Shire of Irwin Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) Meeting

held at the Dongara BFB Station

Monday, 8 July 2024

at 6.00pm

MINUTES

1 DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

In the absence of the Chief Executive Officer, Shannon Stubbs, Community Emergency Services Manager welcomed all attendees to the meeting and handed over to the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer to chair the meeting.

2 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Members

Mr S Ivers	Chief Executive Officer – Shire of Irwin
Cr P Summers	Shire of Irwin Councillor & Chief Bushfire Control Officer
Mr S Stubbs	Community Emergency Services Manager
Cr A Gillam	Shire of Irwin Councillor & Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Mr R Moorcroft	Community Ranger – Shire of Irwin
Mr M Butcher	Captain Dongara Volunteer Fire & Rescue
Mr J Butcher	Captain Dongara Town Bush Fire Brigade
Mr J Moss	Captain Irwin Bush Fire Brigade
Mr M Butcher	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Mr H Campbell	Fire Control Officer
Mr S Boyd	Fire Control Officer

Representatives

Ms Jessica Henriques	Department of Biodiversity, Conversation & Attractions
Mr L Mulholland	District Officer DFES

Visitors

Apologies

Mr S Ivers	Chief Executive Officer – Shire of Irwin
Ms Jessica Henriques	Department of Biodiversity, Conversation & Attractions
Mr L Mulholland	District Officer DFES

3 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON AND DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

CESM Shannon Stubbs sought nominations for a new chairperson or if the attendees were content to allow Cr Peter Summers continue in the role of Chairperson. Cr Peter Summers accepted the nomination.

Further nominations were invited and, as no other nominations were forthcoming, the nomination period was declared closed by Shannon Stubbs.

With only one (1) nomination received, Peter Summers was declared elected unopposed to the office of Chairperson for the Shire of Irwin Bush Fire Advisory Committee.

Further nominations were invited for the Deputy Chairperson, as no other nominations were forthcoming, the nomination period was declared closed by the Chairperson.

Peter Summers continued the meeting as Chairperson.

4 BUSINESS ARISING

4.1 Confirmation of previous minutes

A copy of the minutes of the 20 July 2022 Shire of Irwin Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting have been provided under separate cover.

COMMITTEE DECISION AND RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	**OCM Res: 200824**
MOVED: J Butcher	**SECONDED: S Boyd**
That the Minutes of the 20 July 2022 Shire of Irwin Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting, as previously circulated, be adopted as true and accurate recording of that meeting.	
Consensus:	**Carried**

4.2 Action items from previous minutes

Nil

5 APPOINTMENT OF FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS AND FIRE WEATHER OFFICERS

The Committee reviewed the appointed Fire Control Officers and Fire Weather Officers and made recommendation to Council for new appointments.

COMMITTEE DECISION AND RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	**OCM Res: 200824**
MOVED: J Butcher	**SECONDED: H Campbell**

That the following positions be recommended for appointment by Council and all previous appointments be revoked:

Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Peter Summers
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Andrew Gillam
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Murray Butcher
Fire Control Officer Dongara Town	Hugh Campbell
Fire Control Officer Dongara Town	Stephen Boyd
Fire Control Officer	Shane Ivers
Fire Control Officer	Shannon Stubbs
Fire Weather Officer - East	Andrew Gillam
Fire Weather Officer - South	Peter Summers

Consensus: **Carried**

6 CONFIRMATION AND APPOINTMENT OF BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

6.1 Members & Representatives Elected 2022

The Committee reviewed the Bush Fire Members and Representatives elected in 2022.

6.2 Recommendation of Members & Representatives

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) made recommendation to Council the following changes to the appointments.

COMMITTEE DECISION AND RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL **OCM Res: 200824**

MOVED: P SUMMERS **SECONDED: S STUBBS**

That the following Members and Representatives be recommended for appointment to the Bush Fire Advisory Committee by Council and all previous appointments be revoked:

Members	
Chairperson – Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Peter Summers (Appointed 2022)
Shire President	Mark Leonard (Appointed 2024
Shire of Irwin Chief Executive Officer	Shane Ivers (Appointed 2021)
CESM and Fire Control Officer	Shannon Stubbs (Appointed 2024)
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Murry Butcher (Appointed 2021)
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Andrew Gillam (Appointed 2021)
Shire of Irwin Rangers	Community Rangers (Appointed 2021)
Fire Control Officer	Stephen Boyd (Appointed 2021)
Fire Control Officer	Hugh Campbell (Appointed 2021)
Fire Control Officer	Peter Summers (Appointed 2021)
Captain Irwin Bush Fire Brigade	Jonathan Moss (Appointed 2021)
Captain Dongara Town Bush Fire Brigade	James (Jimmy) Butcher (Appointed 2021)

Representatives	
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	Representative
Department of Fire & Emergency Services	Representative

Consensus: **Carried**

7 BUSH FIRE BRIGADE AGM MINUTES/MOTIONS RECIEVED

7.1 2023 Brigade Annual General Meeting (AGM) Minutes

Irwin Bush Fire Brigade AGM Minutes – Not held (Nil submitted to CESM Records)
Dongara Town Bush Fire Brigade AGM Minutes (Nil submitted to CESM Records)

7.2 Motions received from the Bush Fire Brigades for BFAC advice

Nil

8 REVIEW OF RESTRICTED AND PROHIBTED BURNING TIMES

The Committee reviewed the Restricted and Prohibited Burning periods annually. Amendments were recommended by the Committee. Dates are set out below:

Current: Restricted 15th October – 31st October
Recommended Change: Restricted 1st October – 31st October
Prohibited 1st November – 28th February
Restricted 1st March – 7th April

9 REVIEW OF FIREBREAK REQUIREMENTS

The Committee reviewed the annual Firebreak Notice. Peter Summers suggested extending the Restricted Burning Period. This suggestion was made due to recent changes in seasons and increased fuel loading within the Shire.

The Committee discussed and considered this suggestion and agreed to amend the current restricted burning period date, changing from the 15th of October to the 1st of October. If conditions are appropriate, then permits can be issued.

The committee discussed and would like to see more proactive enforcement of non-completion of firebreak compliance. This is to be in conjunction firstly with a notice that stipulates that if not completed by the compliance date, contractors will be called to complete works at the property owner's expense.

The committee would like to also see more education regarding fire break compliance via social media, electronic notice boards within the shire.

Follow up on ensuring all appointed persons involved with issuing permits, FCO's have access to permit books.

COMMITTEE DECISION AND RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	**OCM Res: 200824**
That the Firebreak Notice 2023/24 be amended for 2024/25 as per the below: a) The Restricted Burning Period for the Shire of Irwin be set as 1st October – 31st October.	
Consensus:	**Carried**

10 REPORTS

10.1 CHIEF BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS REPORT

Peter Summers reported on the fires in the last season, noting it was relatively quiet up to Christmas. Discussed the issues the arsonist caused lighting up numerous fires along the highway.

The second arsonist that caused further fires stretched resources. Having the DBCA ground crew and water bombers assisted with containment.

Nuisance calls are still prevalent and take up resources and suggested calling out Dongara BFB for such things like car fires outside of gazetted fire district.

10.2 DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (DFES) REPORT

Nil

10.3 DEPARTMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, CONSERVATION AND ATTRACTIONS (DPAW)

Nil

10.4 BUSH FIRE BRIGADE REPORTS

10.4.1 IRWIN

J Moss. Advised it is the same crew undertaking most of the firefighting duties. The 1st Lieutenant, Paul Elson has a full time job and is busier than used to be so less availability from members.
Also noted there are minimal new persons moving into the area and employees of the larger farms need to become more involved to alleviate the issue.
Irwin plan on undertaking their AGM in the coming weeks. Discussion on budgetary matters and recouping funds from a Water access bore that was completed in 2022. Receipts to be provided (already paid for by brigade) and attempt to claim to be made against LGGS funding to recoup funds for brigade.

DONGARA
Jimmy Butcher. Thanked Irwin BFB for their assistance at numerous fires.
It was noted that famers are starting to rely on the volunteers a bit too much, land holders need to step up and complete the mopping up / blacking out and not rely on the volunteers to stay for extended periods completing this for them.
Noted the water bombers make a significant difference with fighting fires, reducing times out on the fire ground.

10.5 SHIRE OF IRWIN REPORT (Community Emergency Services Manager)

Shannon Stubbs thanked all the Brigades and volunteers on behalf of the Shire and for their ongoing support. Reminded volunteers to report to him if you need anything fixed etc.

Currently working on tools relating to WHS to roll out to volunteers, within the application SiteDocs.

Local Government Grant Scheme result after countering initial offer provided an operating grant offer of $57,000. Encourage all Brigade to submit or enquire regarding any potential capital works required at their facilities.

A Bushfire Risk Mitigation Coordinator is currently in the final stages of recruitment by the Shire of Irwin. This will ensure going forward the Bushfire Mitigation Plans and asset protection works are undertaken with the appropriate grant funding applications.

The importance of undertaking regular training and utilising provided PPE / Uniforms when attending incidents needs to be reinforced by brigades leadership.

11 GENERAL BUSINESS

11.1 Workplace Health & Safety System

The Shire is leading the way in reference to the response to new Work Health Safety (WHS) legislation. New WHS monitor system has been introduced, building to identify and improve.

Aim to get farmers in appropriate clothing/PPE, and to attend future training as many improvements have been seen from a few years ago.

It was noted that a recommendation to private farm businesses that PPE is made available to machine operators (Harvesters etc) in case of accidental fire. As they will be first to attempt to extinguish, may prevent injury through burns.

11.2 Training Calendar/Requirements

Minimum training standards for BFB members, linked now to the new OS&H laws determining volunteer members as employees of the shire. Only members who have complete the minimum training are allowed to undertake firefighting duties. The minimum training as outlined below and taken from the 'Bushfire Service Training Program'.

1. Bush Fire Safety Awareness
2. Fire Fighting Skills

This should be followed up with the online module 'Aiims Awareness'. This is available in the DFES volunteer Hub E-Academy.

11.3 Water Tanks

There are fresh water bores being utilised on the Indian Ocean Drive construction site, by MRWA, for the road realignment and upgrades. Undertake stakeholder engagement to investigate the possibility that on completion of the roadworks, the bores be made available for a tank refill point for the fire brigades.

11.4 Bushfire Mitigation Program

See previous comments relating the new BRMC role.

12 CLOSURE

Meeting closed at 7.35 pm. Minutes to be completed and forwarded to council.