

# Shire of Denmark Minutes



## BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL RECEPTION ROOM  
953 SOUTH COAST HIGHWAY, DENMARK  
THURSDAY 12<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2019

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**1. ELECTION OF PRESIDING PERSON**

Pursuant to item 3. of meeting minutes of the Bushfire Advisory Committee (AGM) held on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019 Councillor Mark Allen was elected as the presiding person.

**2. DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS**

The Presiding Person opened the meeting at 6:30pm

**3. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE**MEMBERS:

- Cr Mark Allen
- Mr Lez Baines
- Mr Bryce Edwards
- Mr Murray Brooker
- Mr Mike Hills
- Mr Marcus Owen
- Mr Lee Shelley
- Mr Carl Wesley
- Mr Craig Hughes
- Mr Brian Vigus
- Mr Sid Marshall
- Mr Alex Williams
- Mr Patrick McConigley

(Voting)

- Council Delegate / Presiding Person
- Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO)
- Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (DCBFCO)
- Mt Lindesay FCO
- Harewood FCO
- Ocean Beach FCO
- VFRS Captain/FCO
- Mt Shadforth FCO
- Carmarthen FCO
- Tingledale FCO
- Scotsdale FCO
- Hazelvale FCO
- East Denmark FCO

MEMBERS:

- Mr Tristan Farmer
- Mr Paul Ashton

(Non-Voting)

- DCBA Parks and Wildlife
- Australian Bluegum Plantations

STAFF:

- Mr Scott Medhurst
- Mrs Angela Simpson
- Mrs Charmaine Shelley
- Ms Melanie Haymont
- Ms Emma Holliday

(Non-Voting)

- Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM)
- Manager of Community Services
- Senior Ranger
- Bushfire Risk Planning Coordinator
- Administration Officer Community Services (scribe)

VISITORS:

- Mr Matt Hartfield
- Mr Nigel Marsh
- Mr Richard Stanley
- Mr Bart Lebbing
- Mr Tony Pedro

- Denmark Police, Officer in Charge
- Mt Lindesay BFB
- Denmark Support
- Denmark Environment Centre
- Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee

APOLOGIES:

- Mr Simon Coppock
- Mr Wes Bailye

- William Bay FCO
- Area Officer Department of Fire and Emergency Services

**ABSENT:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Mr Craig Lilley	Kordabup FCO
<input type="checkbox"/> Mr Ivars Sulcs	Peaceful Bay FCO
<input type="checkbox"/> Mr Kevin Hard	Parryville FCO
<input type="checkbox"/> Mr Callum Baxter	Somerset Hill FCO
<input type="checkbox"/> Mr Adrian Kranendonk	F.W.O.
<input type="checkbox"/> Mr Paul Harbron	VFRS/Town FCO
<input type="checkbox"/> Mr Neville Brass	Nornalup FCO

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

Nil

**4. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PERSON PRESIDING**

*Cr Allen welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Angela Simpson the Acting Community Services Manager and Emma Holliday the Community Services Administration Officer and minute taker of the meeting.*

*Cr Allen thanked Bryce Edwards, Kelly McLeod and Marcus Owen for going over east and volunteering their time to assist in fighting the NSW fires.*

**5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES****5.1 Committee Meeting Minutes****COMMITTEE DECISION**

ITEM 5.1

MOVED: **Bryce Edwards**SECONDED: **Murray Brooker**

That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Annual General Meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2019 be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**6. GUEST SPEAKER**

Mr Lez Baines introduced Mr Matt Hartfield OIC, Denmark Police:

Mr Matt Hartfield delivered a discussion on driving under emergency and the importance of assessing all the risks.

*CBFO and CESM advised that department of Fire and Emergency Services do provide on-road and off-road training and Albany is looking to build capacity with new driving instructors.*

*Mr Marcus Owen and CESM advised that qualified drivers must be driving “under emergency conditions”, don’t let unqualified drivers drive.*

## **7. OFFICER REPORTS**

### **7.1 Department of Fire and Emergency Services**

Nil

### **7.2 Department of Biodiversity Conservation & Attractions**

Mr Tristan Farmer reported on the following:

- Three burns were completed covering 10,500 hectares.
- Currently monitoring the dryness, at:
  - Hay River
  - Denbarker
  - East of Nornalup
- The Jarrah forest is currently getting too dry and the Karri forest is getting dry enough.
- Mt Leahy and Redman are still being monitored, but no other burns will be conducted until autumn 2020.
- Western cell of Burnes Road was started but then became too dry, all the signs have been taken down and DBCA will look at again in autumn. This area was always planned to be done in 2 or 3 stages.

### **7.3 Australian Bluegum Plantations**

Mr Paul Ashton reported on the following:

- Currently commencing establishment program for next year, will be implementing the same coordinated approach.
- Mr Paul Ashton thanked CESM for adding them to the SMS Alert register.

### **7.4 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO)**

Mr Lez Baines submitted the following report:

- Not too many incidents to report, VFRS and BFB are working well together and communication between the 2 groups is good with both helping out each other.
- One call out on the 2nd had the potential to get rather frantic but was pulled up nice and quickly by Somerset Hill who were assisted by Mt Lindsay and Kordabup. This owner did not comply with the permit conditions and his permits were revoked. He will also be receiving an invoice for machinery which was required.
- Several Brigades have completed Hazard Reduction Burns and I notice that Brigade training is also increasing.
- Could Brigades have a weekly spread sheet with available crews as we could possibly be in for a busy season?
- Encouragement given to Brigades to put themselves onto the pager alert system which is proving to be very efficient.

*The CBFCO reported that lots of requests have been received from Albany DFES, any appliances that are released are considered very carefully before approval granted.*

*Reminder given to the members to beware of the importance of having LACES/PAFTACS*

*CBFCO and CESM spoke about mobilising CESM early on, these positions are not first responders and won't come to the site straight away. COMCEN must be logged even if you see smoke you need to notify CESM / CBFCO / DCBFCO, don't go out alone and you must have radio contact.*

## **7.5 Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM)**

Mr Scott Medhurst submitted the following report

### **Prevention;**

- Annual slashing and works program has commenced a bit late this year but is underway.
- MAF funding successful, Tender Process to be implemented before works can commence
- UCL/UMR Works completed across most of the Shire (Some works to be completed next year)
- Thanks to Brigades and Members that have assisted DBCA with their works around the Shire fringe. There is expected to be more of these opportunities in the future please encourage your members to assist.

*CESM thanked Ms Melanie Haymont for all the work she put towards successfully obtaining a grant of \$335,000 the MAF.*

### **Community Engagement;**

- The Bush Fire Ready team have made significant progress in this space with new groups formed, new facilitators trained and several community preparedness events held. It is a pleasure to attend these events not only for how professionally they are presented but to see the buy in from our community. Please speak to Carl if you have any further Bush Fire Ready enquiries he is more than happy to help steer you in the right Direction.
- Melanie Haymont and Charlotte have delivered workshops as part of the BRIGS project and it was good to see many volunteers attending them to broaden their minds and skills.
- Whilst this is a developing space and all members play their part I would encourage members to dedicate someone in their brigades to Community Engagement and Bush Fire Ready, there are many people out there that really enjoy this type of work. It may be a recruitment opportunity for someone not interested in an active Fire Response role also.

*CESM thanked Murray, Carl, Melanie and Charlotte for their work relating to the Bush Fire Ready groups.*

### **Preparedness**

- There have been some significant issues located with appliances this servicing period which have largely been rectified now. Servicing has commenced this year there has been a few difficulties due to a new employee at the depot who was thrown in the deep end of Fire Appliance Servicing. Please make sure vehicle fault books are completed and if you don't have one a note or note pad please let someone know. If your appliance does have a fault please let the workshops or myself know and we will make all attempts to fix it as soon as possible there is no expectations for brigade members to attempt these repairs themselves.
- Command vehicle will be serviced by external contractor.

- AVL Testing. Please remember this needs to be done monthly and it is audited. We are really good at this now with the numbers of no tests decreasing every month. It is important to keep this up over the high threat period as it has identified several issues with the units over winter.

*It was requested that a courtesy call be given to FCO's to let them know when appliances have been removed from the shed. CESM acknowledged this request and advised it would be relayed to concerned parties.*

### **Training**

- Please remember all members need to have completed VFF1 to go on the fireground. I appreciate that some members may have the skills but not the qualifications on paper. Please contact me directly about this and we will work to have their skills recognised officially.
- Training for 2019/2020 – Basic training courses have been scheduled for 19/20 courses will be shared between Denmark, Albany and Plantagenet. It has been shown members are willing to travel to these locations to complete courses so sharing the locations means all members have better access to training delivery. Specialised courses are expected to be added early in the New Year before publication of the calendar.
- eAcademy 2.0 is expected to be released early next year, there is a video available on the Volunteer Hub and eAcademy website. It is looking like it will be much more user friendly.
- New pathways and Modules are also expected early next year. It is understood there will be a transitional period to ensure training delivery is not interrupted while trainers are upskilled/refreshed on the delivery of the new content.

### **PPC/PPE**

- Please remember to wear all PPC appropriately it's not going to protect you if it's not worn properly and may have implications for you if you get hurt.
- Cotton T-Shirts are now available to Active members in the first instance, once members who regularly avail themselves are kitted out we can continue to roll them out to others.
- Currently investigating options of cooler and more comfortable but harder wearing PPC please watch this space for developments.

*Mr Marcus Owen asked if crew leader badges could be given out so that people could determine who the leadership crew were at jobs. Mr Scott Medhurst advised that the new uniforms have sections on the shoulders for epaulettes or otherwise could have two velcro slips on chest.*

*A vote was held on whether to have gold or blue pants, a majority vote of 7 people concluded that the pants colour will remain as gold.*

### **Response**

- Local incidents have been very well and promptly attended. Thanks to all members that have given up time to do so.
- Intra/Interstate deployments are becoming more frequent. Thank you to all members that have committed to sometimes week long deployment, not only have you given a lot of your time, so have your family and employers and it should be commended.

- Heightened state of readiness and pre deployments are becoming the norm with the climatic conditions we are living with. Whilst these deployments and preparedness actions can cause an inconvenience and often not eventuate into anything serious it makes planning for the support of large incidents much easier so thank you to members that have availed themselves for these.

### **Other**

- Fire Management Notice – The notice and booklet have received lots of positive feedback this year mostly regarding the layout and the addition of the booklet. However it is acknowledged that it is not perfect. At the next BFAC meeting establishment of a small working group is proposed. This will allow the group to provide something to the June BFAC allowing the Notice to go to the July Council Meeting which means the Notice will be out to residents at the earliest time possible. Please consider an appropriate person from each Zone to be part of the working group for next meeting.

*CESM advised that Mr Marcus Owen would speak more to this point in item 8.2*

- Media– The media are getting increasingly persistent at contacting volunteers and staff during incidents and this is only expected to increase during summer. Please remember that as volunteers you are representing the Shire of Denmark and that all media inquiries must be directed to the Incident Controller for escalation to the Shire CEO or President as appropriate.
- Social Media – We encourage brigade Social Media pages for the value they provide to the community as an engagement tool, SoD and DFES policy must be adhered to for these pages so please ensure content is suitable.
- Personal Social Media – Recently there has been some complaints received from the public and also DFES professional standards surrounding inappropriate content posted by people representing the Shire and the Bush Fire Service. One of these complaints resulted in a volunteer being removed from the brigade (not from Denmark). Remember that as a BFS volunteer of you are seen by the community to be an authority on fire and on social media and it's very easy for them to capture what has been said and share/report it these days. By all means consider your privacy settings on personal pages and be mindful of content you post particularly if you are speaking about fire or on DFES social media.

## **7.6 Bushfire Risk Planning Coordinator**

Ms Melanie Haymont submitted the following report:

- A community survey is currently in circulation and is due to close on the 16th December. So far, we have had about a 30% response, consultants say that is good.
- Plane Tree Precinct tender is currently being advertised, a fire wise garden will be planted in this location hopefully launched in May 2020. It will be the largest of it's kind in Western Australia and Garden Australia will come down to do a segment on the garden.

### **Mitigation activities Fund (MAF)**

- The Shire of Denmark Received \$335K from the State Government to carry out 44 treatments across the Shire in the 2019/2020 financial year.



- The Shire became eligible for the funding with the Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM) endorsement of the Bushfire Risk Management (BRM) Plan.
- This round of funding has been made available through Royalties for Regions funding the Shire will be eligible for funding for the next 3-5yrs.

### **Natural Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP)**

#### **Public workshops**

- Over the last three weeks there have been a number of sessions conducted in the community around bushfire resilience and preparedness with over 300 people involved workshops and education sessions.
- The Red Cross delivered:
  - Five sessions of the pillow case program to year 3/4s at Denmark Primary School covering over 100 students
  - Two sessions of the youth program to year 10 at Denmark Senior High School to 70 students
  - A Rediplan session to 30 adults in October.
- Over the weekend of the 1st, 3rd and the 23rd of November the forever project in conjunction with the Shire of Denmark and Department of Emergency Services delivered five workshops to the community approximately 140 people attended
  - Bushfire ready Gathering
  - Fire & Biodiversity
  - Bus Tour
  - 2x Property planning

### **Bushfire Resilience in the Great southern (BRIGS)**

- Vegetation pick up has been completed for all eight precincts in the project
- The draft Ocean beach and Goode beach reports have been generated
- Data from the field pick-ups has been seen to the level 3 bushfire consultants for 5km fire run modelling and evacuation planning
- Full mapping and recommendations expected May 2020

## **8. GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **8.1 Biodiversity Conservation Act in Reference to Mitigation Activities**

Mr Lez Baines reported on the following:

This subject was brought to my attention through a conversation on an unrelated subject after a chat with the CESM from Port Augusta. However alarm bells have started ringing and this is not a subject which we can ignore as it has very serious ramifications to all of us working on certain fire grounds.

In a nut shell, small piles, windrows, large piles on clear ground would be ok but any "Hazard Reduction" burn on private property is now subject to meeting the guidelines laid out in this new legislation. The penalties could be imposed on the "agent" rather than the owner, this could include us as volunteers who are conducting the "Hazard Reduction" burn on behalf of the owners.

The new legislation is to protect fauna and flora throughout our state, whether a threatened species could be disturbed or destroyed. These include mammals eg. Quokka's, Rock-Wallaby, Western Ring Tailed Possums, birds such as the Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo etc.

The Shire of Augusta has put together a 1 page document which is a waiver for property owners to sign accepting all responsibility and necessary authorisations from DBCA in order to address conditions during a “Hazard Reduction” burn.

*Mr Murray Brooker enquired if volunteers were potentially non-compliant with this legislation every time they fought a fire, CESM clarified that this legislation does not apply to operational duties it only effects “Hazard Reduction” burns on private properties.*

*DCBFCO advised that this legislation is not new and was issued in 2016 as a result of Federal Law stating that fauna needed to be included in checks, as well as flora. CESM advised that the Shire has requested a guideline for local governments from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions but this is not yet available. It was discussed that a waiver form could be developed in the interim.*

*Mr Murray Brooker raised as a point that there is currently not enough information and if people were to ask volunteers questions there is no policy for volunteers to follow. It was decided that as there would be no more approved “Hazard Reduction” burns before the March 2020 meeting, this could be deferred and then re-raised at the March meeting.*

**Action Item – The Denmark Shire to investigate this new Biodiversity Conservation Act legislation in order to protect volunteer brigades from unknowingly committing an offense whilst performing Fire Fighting “Hazard Reduction” burns on private properties.**

## **8.2 Fire Management Notices Review**

Mr Marcus Owen presented the following motion for consideration:

That BFAC form a sub-committee to conduct any future review of the Fire Management Notice, the sub-committee to comprise of the following members;

- Chief FCO &/or Deputy Chief
- FCO 1
- FCO 2
- FCO 3
- CESM
- Senior Ranger

The need for a review to be established at (December?) BFAC meeting. The reasons for the review being change in legislation, public feedback, issues that arose in previous fire season.

*CESM spoke to the motion and suggested that the group didn't require the Senior Ranger and CFCO and DCFCO and otherwise suggested that the working group include the CESM and FCO representatives from the West, East and Central*

*Cr Mark Allen asked the question to the Senior Ranger, CFCO and DCFCO in which they were in agreeance, he then asked the Committee if there were any questions to which there were none.*

*Cr Mark Allen then called for volunteers from the West, East and Central quadrants. The following members nominated themselves for the position and the Committee agreed unanimously.*

*West. Mr Alex William - Hazelvale FCO*

*East. Mr Marcus Owen - Ocean Beach FCO*

*Central. Mr Nigel Marsh – Mt Lindesay Lieutenant*

**Action Item – Group to meet and establish a Terms of Reference.**

**8.3 Denmark Bush Fire Ready Groups**

Mr Carl Wesley reported on the following:

There are currently 37 Bush Fire Ready groups registered with DFES and 12 groups pending. This is a huge increase from last year when there was only a handful. They have recently gained two new facilitators, Karen Cussons and Gail Guthrie which brings the number up to 7 facilitators for the whole shire. One of the main focuses of the administration group is producing a master contact list for the Bush Fire Ready Groups.

*Cr Mark Allan and the CBFC commended the efforts of the volunteers involved in establishing and assisting the Bush Fire Ready Groups*

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

**9.1 Shire of Denmark Medical Clearance Circular**

Mr Craig Hughes enquired if everyone had to provide a “fitness to work” certificate.

*CESM answered “no” it is only required if you have made it known that you are, or have been, injured. Brigades should be paying attention to their crew and if a member is not fit for work or presents injured then a certificate is required on their return.*

**9.2 Frequency of BFAC meetings**

Mr Marcus Owen made reference to the meeting minutes of BFAC meeting held in December 2015, which states BFAC meetings will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of March, June and November and asked why meetings have been held in December.

**Action – Review of Meeting dates to be held at AGM**

**9.3 Pump Training**

Mr Marcus Owen stated that there should be a push for volunteers to do ongoing pump training.

*CESM responded that new module based training will be released by DFES early in the new year and the changes that have been implemented will make it easier for specialist training such as pump operations to be completed. CESM also stressed the importance of ensuring volunteers will need to complete VFF1 to ensure their current qualifications carry over. CESM advised that he is able to work with brigades to ensure they complete this training.*

**9.4 Acknowledgements**

Mr Marcus Owen thanked the crew that came out to Mount Hallowell.

Mr Lee Shelley thanked the brigades that came out to the structure fire, the core of the house and surrounding properties were saved.

Mr Patrick McConigley thanked the volunteers who came out to Denmark Senior High School and did a presentation, it was well received by all.

**9.5 2020 Training Calendar [Alex Williams]**

Mr Alex Williams asked when the 2020 training Calendar will be released.

*CESM responded that it is currently being reviewed and will be released in stages only showing 3 months at a time. It is estimated that the calendar will be released in January with the first lot of training commencing late February. CESM also advised that he is available to work with brigades to run specific courses to upskill members if there is sufficient demand.*

**10. NEXT MEETING**

It is recommended that the next meeting the Bush Fire Advisory Committee be held on Thursday, 5th March 2020 at the Shire of Denmark Reception Room commencing at 6.30pm.

**11. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

There being no further business to discuss the Presiding Person closed the meeting at 9:20pm.

These minutes were confirmed at the meeting of the \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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