to provide significant recharge of the underlying deep layer soil moisture and the peat in western Tasmania but there may be sufficient rainfall to moisten the upper soil layer which will assist fire suppression of any remaining going fires. An early commencement for planned burning is expected in the east and north of the state.

## South Australia

*Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Autumn 2025 in South Australia*

### Summary

- SA enters autumn with below average rainfall across a majority of the state
- The forecast warm dry conditions create potential for a prolonged period of higher fire risk, extending well into autumn.
- There is a slightly elevated fire risk across the southern coastal parts of the state and the far northwest.

For further information see: cfs.sa.gov.au

After a very dry start to January, SA enters autumn with below average rainfall across a majority of the state, particularly western parts of Kangaroo Island, Mid North and Eastern Eyre Peninsula. Rain deficiencies are expected to abate as autumn progresses.

There is a very high likelihood of well above average temperatures continuing, especially in the southeast of the state.

Autumn rain is forecast to exceed averages in central and northern areas of the state, while the Upper Eyre, Mount Lofty Rangers and Yorke Peninsula are expected to receive below average rainfall.

The forecast warm dry conditions create potential for a prolonged period of higher fire risk, extending well into autumn, with a slightly elevated fire risk across the southern coastal parts of the state and the far northwest.

With the forecasted dry period extending into autumn, South Australians will need to remain vigilant, continue to maintain their properties, monitor the fire risks throughout their district and be prepared to enact their bushfire survival plan well into autumn.

## Western Australia

*Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Autumn 2025 in Western Australia*

### Summary

- Severe moisture deficits have increased fire risk in the Mallee, Esperance Plains, and Mardabilla Bioregions.
- Significant grass fuels and forecast warmer conditions have increased fire risk in the Nullarbor Bioregion.
- Moisture stress has increased fire risk in the southeastern part of Southwest Land Division, Lesueur Sandplains, and northern Swan Coastal Plain Bioregions.

For further information see: dfes.wa.gov.au

An average fire risk is expected for the Pilbara, Central Interior, and northern Kimberley due to broadly above-average root-zone soil moisture and forecast above-average rainfall for autumn. Moist conditions may limit early prescribed burning opportunities in northern parts of the Kimberley. However, in southern parts of the Kimberley with below-average root-zone soil moisture, fire risk may increase in woody fuels and spinifex due to higher flammability, while grazing and reduced growth are expected to mitigate fire risk for tussock grass fuels.

Increased fire risk is unlikely across inland areas of Midwest-Gascoyne due to recent and forecasted average to above-average rainfall and broadly average soil moisture. However, in the Geraldton Sandplains, Yalgoo, and southern Carnarvon bioregions, higher fuel availability and forecasted high temperatures may elevate fire risk in grassy woodlands. Moisture deficits in the Lesueur Sandplains and the northern Swan Coastal Plain contribute to increased fire risk.

The Nullarbor Bioregion faces an increased fire risk due to the persistence of significant grass fuel loads following the previous March floods. In addition, average to below-average rainfall and soil moisture deficits over the past six months, along with forecast warmer conditions, and a low probability of exceeding average rainfall contribute to the increased fire risk.

In the Mallee, Esperance Plains and Mardabilla (East Coolgardie) Bioregions, severe root-zone moisture deficits, combined with forecasted warmer conditions and a low likelihood of exceeding average rainfall, are expected to increase fire risk. Moisture deficits extend into the southeastern part of the Southwest Land Division, where increased flammability of moisture stressed woody vegetation has increased fire risk.

## Queensland

*Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Autumn 2025 in Queensland*

### Summary

- Normal levels of bushfire risk across Queensland for Autumn.
- Significant rainfalls in northern Queensland will produce grass growth across large areas.
- Current weather conditions provide clear opportunity for early season hazard reduction burning.

For further information see: fire.qld.gov.au

There are significant tracts of grasslands across Queensland, some of which have received record rains in late summer. This will contribute to above average grass growth and fuel accumulation in areas where there may have been limited fuel previously. In areas of the South East Coast, Wide Bay, Burnett, Darling Downs and Granite Belt regions, this rainfall was predominately been in early summer. Due to fast growth rates fuelled by above average temperatures, the grass remains green but has developed a large thatch layer of dry material which may help to fuel grass fires as conditions continue to dry out in these districts .This means it is important to closely monitor local conditions.

Recent record rain in northern Queensland means most fuel is unavailable for burning this autumn. However, these conditions may present opportunities to conduct hazard reduction burning in country that may have not been possible due to the risk, particularly in large scale landscapes away from major metropolitan centres.

In southern Queensland, conditions are favorable for mitigation to be undertaken during autumn. Rainfall seen across much of the state in summer may present opportunities for hazard reduction burning which may not have been possible in previous years.

Forested areas of the state remain wet and the risk of fire in these locations is significantly reduced during the outlook period, however there may be some opportunities for hazard mitigation burning for the forest areas of the state. Fire agencies will continue to work with landholders and Indigenous land management groups to ensure planning is coordinated during this critical mitigation period across the state. A more in-depth understanding of future risk areas for the 2025 fire season will be possible once the full extent of the late summer rainfall events is known.

## Northern Territory

*Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Autumn 2025 in Northern Territory*

### Summary

- The NT has a normal risk of bushfire for the outlook period.
- If a dry spell occurs, there is a risk of fires spreading in all areas with available fuel in central Australia.
- Higher fuel loads are concentrated southwest of Alice Springs, including the southern Tanami and Macdonnell regions.
- Landholders across the Territory are strongly encouraged to prepare their properties for ongoing fire risk.

For further information see pfes.nt.gov.au or Bushfires NT

Minimum temperatures across the Territory are expected to remain above median, with rainfall in the Barkly and Alice Springs Fire Management Zones ranging from average to slightly above average.

Soil moisture is forecast to be above average in the Savanna, southern Arnhem, Vernon Arafura, the western Tanami and eastern Barkly districts. Fuel curing in central Australia is between 75-90%, with fire dangers easing to moderate. Available fuels are mainly found in areas with low grazing pressure that have remained unburned for more than 12 months, due to cumulative rainfall and rapid regrowth of surface fuels, including buffel grass. Higher fuel loads are concentrated southwest of Alice Springs, in the Macdonnell and southern Tanami regions.

If a dry spell occurs in the forecast period, there is a risk of wildfires spreading across all areas with available fuel in Alice Springs and Barkly regions. However, the frequency and scale of these events are unlikely to lead to back-to-back campaign fires throughout the forecast period.

Conditions in April and May may be more favourable for bushfire mitigation burning across all regions in the NT. The monsoon's late arrival this year may disrupt burn programs in the Top End.

Landholders across NT are strongly encouraged to prepare their properties for ongoing fire risk, ensuring that fire management plans are up-to-date and all firefighting equipment is in working condition. In central Australia, fire activity is recurring, even in areas previously affected by last year's fires, so it's essential to monitor grass regrowth and perform regular maintenance.

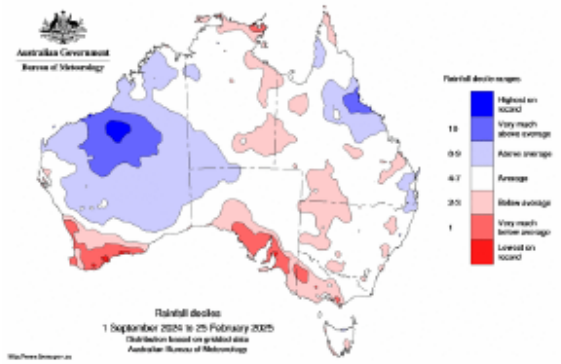


*Figure 2a Spring–summer to date (1 September 2024 to 25 February 2025) rainfall deciles relative to all years since 1900.*

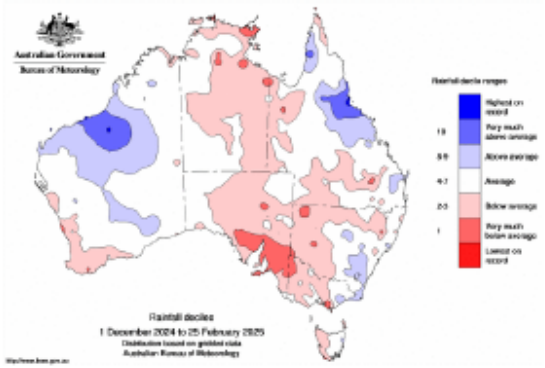


*Figure 2b Month to date (1 to 25) February rainfall deciles relative to all years since 1900 [preliminary that includes forecast rainfall].*

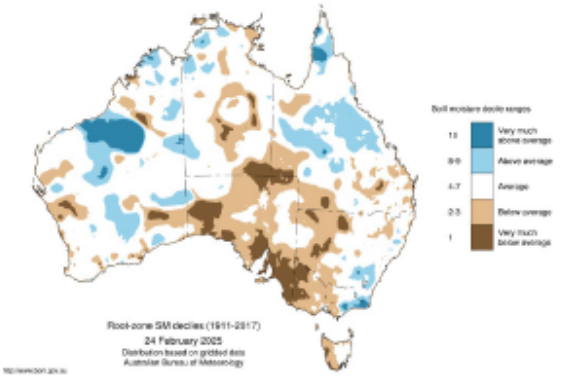


*Figure 3 Latest root zone soil moisture (top 100 cm) deciles, at 24 February, relative to average soil moisture on this date for all years between 1911 and 2017.*

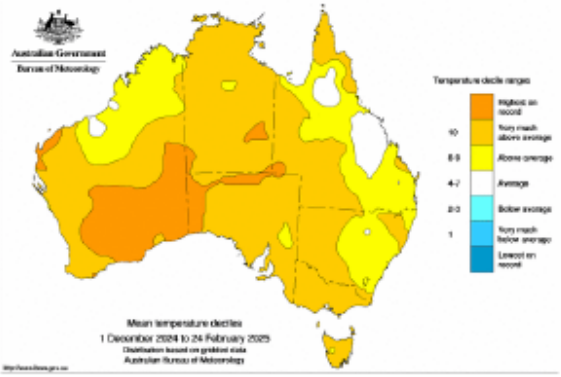


*Figure 4 Summer to date (1 December 2024 to 24 February) mean temperature deciles relative to all years since 1910.*

The risk of grass fires and bushfires in Australia is dependent on many factors, including the amount and type of fuel (vegetation), and the dryness of the fuel. Fuel conditions are influenced by recent rainfall, temperatures, and soil moisture.

Rainfall for the six-month period from September 2024 to February 2025 was below to very much below average[1] over the southern mainland, from the southwest of WA to southern SA and the west and south of Victoria (Figure 2a) with serious or severe rainfall deficiencies (rainfall totals in the lowest 5% or 10% of periods, respectively, since 1900) persisting in these regions. Below average rainfall was also seen over some inland parts of the mainland's east and north.

Rainfall was above to very much above average for most of northern and central WA, extending into central Australia. Above average rainfall was also observed over the central Queensland coast and the far northern NSW coast to the southeastern Queensland coast.

Summer to date rainfall has been average to below average for much of the country with the main exceptions being WA's northern Pilbara and Queensland's central coast where Tropical Cyclone Zelia and a deep tropical low, respectively, brought heavy falls in late January and early February (Figure 2b).

Areas northeast of Port Hedland and around Townsville have exceeded their highest monthly totals on record for the month of February. Drier than average conditions have persisted in the south, while a delayed onset to the monsoon has contributed to drier than average conditions over the NT.

Soil moisture as at 24 February 2025 is below average for this time of year across much of SA, extending into central Australia, western NSW, and western and central Victoria (Figure 3). Soil moisture is above to very much above average for eastern Victoria, southeastern NSW, much of northern and central Queensland, and parts of northern and central WA.

The mean temperature for 2024–25 summer to date has been very much above average for most of Australia with some western and central areas in Australia on track to see their warmest summer on record. Maximum and minimum temperatures have also been above to very much above average for most of Australia, although maximum temperatures were close to average over WA's northern Pilbara and Queensland's central coast, where heavy rainfall events occurred (see earlier section on rainfall).

The Bureau of Meteorology's long-range forecasts are based on global dynamical modelling of the oceans, atmosphere, land surfaces and sea ice. The model simulates the evolution in the state of the atmosphere and oceans for coming months. It implicitly captures climate indicators including the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), as well as long-term trends due to climate change.

For March to May 2025 (Figure 5) there is an increased chance of above average[1] rainfall for the northern Kimberley and parts of the Top End of the NT. There is an increased chance of below average rainfall for most of central and northern Queensland, extending into central Australia. For most other parts of Australia, there is no strong signal suggesting above or below average rainfall over the forecast period.

For central and northern Queensland, the likelihood of below average rainfall is greater in March than in April or May, with rainfall in April and May more likely to be within the typical range for those months.

Both maximum (Figure 6) and minimum temperatures during March to May are very likely (greater than 80% chance) to be above average across most states and territories. There is an increased chance of unusually high maximum temperatures across much of Australia, with the highest chances in Tasmania, southern Victoria, west of the Pilbara, and the southern half of Queensland extending into northern NSW and central Australia, where the likelihood is at least 3.5–4 times the usual chance. The chance of unusually high minimum temperatures is 3–4 times the usual chance for most of Australia, and greater than 4 times the usual chance for parts of WA, the far tropical north, and eastern Australia.

For March, below average soil moisture is forecast for much of Australia (Figure 7). Above average soil moisture is forecast for interior parts of the mainland's west. In May, average soil moisture is likely for most of the country, except for parts of the Top End of the NT, where soil moisture is likely to be above average, and southern and interior parts Australia, where soil moisture is likely to be below average.

The Bureau's long-range forecasts are updated regularly and are prepared for seasonal, monthly, fortnightly and weekly periods. In addition to forecasts on rainfall and temperature, they include forecasts on the Indian Ocean Dipole and El Niño–Southern Oscillation. The Bureau's long-range forecasts are published at www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead and https://awo.bom.gov.au/

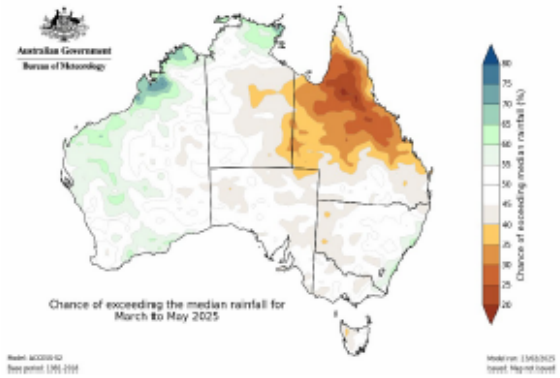


*Figure 5 March to May 2025 chance of above median rainfall.*

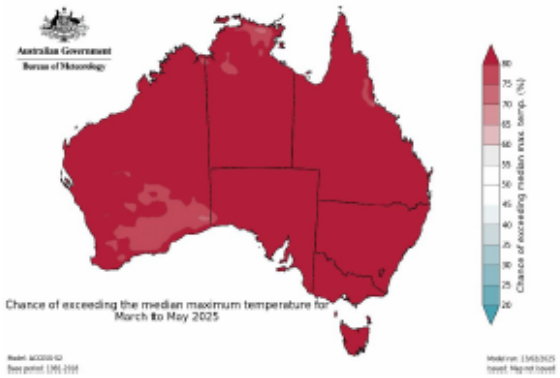


*Figure 6 March to May 2025 chance of exceeding median maximum temperatures.*

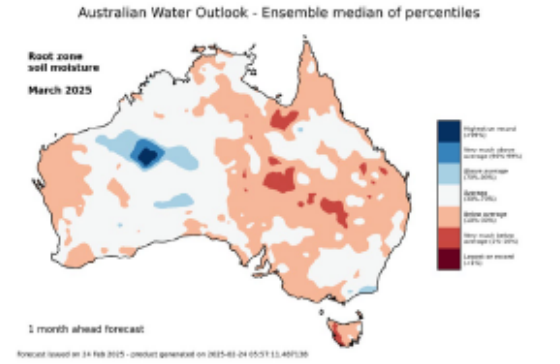


*Figure 7 March 2025 soil moisture outlook.*

1. The term 'average' is used throughout the text to denote either mean or median. The method used for a particular variable is stated in the relevant figure.

Waters around most of the Australian coastline are warmer than average, particularly along the western and southern coasts, contributing to increased atmospheric moisture and energy that may influence the intensity and frequency of weather systems. Sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the Australian region during January 2025 were the warmest on record for all Januarys since records began in 1900. Additionally, the January SST anomaly was the equal highest positive anomaly on record for any month.

The Madden-Julian Oscillation contributed to enhanced tropical activity in the Australian region in early to mid-December and again in late January and early February. This season's monsoon onset was the latest since records began in 1957–58, and it coincided with an active MJO over the Australian region.

The El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is neutral, despite changes in sea surface temperature patterns during 2024 that were consistent with a developing La Niña. Since late December, the tropical Pacific has become more La Niña-like, with signs of interactions between oceanic and atmospheric indices. However, these interactions have not been consistently sustained and do not meet the Bureau's La Niña criteria. Model forecasts indicate ENSO is likely to return to a more neutral ENSO state by the end of autumn and persist at neutral levels through to at least the middle of 2025.

The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is neutral. The IOD typically has little association with Australian climate from December to April.

Australia's climate has warmed by 1.55 ± 0.23 °C between 1910 and 2024. This warming is consistent with global trends, with the degree of warming similar to the global average for land areas.

The background global warming trend means Australia will experience ongoing changes to its weather and climate, including:

- more heat extremes, and fewer cold extremes
- reduced average cool season (April to October) rainfall over the southern half of the continent
- more intense heavy rainfall events, even in regions where average rainfall has decreased
- a longer fire season, with more dangerous fire weather days.

**Further information**

For further information about climate forecasts and conditions, please visit the following pages

- bom.gov.au/climate/ahead
- bom.gov.au/weather-services/fire-weather-centre/fire-weather-services
- www.bom.gov.au/climate/about/australian-climate-influences.shtml

*This Seasonal Outlook was developed by AFAC, the Bureau of Meteorology, Queensland Fire Department, NSW Rural Fire Service, ACT Emergency Services Agency, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, Country Fire Authority, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action VIC, Tasmania Fire Service, SA Country Fire Service, Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions WA, and Bushfires NT.*

AFAC is the National Council for fire and emergency services **afac.com.au**

## 9.03.25 NEXT MEETING & CLOSURE

The next BFAC Meeting will be held at 7pm on Wednesday 27th August 2025 at the East Brookton Fire Station, Aldersyde.

There being no further business, the Presiding Member Cr McCabe declared the meeting closed at 9:10.