



MINUTES

Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting

Held Tuesday 31st March 2026 at 6:00pm
East Brookton Fire Brigade Building

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

Presiding Member: Date:

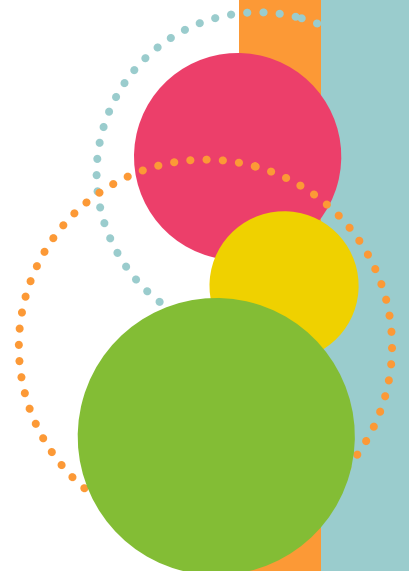


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1.03.26 DECLARATION OF OPENING/ATTENDANCE

The Presiding Member Cr McCabe opened the meeting at 6:10pm 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 Deputy President
Cr Crouch

Committee Members (Voting)

Travis Eva Chief Bushfire Control Officer
Tim Evans Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer
Blair Montague Central Brigade
Andrew Pike Central Brigade
Bevan Walters East Brigade
Shanahan Fowler East Brigade
Len Simmons West Brigade
Holly Blechynden West Brigade

Staff (Non-Voting)

Gary Sherry Chief Executive Officer
Sandie Spencer Executive Governance Officer
Roger Northey Acting Community Emergency Services Manager

Other Agencies

Trent Nagtegaal Department of Fire and Emergency Services Area Officer

Apologies

Murray Hall Central Brigade
Brad Bassett Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer
Ashley Hobbs Central Brigade

2.03.26 CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

BFAC 04.26-01

BFAC RESOLUTION

MOVED T Eva

SECONDED B Montague

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

3.03.26 PRESENTATIONS

3.03.26.01 FIRE MAPPER OVERVIEW

Fire Mapper is a shared, live mapping tool designed to improve situational awareness during incidents.

- The platform operates as a live document, allowing users to view real-time updates of the incident area.
- Access is simple via a QR code, which links directly to the live map.

Key Uses

- Air Attack: Utilises the same program to maintain consistent, real-time visibility across aerial operations.
- Units on Scene: Ground crews can view current fire boundaries, hazards, and operational updates.
- Farm Responders: Local responders can share and view their locations, improving coordination and safety.

Integration & Access

- QR codes distributed through DFES can link directly to WhatsApp, enabling quick sharing of:
 - Water points
 - Access tracks
 - Other critical incident information

Current Use

- Successfully used in areas including:
 - Boddington
 - Dunn Rock
 - Shires of Kent and Dumbleyung

4.03.26 BFAC RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SHIRE OF BROOKTON**4.03.26.01 APPOINTMENT OF FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS**

In 2025/26 the Shire of Brookton made the following appointments:

Position	Nominee(s)
Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Travis Eva
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Tim Evans 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 Evans, Mark Whittington, Len Simmons, Ross Evans, Tristan Guinness 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 (Required to be in order of precedence)	Travis Eva – CBFCO Tim Evans – Deputy 1 Brad Bassett – Deputy 2

Mr Sherry advised that the Shire would consider appointments to the role of FCO during the year to accommodate those brigade members who complete their FCO certification.

BFAC 04.26-02**BFAC RESOLUTION****MOVED T Evans****SECONDED B Montague**

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

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

	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

5.03.26 GENERAL BUSINESS

5.03.26.01 RESTRICTED BURNING PERIOD

- Restricted Burning: Currently in place under Level 1 permits.
- Weather Monitoring: Conditions are being closely monitored, with settings to be adjusted as required based on weather changes.
- Review Date: Conditions will be assessed on 14 April, with a decision to:
 - Extend restrictions, or
 - Transition to open burning
- Easter Period:
 - Permits will remain available, subject to conditions and approvals

5.03.26.02 HARVEST & VEHICLE MOVEMENT BANS – HAY PLANTS

- BALCO operations require clarification during HVMB periods.
- Where possible, BALCO may continue onsite work, provided:
 - Approved work areas are clearly identified and marked, and
 - Activities are conducted within agreed safety parameters
- Collaboration with the Shire and the CBFCO to:
 - Define safe operating zones
 - Ensure alignment with fire management requirements
 - Maintain safety of personnel and responders
 - This will occur prior to fire season commencing in 2026.

5.03.26.03 FIRE BREAK ORDER – RURAL LAND LESS THAN 100 HECTARES – CONTIGUOUS LAND TITLES

The 2025/26 Fire Break Order required in part:

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.*

Shire staff reviewed the Shire’s property ownership data and sought fire breaks from all rural landowners of properties of less than 100 Hectares in aggregate size.

This included a number of smaller landowners who were leasing their property to broadacre farmers for farming purposes and did not have fire breaks.

Property boundary Fire breaks are not required for properties greater than 100 Hectares in size. The Shire had discussions with some broadacre farmers who were leasing smaller

properties who believed they had an exemption because they were not required to install fire breaks.

The Shire needs clarity on this issue to:

- uniformly apply the Fire Break Notice to all broad acre farmers; and
- correctly advise all smaller landowners as to why only some require firebreaks.

Discussion

1. Is it the BFAC's intention to not require firebreaks on any land leased to broadacre farmers?
2. What process would the BFAC believe reasonable to establish the credentials of lessees of land to allow an exemption from Fire Breaks?

The BFAC agreed to consider at their September 2026 Meeting a Fire Break Notice that permits for properties of less than 100 hectares in size:

- Where a property of less than 100 hectares is contiguously farmed by an adjoining neighbour with a landholding exceeding 100 hectares, the requirement for the construction and maintenance of a 3m wide minimum bare earth unobstructed trafficable firebreak within 30m of the boundary of the property will not be required;
- All other properties of less than 100 hectares will require construction and maintenance of a 3m wide minimum bare earth unobstructed trafficable firebreak within 30m of the boundary of the property. This includes properties of less than 100 hectares that are leased by lessees who have a landholding exceeding 100 hectares, where the two properties are not contiguously farmed (ie the two properties do not share a boundary).

Because the Shire does not maintain lessee details, the Shire will still need to review all properties of less than 100 hectares and will correspond with the owners of these properties if a fire break is not completed. However where contiguously farmed, the owner and/or lessee will need to contact the Shire to advise of the lease arrangements.

5.03.26.04 STICKERS FOR FIRE APPLIANCE WINDSCREENS

- Stickers for vehicle windscreens

The Shire will provide stickers for fire appliance windscreens with COMCEN's contact details.

5.03.26.05 FUEL AVAILABILITY – FUEL PRICE INCREASE

The Shire is currently holding a reserve of 2,000 litres of diesel for emergency services.

Discussion

1. Is the price and availability of fuel likely to impact response of BFBs or their members?
2. What measures, if any, should the Shire consider in response to the rapidly increasing price of fuel/lack of availability of fuel?

Noted

6.03.26 REPORTS

6.03.26.01 CHIEF BUSHFIRE CONTROL OFFICER – TRAVIS EVA

The 2025/2026 fire season saw a busy start, with six fires occurring in a short space of time across the district and surrounding areas. These incidents required a coordinated response from local brigades and, in some cases, external agency support. The season also highlighted ongoing challenges around brigade capacity, industrial fire risks, and the management of burning permits during periods of elevated fire danger.

These included incidents at Brookton Highway west of Brookton, Bill Cleland's property at The Dale, Kim Richie's at West Brookton, Rolly Broun's at The Dale, Matt Richards in the Shire of Quairading, and the Balco hay plant.

The fire on Brookton Highway west of Brookton was caused by a truck tail shaft detaching itself from the transmission and creating sparks the bitumen. The fire extinguished quickly; however, the truck remained blocking the westbound lane, requiring the assistance of WA Police to provide traffic management and ensure public safety.

The fire at Bill Cleland's property required assistance from DFES, who coordinated the deployment of two fixed-wing aircraft and two Black Hawk helicopters. This support was critical in preventing the fire from impacting nearby State Forest.

The incident at Balco was caused by hay fines, or hay offal, being dumped in a paddock, becoming wet, and self-combusting. This represents a serious ongoing risk, particularly with hay processing plants located both north and south of Brookton. Appreciation is extended to Rod and the Shire of Brookton for engaging with Balco and working towards a practical solution. As a result, hay fines will be collected and removed from site for in compost production. Ongoing communication will be required with both Balco and Hay Australia to ensure this process remains effective and the risk is properly managed.

During the season, there were also numerous requests for Brookton brigades to attend the Boddington and Dunn Rock fires. Unfortunately, these requests could not be accommodated due to insufficient experienced brigade members being available to crew appliances. While this was disappointing, it reflected the operational pressures of a very busy period. It is noted, however, that other Wheatbelt brigades were able to provide support, which is important given the mutual aid arrangements that all districts rely upon and the fact that local brigades may also need assistance in future.

On a positive note, when DFES requested support for the Crossman–Boddington fires, Brookton was able to provide crews and appliances for four consecutive days. This was an excellent effort and reflects the commitment of brigade members who made themselves available to assist. Thanks are extended to all volunteers who put their hand up to help during this deployment.

A significant milestone during the season was the opening of the new East Brookton Fire Brigade shed on 29 October 2025. Thanks are extended to Bevan Walters, Murray Hall and the Shire of Brookton for their time and effort in delivering the facility. The Shire is now in the fortunate position of having two high-quality, modern facilities to accommodate both the West Brookton and East Brookton Brigades.

The restricted burning period commenced on 14 March. While fire danger remained relatively high at that time, the introduction of Level 2 permits for periods classified as High Fire Danger is considered to be working well. This permit system continues to provide a strong level of oversight and management for landholders seeking to undertake permitted burns, while still allowing some flexibility where conditions can be managed appropriately.

The main issues identified during the season were:

- the high number of fires early in the season
- the need for external support on significant incidents
- ongoing fire risk associated with hay plant waste products
- limitations in brigade capacity due to insufficient experienced members to crew appliances during peak periods
- the need for continued liaison with industry operators regarding risk management balancing landholder burning needs with ongoing elevated fire danger conditions.

Positive outcomes from the season included:

- rapid containment of several incidents
- effective support from DFES, including aerial firefighting resources
- successful engagement with Balco to improve management of hay fines
- strong brigade support to the Crossman–Boddington fires over four consecutive days
- official opening of the new East Brookton Fire Brigade shed
- successful implementation of Level 2 burning permits during periods of high fire danger.

The 2025/2026 fire season has been demanding, particularly during the early part of the season when multiple incidents occurred in quick succession. Brigade members, support agencies and the Shire all contributed strongly to fire response and fire management outcomes. While brigade capacity remains, an area requiring ongoing attention, the season also demonstrated strong volunteer commitment, effective interagency support, and continued progress in local fire management infrastructure and practices.

Thanks to Roger and Trent for conducting training courses.

6.03.26.02 DEPUTY CHIEF BUSHFIRE CONTROL OFFICER – TIM EVANS/BRAD BASSETT

Nil.

6.03.26.03 WEST BRIGADE – CAPTAIN: TIM EVANS

- 13 fires attended
- Good numbers attended “hands on day”.

6.03.26.04 CENTRAL BRIGADE – CAPTAIN: BLAIR MONTAGUE

Central attended a number of fires in the Brookton Shire and also in neighbouring Shires . Thank you to the volunteers that gave their time .

Central attended two mitigation burns organised by Jason Carrall CSEM. They were well run and organised. Thank you to Rolleystone Volunteer Brigade for sending a crew .

Communications once again is proving to be a problem particularly in the West of the Shire. This has been brought to BFAC meetings , it needs to be addressed through satellite technologies such as Garmin InReach devices or Starlink Mobile services. The later is now

readily available and serious consideration should be given to installation in trucks and Chief / Deputies vehicles.

Fuel for Emergency Vehicles . The Shire has agreed in the interim to keep 2000 Litres of diesel in reserve for Emergency Services Vehicles. Consideration should be given to applying to DFES for a strategic reserve to be kept on hand and rotated through to keep the diesel fresh. Suggest this is done in conjunction with the Shire and stored at the Works Depot . Depending on the size of the Shire Fuel Tank it could be part of the existing Works Fuel Supply.

There are 37 x \$50 fuel cards to be distributed to volunteers.

I am stepping down as Captain, due to other Volunteer commitments expanding and not having the time available to do the Captain's role to an acceptable level.

Captain:- Andrew Pike

Correspondence In / Out

- In - Western Power Grant for Amphibio - successful \$1705-00 . Money will be deposited in West Brigade Account . Item yet to be purchased.

6.03.26.05 EAST BRIGADE – BEVAN WALTERS

Appointments:

Captain	Bevan Walters
Vice-Captain	Jarrad Turner
FCO's	Bevan Walters, Darrell Turner, Jarrad Turner, Micheal Eva, Luke Blechynden nominated (subject to completion of training)

Incidents:

14/4/2025	000 report on roadside fire which turned out to be an escaped fire from previous days burning. Awkwardly I had to cancel an issued permit to the same landholder as the current 000 call took priority.
16/1/2026	Truck was crewed to South Caroling Fire.
24/1/2026	Truck was crewed to Wandering Fire for mop up.

General:

- 29/10/2025 East Brookton Bush Fire Shed was officially opened. Much appreciated by the East community.
- Early October the injection Fuel pump on Firefighter unit was repaired again. Currently seems ok.
- Jan-Feb 2026 – during ground development work around the shed slight damage was incurred to shed tank and was repaired. Water was pumped to bigger storage tank so the repair could occur. Damage to Septic pipework/treated water discharge was also repaired.
- East Brigade was successful in receiving a Western Power Grant to purchase a 3-inch Water transfer pump.

Bush Fire Advisory Committee Department of Fire and Emergency Services Report Post-Season 2025/2026

Key DFES Contacts

Name	Area of Responsibility	Phone Number
All Hours Emergency Contact		
DFES COMCEN	All Hours Emergency Contact For Turnouts and Providing Incident Information	██████████
DFES UGS Regional Duty Coordinator	All Hours Regional Contact For Support and Assistance	██████████
DFES Public Information	All Hours Contact For Issuing Alerts and Warnings	██████████

Post Season Information

- **In the Upper Great Southern region this season key incidents were;**
 - Newmont Goldmine Fire (Inc 765644) 14 Dec 2025 – 07 JAN 2026
4150Ha, activating Evac Centre (Ngn and Williams) and engaging the Level 3 Preformed State Team, this incident had two deployments from South Australia and put the townsite of Boddington into Emergency Warning on Christmas day
 - Dunn Rock Bushfire (Inc 769192) 17 Jan 2026 – 28 Jan 2026
32537Ha in the Shire of Lake Grace near Lake King townsite. Was eventually run as South Coast Complex along with Fitzgerald National Park by the State Level 3 Team and then DBCA before being handed back to Local Government
 - Boddington Complex (Inc 769835) 22 Jan 2026 – 02 Feb 2026
6200Ha, 4 separate fires, 125kms of edge, 54 impacted properties including sheds etc, multiple saves, very few losses across 3 local governments and DBCA tenure, run as a Level 2 Complex Incident across 3 divisions. Narrogin evacuation centre used.

Thank you to everyone for their support, co-operation and patience as we progressed through a very busy and complex season for the Upper great Southern region. **Well done** on your work at home and across other shires it is very appreciated and essential to all.

- **Grain Harvest Water Bombers** – Water Bomber teams are positioned in Narrogin, Esperance and Geraldton to support the Grain Harvest Strategy. Approximately 50 people were trained across the region in the Ground Controller in just this season alone. From this Grain Harvest Taskforce which has concluded there were **152 activations** with **997hrs of flight time**.

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.



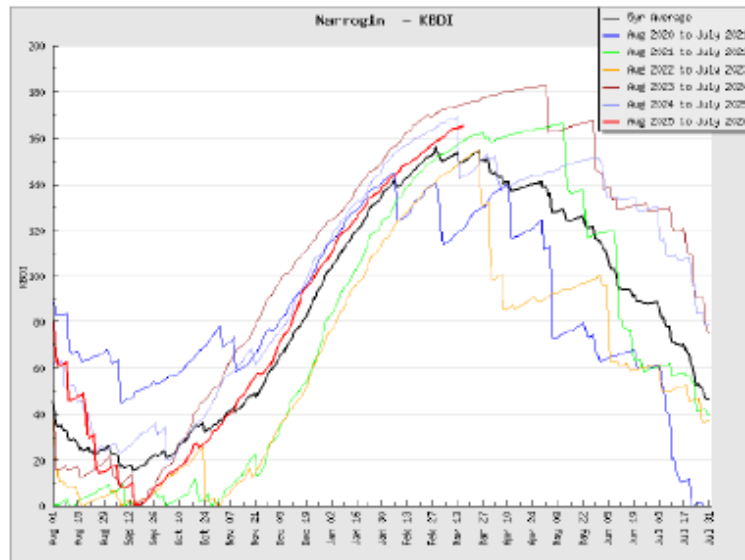
More Info on KBDI



Government of Western Australia
Department of Fire & Emergency Services



Bush Fire Advisory Committee
Department of Fire and Emergency Services
Upper Great Southern Officers Report



Review of Narrogin'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 25+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.

Feedback or Observations from the current fire season?

Tell us anytime - the Lessons Management Observation Register is always ready to receive your observations. Scan the handy QR code or [redacted]



WAFES Awards

Regions are encouraged to promote the awards and nominate volunteers and staff who have made an outstanding contribution over the last 12 months. - [redacted]

Training Calendar – The Upper Great Southern DFES Brigade Training Calendar for 2026 has been released and available on eAcademy. As per the regional plan we have a strong focus on incident management and developing new trainers.

Want to run your own training in your locally? – Workplace Trainer Assessor training is 3 days to upskill you in the requirements of this, on in Narrogin 17, 18 & 19 April 2026 – enrol on eAcademy or contact our regional Training Support Officer (TSO) via [redacted]



Government of Western Australia
Department of Fire & Emergency Services



Public Information and Warnings

Emergency WA

Use Emergency WA as your source of Truth for Incident Information. Stay up to date with [Emergency WA](#), they also have a 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. You are able to set watch zones and receive updates if an incident occurs nearby. Refer the community to Emergency WA for Information.

As Incident Controllers we need to start feeding Incident Information up and issuing appropriate alerts and Warnings to support this.

Alerts and Warnings

For incidents where smoke or fire is going to impact or affect the public we need to start thinking about issuing alerts and warnings. **Being proactive with alerts and warnings can save lives.**

It is also a **State Strategic Control Priority – Community Warnings and Information**

We use 3 Warning levels, which is a National approach, details below:

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. The Community needs to take actions now to stay safe.
EMERGENCY WARNING	There is an immediate threat to lives and homes. The Community is in danger and need to take immediate action.

How to Issue Bushfire Alerts and Warnings		
Issuing Bushfire Advices , Watch and Acts and Emergency Warnings		
Contact	Number	Actions
DFES PUBLIC INFORMATION	1800 718 288	You can call DFES Public Information and they will be able to talk through which warning. It would be advantageous to know what warning you require and the "Boundaries", these can be roads, waterways etc.

The State Hazard Plan – Fire (Update)

The State Hazard Plan - Fire provides an overview of arrangements for the management of fire in Western Australia (WA) and contains information on fire prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The State Hazard Plan has now been reviewed, updated and republished (21st August 2025). State Hazard Plan - Fire can be found here: https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2025-08/shp_fire_v3.00.pdf

Transfer of Control

As per Bushfires Act 1954 and State Hazard Plan – Fire, **Local Government is the Controlling Agency for all Fires outside of the Gazetted Fire District.**



Government of Western Australia
 Department of Fire & Emergency Services



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Upper Great Southern Officers Report

In some circumstances the Controlling Agency of an incident can be transferred to another agency.

Reasons for Transferring Control

For bushfires, circumstances that may trigger a change of Controlling Agency include:

- 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

Transfer of control to DFES can only occur under a Section 13 of the Bushfires Act 1954 which requires authorisation at State Level by the Duty Assistant Commissioner (DAC). This can be accepted or declined and does take time to progress.

During this time Local Government retains control of this incident. The region and Bushfire Liaison Officers will continue to support you throughout this time.

LG to DBCA

Transfer of control to DBCA can occur under a Section 45 of the Bushfires Act 1954. Generally, if the fire involves DBCA Tenure. The Current Incident controller can contact the DBCA Duty Officer who can assist in facilitating this. **Please note – This Process is between DBCA and LG, however, Comcen need to be made aware of this and requires a signed handover form.**

Fires on UCL/UMR and DBCA Tenure

There were a few instances where fires were not actioned last season 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 the tenure and/or property to prevent the spread of fire as long as they are taking due care and informing the property owners of attendance.

Checklist and Supporting Documents

The Upper Great Southern have an Online Folder with helpful and useful resources that can assist you. The link is found [here](#) or scan the QR Code below.

4.14 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



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Department of **Fire & Emergency Services**



7.03.26 ACTING COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES MANAGER (CESM)


- Incident reporting – 5 reported (West)
- Training – spreadsheets available

7.03.26.01 TRAINING UPDATE


- Attendance levels have been very positive, with consistently strong numbers over the past few courses.
- Training records printed off for Captains to review and update members list.

8.03.26 FOR INFORMATION/CIRCULARS

8.03.26.01 INTERAGENCY BUSHFIRE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE (IBOC)



Department of Fire and Emergency Services
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions



WALGA
Influences. Support. Expertise.

Interagency Bushfire Operations Committee Communique

IBOC Meetings
The IBOC met on 11 January and 14 March 2026. These meetings were held at the DFES Bushfire Centre of Excellence, and Chaired by Stefan de Haan, Manager Fire Management Services Branch, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

Subcommittee Sponsors
Please see below the current IBOC Subcommittee Chairs and Sponsors, as of March 2025:

Subcommittee	Chair	Sponsor
Aviation	Peter Gibson	Andrew Wright
Bushfire Intelligence	Katie MacWilliams	Meg Williams
Bushfire Research	Chris Dunne	John Tillman
Common Doctrine	TBA	Stefan de Haan
ICT	Glen Watkins	Andrew Milne
Training and Development	Will Blackshaw	Aminya Ennis
State Bushfire Capabilities	Matt Folini	Grant Pipe

IBOC Chair Rotation
At the March 2026 IBOC meeting, members endorsed a proposal to rotate the IBOC Chair. John Tillman – DFES Chief Superintendent Bushfire Centre of Excellence, was welcomed as the new Chair, with Andrew Milne – DBCA Manager Regional Fire Services, appointed as Deputy Chair.

Members also acknowledged the significant contribution of Stefan de Haan, who has served as IBOC Chair since its inception.

IBOC Highlights
IBOC has recently endorsed the delivery of *Intent into Action* – a five-day immersive strategic decision-making program delivered by Mission-Centred Solutions in partnership with Red Flag Real Time Leadership. The program supports IBOC's 2025/26 Strategic Priority to *strengthen strategic decision-making during large and complex incidents*. The DFES Bushfire Centre of Excellence and DBCA Training team are coordinating delivery, with participation targeted at senior incident leaders and personnel operating and Regional and State level providing strategic oversight of Level 3 incidents or multiple incidents across a Region/State. The program will be delivered from 18 to 22 May 2026 at the DFES Bushfire Centre of Excellence.

At the January and March meetings, there were several items discussed including the WALGA 2026/27 State Budget submission and submission relating to the 2020 Work Health and Safety Act.

IBOC branding has been refreshed and will be applied to all future documentation. The Executive Officer will distribute updated templates accordingly.



Subcommittee Highlights

State Bushfire Capabilities Subcommittee met on 9 September 2025 and 18 February 2026. The Subcommittee are focusing on the development and completion of their 2025/26 Work Plan. Work continues to progress on the interoperability between the DFES and DBCA caches. The Subcommittee provided three agenda items for the March IBOC meeting including the *2026 Pre-Form Team Workshops*, *2026 Incident Control Centre Review*, and *State Cache Catalogue Review*.

Bushfire Intelligence Subcommittee met on 10 February 2026. The Subcommittee welcomed Katie MacWilliams (DBCA) as the new Chair and Viv Schweizer (DBCA) as the new Executive Officer, and acknowledged the contributions of Glen Daniel (DFES) and Trish Malone (DFES) during their tenure.

Key focus areas include the post-season review of the FBAn Handbook, development of a handbook to support the Situation Analysis function, and review of outcomes from the DBCA science fuel mapping project and its alignment with interagency fuel mapping products.

Aviation Subcommittee met on 27 November 2025 and is scheduled to meet again on 27 March 2026. The Subcommittee welcomed Terry Wegwermer as DFES Air Operations Manager. Key focus areas include exploring training opportunities for Air Operations Managers and Aircraft Officers, and investigating the adoption of ARENA for suppression operations. The Aviation and Common Doctrine Subcommittees are also discussing the development of a dual-badged Aviation Guide. A post-season Chief Pilot meeting is planned for 31 March to inform changes for the 2026/27 fire season.

ICT Subcommittee met on the 11 December 2025, and the 19 February 2026. The Subcommittee welcomed Glen Watkins (DBCA) as the new Chair, and Gail McKenzie (DFES) as the new Executive Officer, and acknowledged the contributions of Vicky Reynen (DBCA) and Kelly Roth (DBCA) during their tenure. A steering committee has been established to support the management of interagency incident mapping tools (QFIIMS). The Subcommittee has also formed a Working Group, led by Vicky Reynen, to develop interagency procedures and doctrine for the use of DFES and DBCA SharePoint record-keeping platforms during incident management. This will provide guidance on platform access and use, ownership of records based on the Controlling Agency, transition between platforms, and post-incident record sharing.

Training and Development Subcommittee met on 16 February 2026. Following recent onboarding of new staff within the DFES CLaD team, progress is being made against the 2025/26 Work Plan. Key achievements include completion of the final draft of the Bushfire Investigation course and the release of the Introduction to Fire Ecology online course. Current Chair, Will Blackshaw (DFES), has indicated his intention to hand over the role to Jess Newman (DBCA) following the April meeting.

Bushfire Research Subcommittee met on 3 December 2025 and 10 March 2026. Chris Dunne (DFES) has taken over as Chair from Ryan Butler (DBCA), with meetings continuing to have strong attendance. The Subcommittee also welcomed Ryan Tangney (DBCA), who replaced long-standing member Ben Miller (DBCA), a member since inception. Recent discussions focused on progressing the WA Bushfire Research Priorities. In 2025, approximately 2,500 papers referencing 'bushfire' were reviewed, with Kate Brameld (DFES) and Ben Miller developing a matrix framework to assess and shortlist key papers. Brendan McAtee also provided an update on the NHRA Grant Program.



Bushfire Lessons Management Working Group met 26 February 2026, and welcome Vanessa Hart as the newly appointed DFES Manager Lessons Management. The Working Group continues to progress priorities from its 2025/26 Work Plan, including the development and distribution of debriefing guidelines. These guidelines aim to provide clarity and promote consistent, high-quality debrief observations from each PFT following deployment.

Upcoming IBOC Meetings

Please find the approved 2025/26 IBOC meeting schedule below:

- 6 May 2026
- July 2026 (TBC)
- August 2026 – Planning Day (TBC)

Work is underway to plan the 2026/27 meeting schedule and the 2026 Annual IBOC Planning Day.

If you would like any further information on or relating to the IBOC, please contact the Executive Officer at Kendall.O'Neil@dfes.wa.gov.au or on 0436 322 385.

9.03.26 NEXT MEETING & CLOSURE

The next meeting will be held Wednesday 26th August 2026 at 6pm.

There being no further business, the Presiding Member Cr McCabe declared the meeting closed at 8:00pm.