



Shire of Murray

Minutes

**Bush Fire Advisory Committee
Meeting**

**Wednesday 22 October 2025
at 6.00pm**

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**MINUTES OF SHIRE OF MURRAY
BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE MURRAY SHIRE COUNCIL, 1915 PINJARRA ROAD, PINJARRA
ON WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2025 AT 6:00PM**

1 DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

The Chair Cr Ange Rogers declared the meeting open the time being 6.00pm.

It should be noted that decisions of this committee are only recommendations to and not decisions of Council. Committee recommendations should therefore not be actioned on or otherwise relied upon until Council has formally considered and decided on the Committee recommendations.

2 ATTENDANCES/APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

PRESENT

Cr Ange Rogers (BFAC Chairperson), Nicole Stevens (Coordinator Ranger and Community Safety/CBFCO), Douglas McLarty (FCO Coolup VBFB), Anthony Cocivera (FCO Dwellingup VBFB), Michael Webster (FCO North Dandalup VBFB), Lawrie Caffin (FCO South Yunderup/Ravenswood VBFB), Justin Crotty (FCO West Murray VBFB) and Kevin Jones (FCO Pinjarra VFRS).

IN ATTENDANCE

Dean Unsworth (Chief Executive Officer), John Kowal (BFAC Executive Officer/Manager Ranger and Community Safety), Tracie Unsworth (Director Corporate Services), Justyn Bennett (DCBFCO), Jarron Van Elst (DCBFCO), Brendan Webster (DCBFCO), Dave Vuletic (Captain Coolup VBFB), Stuart Kirkham (Coolup VBFB), Liam Barker (Captain West Murray VBFB), Robert "Bluey" Wilson (South Yunderup/Ravenswood VBFB), Ken Jones (Captain Pinjarra VFRS), Bella Harrison (Ranger), Adrian Eppen (Ranger) and Chantelle Goff (Minute Taker/Emergency Management and Administration Officer).

ATTENDED VIA TEAMS

Brett Finlay (West Murray VBFB).

APOLOGIES

Nil.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil.

There were seven (7) ex-officio members, five (5) members of the public and three (3) members of staff in attendance at this time.

3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING

3.1 Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting – 21 May 2025

Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 21 May 2025 be noted.

4 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Nil.

5 BUSINESS ARISING

5.1 Nominations for Bush Fire Control Officers

File Ref:	D25/36863
Previous Items:	Nil.
Applicant:	Nil.
Author and Title:	John Kowal, Manager Ranger and Community Safety
Declaration of Interest:	Nil.
Voting Requirements:	Simple Majority
Appendices:	Item 5.1 Appendix 1 - Extract - Clause 8 - Shire of Murray Bush Fire Brigades Standard Operating Procedures Item 5.1 Appendix 2 - BFAC Terms of Reference as at 19 June 2025 Item 5.1 Appendix 3 - CBFCO - EOI Submissions - October 2025

Nominees were given the opportunity to provide a speech at 6:01pm.

Secret ballot conducted by Director Corporate Services (Returning Officer) at 6:09pm. Brendan Webster voted as proxy for FCO North Dandalup VBFB as Michael Webster cannot vote due to nominating as the CBFCO.

The BFAC Chairperson declared the successful candidate was Michael Webster with four (4) votes.

Recommendation

Council Decision OCM25/125 (23 October 2025)

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee:

1. **Recommends to Council that Michael Webster be appointed to the role of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.**
2. **The appointment of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer be advertised in accordance with section 38(2A) of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*.**

In Brief

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee (**BFAC**) is to consider and recommend the appointment of a person to fulfill the role of the Chief Bush Fire Control Office (**CBFCO**) in accordance with section 38(1) of the *Bush Fires Act 1954* (**Act**), Shire of Murray Bush Fire Brigades Local Law 2024 (**Local Law**) and the Shire of Murray Bush Fire Brigades Standard Operating Procedures (**SOP**).

Background

In accordance with the Act, Local Law and the SOP, an Expression of Interest (**Eoi**) process was initiated seeking nominations from suitably experienced and qualified Bush Fire Brigade members for the role of the Shire of Murray (**Shire**) CBFCO. The closing date for the receipt of nominations was Tuesday 14th October 2025.

Report Detail

Due to the recent resignation submitted by the current CBFCO from the role and in accordance with the provision of Clause 8 of the SOP, an Eoi process was undertaken and circulated on the 1 October 2025 to all Shire of Murray Fire Brigade Captains, Brigade Secretaries, Brigade members and to all current Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officers and all current Bush Fire Control Officers. The Eoi closed on Tuesday 14 October 2024, at 5pm.

A copy of Clause 8 of the SOP is attached at **Appendix 1** The BFAC decision making process in relation to the position of the CBFCO is contained at clause 6.7 of the BFAC Terms of Reference. A copy of the BFAC Terms of Reference is attached at **Appendix 2**.

Following the closure of the EOI period, three (3) Eoi submissions were received for the CBFCO role:

- Brett Finlay
- Webster Michael
- Robert Wilson

In accordance with the SOP, a panel consisting of the Director of Corporate Services and the Manager Ranger and Community Safety undertook a review of the Eoi submissions as attached at **Appendix 3**, and it was considered that the submissions for the CBFCO role satisfied the criteria as described in the Position Description in the SOP's.

The successful candidate for the role is to be determined by secret ballot by the voting members of the BFAC.

To resolve the vacancy in the role of CBFCO, this BFAC report recommendation and subsequent minutes of the BFAC meeting held on 22 October 2025 will be provided to the Council following the BFAC Meeting for consideration prior to the Ordinary Council Meeting scheduled for 23 October 2025.

Council Plan

Focus Area	Planet
Outcome 6	A resilient community equipped to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies.
Objectives 6.1	Minimise risks and impacts from fires, floods and natural disasters.
Actions 6.1.1 and 6.1.2	Implement bushfire mitigation works. Implement the Local Emergency Risk Management Plan to raise community awareness, understanding and confidence in what the Shire is doing to address bushfire risks.

Other Strategic Links

Nil.

Statutory Environment

Local Government Act (1995)

5.21 Voting

(3) If the votes of members present are equally divided, the person presiding is to cast a second vote.

Bush Fires Act 1954

Section 38 - Local government may appoint bush fire control officer

(1) A local government may from time to time appoint such persons as it thinks necessary to be its bush fire control officers under and for the purposes of this Act, and of those officers shall

subject to section 38A(2) appoint 2 as the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer who shall be first and second in seniority of those officers, and

subject thereto may determine the respective seniority of the other bush fire control officers appointed by it.

(2A) The local government shall cause notice of an appointment made under the provisions of subsection (1) to be published at least once in a newspaper circulating in its district.

Sustainability & Risk Considerations

Economic - (Impact on the Economy of the Shire and Region)

Nil.

Social – (Quality of life to community and/or affected landowners)

Nil.

Environment – (Impact on environment's sustainability)

Nil.

Policy Implications

There are no policy implications, and the level of risk is considered to be low if the recommendation is endorsed. The proposed appointments under delegated authority are in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

Risk Management Implications

<i>Risk Level</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Low	Nil.

Consultation

In accordance with previously established procedures, all brigades are cognizant of the Expression of Interest process for determining the CBFCO and the DCBFCO positions.

At a specially convened meeting held on Tuesday 30th September 2025, all brigade Captains and FCO's were provided a briefing about the resignation of the present CBFCO and the Expression of Interest process that would be undertaken.

Resource Implications

Financial

The cost of advertising the appointments in accordance with 38(2A) of the Act is accommodated within the annual operating budget.

Workforce

Nil.

Options

1. Support the recommendation.
2. Amend the recommendation.
3. Reject the recommendation and determine an alternate position.

Conclusion

The BFAC recommendation is for the consideration of Council. Should Council endorse the BFAC recommendation the CEO under delegated authority can then formally appoint a person in accordance with the provisions of the Act to the role as Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.

6 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**6.1 Chief and Deputy Bush Fire Control Officers Remuneration**

A review of the remuneration arrangements for the positions of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO) and Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers (DCBFCO) identified that the previous allocation of a Shire vehicle is no longer practical following changes to the Shire's fire management structure and internal staffing changes. Benchmarking with other local governments confirmed that no vehicles are provided for these roles; instead, annual honorariums are paid in recognition of the significant time commitment, personal expenses, and statutory responsibilities under the Bush Fires Act 1954. The Shire of Murray will therefore be introducing annual honorariums for the CBFCO and the DCBFCO, with funds to be allocated in the Shire's annual budget.

The remuneration for the CBFCO will be \$2,500 per year and \$1,500 for DCBFCO's.

7 MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

Nil.

8 NEXT MEETING

The next Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting is TBA.

9 CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business the Presiding Member declared the meeting closed the time being 6:15pm.


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CHAIRPERSON