



Minutes

Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday 22 May 2024 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 MAY 2024 AT 6:00 PM**

1 DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

The Chair 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 / MEMBERS

Ange Rogers (SoM / Coolup VBFB), Douglas McLarty (SoM / Coolup VBFB), John Kowal (SoM / Manager Ranger and Community Safety) Nicole Stevens (CESM), Anthony Cocivera (FCO Dwellingup VBFB), Peter Thurkle (FCO North Dandalup VBFB), Jim Camplin (FCO South Yunderup VBFB), Kevin Jones (FCO Pinjarra VFRS)

IN ATTENDANCE / EX-OFFICIO

Dean Unsworth (Chief Executive Officer), Bella Harrison, Stuart Kirkham (Cr SoM), Tracie Unsworth (Director Corporate Services), Kenneth Jones (Captain PVFRS), Belinda Brown (Minute Taker).

APOLOGIES

Robert Wilson (CBFCO), Jimmy McInerny (Water Corporation), Ricki Southgate (DFES)

GUESTS

Luke Stafferton (Fire Fighter NDVBFB), Afton Stafferton (Fire Fighter NDVBFB), Chris Watts (1st Lieutenant NDVBFB), Dean McGuinness (Captain SYRVBFB), Justin Crotty (Captain WMVBFB), Lorraine Webster (Secretary NDVBFB), Michael Webster (4th Lieutenant NDVBFB), Riley Jenkinson (Fire Fighter SYRVBFB), Andrew Taylor (WMVBFB)

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil.

3 RECEIPT OF MINUTES OF MEETING

3.1 Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting – 16 August 2023

Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 16 August 2023 be noted.

4 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Nil.

CEO – Dean Unsworth addressed the meeting at 6.01pm

Dear Chair, BFAC members and respected volunteers,

In volunteer week, it is appropriate that I sincerely thank all of you for your continued service in protecting the lives and property within the Shire of Murray.

I would like to respond to the email that was sent by Mr Robert (Bluey) Wilson yesterday afternoon, but I did not want to respond via email and risk a keyboard war, and prefer to respond face to face at this BFAC meeting.

I was surprised and saddened at some of the contents of this email and for a resignation to be done in such a public way.

On behalf of the Shire, I would like to thank Bluey for his passion and commitment to the Shire and Brigades over many years. The hours that he has given have been extra-ordinary and so very appreciated by me personally, and on behalf of the Shire, Council and the community.

However, I wanted to put forward my response and the reasoning as to why there was a recommendation for BFAC (not the Shire or the Council), but **BFAC members** to recommend their Chief for the next 12 months.

Many of us attended a couple of Craig Salt workshops in mid to late 2022. These workshops identified a clear wish from the **Brigades** to really think about important issues and ways the Brigades can grow and meet the significant challenges that lay ahead. These things included a focus on

- Governance and the need to relook at the current structure
- Updating of the current rules and Standard Operating Procedures
- Look at having a process where the Chief and Deputy Chief role is open to anyone who can demonstrate the qualifications and competencies
- Foster two-way communication
- Succession planning including identifying future leaders.

What has since been implemented is what was requested: - and that is a fair, open and transparent process in selecting the Chief and Deputy Chief positions based on competencies rather than a popularity contest and whether they were a Brigade FCO or not.

Many would recall that in past years, only the FCO's selected by individual Brigades were eligible to be the Chief. This was problematic 2 years ago when we had no FCO's from Brigades nominate and that Mr Wilson was then selected by Council. This was one of the catalysts to relook at the process, and this was the driver of much discussion at the Craig Salt workshops.

The process before you tonight is the process that was supported by members at the Craig Salt workshops and then, through the numerous rewrites of Brigade rules and SOPS that occurred with firstly Rob Marlborough and then by John Kowal. The Shire has put this **Brigade led** process to the members tonight.

You will note that if we had the previous processes still in place, Mr Wilson would not have been Chief 2 years ago, and that Mr Peter Thurkle and Ms Justyn Bennett wouldn't be able to nominate tonight, not being a Brigade FCO. This previous system would have rendered two quality leaders the opportunity to nominate for leadership roles. The new process avoids that ridiculous model and encourages all who have the skills to apply.

I will state that I as CEO have given nothing but 100% support to Bluey from the day he was first selected as Chief until 3.24pm yesterday. My support was unwavering and consistent. Even on the previous times that Mr Wilson has resigned suddenly, I have worked closely with him to encourage him back to continue on in the role. However, these resignations cannot continue for the long-term good of the Brigades.

The Values that the Brigades signed off on in mid-2022 are:

- Impact - every member having a POSITIVE impact
- Excellence - continual improvement and developing leaders
- Collaboration - communication
- Innovation - learning to do things better
- Mutual Respect - goes without saying
- Empowerment - empower brigade members and officers so that they can develop

In terms of volunteerism, there is, in my opinion, a big difference between a volunteer that sells spoons and tea towels at the Arts and Crafts Club to a volunteer for a Bush Fire Brigade. And I say that with the very highest respect to our Arts and Crafts club members.

The difference is that Bush Fire Brigade volunteers assume a very high-risk role and put their safety on the line. With the new world of bigger fires, longer summers, dryer land and increased LEGAL responsibilities placed on all of us, especially the Shire, (including the risk of industrial manslaughter charges to the CEO if processes are not in order) a higher focus on best practice is mandatory. And hence why we have the process – which again I state was driven by the Brigades – that we have tonight.....And that is a very fair, open, transparent and truly democratic process for BRIGADES to select their leaders.

We want an organisation that is ambitious and innovative, and one that is able to adapt to meet the new world of climate change and risk exposure.

Unfortunately, with the withdrawal of Bluey's nomination, the choice between 2 qualified and very competent people has been taken away from the you.

Finally, I am disappointed that Bluey's comments in that "The Shire wants to go down the road of DFES/Shire Officers being the Chief. This is completely wrong. If the Shire wanted to go down the road of a DFES or Shire Chief, then the Shire would have done that, as is permissible under the Bush Fires Act...Something that many other Local Governments have in fact done.

This Shire did exactly opposite to what Mr Wilson is suggesting and did what was requested through the Craig Salt workshops and the SOP workshops that were held. Rather than appointing a DFES or Shire person, it put the decision making in the HANDS OF THE BRIGADES as was the request from the Brigades. So, to summarise to suggest that there is a hidden agenda is totally false.

Further, as CEO I did not see it not only fair, but not legal, for me to dismiss an application from an eligible person to hold a public office. This would be bordering on bullying and corrupt and interfering with a public process. Remember, the role of volunteer is classed as a Shire officer, and the same principles apply for paid staff as they do appoint Shire volunteers.

I have known Bluey for many years now and am totally disappointed that I didn't have the opportunity to discuss his concerns with him before he put out an open letter to one and all. We have always been able to talk freely and openly, and have regular wagers on football that I always lost. I truly did believe that he saw that I was in his corner. With his comment to finish off his email with his quote "You will not get complete loyalty from someone who takes an each way bet" is deeply disappointing.

I say to that comment, it was not my or the Shire's race to bet on. It was not mine or the Shire's (racing terms) 'place' to choose 'favourites' or back 'winners' but leave the decision making to the ones that I believe should have the say, and that is the BRIGADES. And in another in racing term, whoever is Chief this year and any future years is guaranteed mine and the Shires 'straight-out' support.

Again, I thank Bluey for his many years of service. His role of Chief could have been for many more years if he had been here tonight and had not withdrawn his nomination.

I truly hope that we can move on in a positive way and collectively bring to fruition all of the objectives that were identified through the Craig Salt workshops, and focus on:

- Positive Impact
- Excellence
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Mutual Respect
- Empowerment
- Succession Planning and
- Leadership Development.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening.

Ange Rogers thanked Dean for his address which concluded at 6.09pm

5 BUSINESS ARISING**5.1 Nominations for Bush Fire Control Officers, Bush Fire Control Officers - Permit Issuing Only, Fire Weather Officers & Other Shire Officer Positions**

File Ref: D24/16147
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 2a - Expression of Interest - CBFCO - Robert Wilson
Item 5.1 Appendix 2b - Expression of Interest - CBFCO - Nicole Stevens
Item 5.1 Appendix 3a - Expression of Interest - DCBFCO - Peter Thurkle
Item 5.1 Appendix 3b - Expression of Interest - DCBCO - Justyn Bennett
Item 5.1 Appendix 4a - Expression of Interest - Shire Training Coordinator
- John Waite

Recommendation/Committee Decision BFAC24/001**Moved: SoM / Coolup VBFB D McLarty****Seconded: K JonesPVFRS****That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee:****Recommend to Council the appointment of Ms. Nicole Stevens to the position of Chief Bush Fire Control Officer for the Shire of Murray.****In Favour: Ange Rogers, Douglas McLarty, Nicole Stevens, Peter Thurkle, Jim Camplin, Kevin Jones and John Kowal****Against: Anthony Cocivera****CARRIED 7:1****Recommendation/Committee Decision BFAC24/002****Moved: SoM / Coolup VBFB D McLarty****Seconded: Cr K Jones PVFRS****That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee:****Recommend to Council the appointment of Mr. Peter Thurkle and Ms. Justyn Bennett to the position of joint Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers.****In Favour: Ange Rogers, Douglas McLarty, Nicole Stevens, Anthony Cocivera, Peter Thurkle, Jim Camplin, Kevin Jones and John Kowal****Against: Nil.****CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8:0**

Recommendation/Committee Decision BFAC24/003**Recommendation****Moved: SoM / Coolup VBFB D McLarty****Seconded: K Jones PVFRS****Recommendation****That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee:****Recommend to Council the appointment of the following persons to the position of Bush Fire Control Officer and to the position of Bush Fire Control Officers – Permit Issuing Only:****Bush Fire Control Officers****Douglas McLarty – Coolup VBFB****Anthony Cocivera – Dwellingup VBFB****Brendan Webster - North Dandalup VBFB****Jim Camplin – South Yunderup/Ravenswood VBFB****Justin Crotty – West Murray VBFB****Bush Fire Control Officers – Permit Issuing Only:****Chris Sattler – Coolup VBFB****Stuart Kirkham – Coolup VBFB****Lorraine Webster – North Dandalup VBFB****Graeme Baldwin – South Yunderup/Ravenswood VBFB****Andrew Taylor – West Murray VBFB****Kevin Jones – Pinjarra VFRS****Dave Turner – Dwellingup VBFB****In Favour: Ange Rogers, Douglas McLarty, Nicole Stevens, Anthony Cocivera, Peter Thurkle, Jim Camplin, Kevin Jones and John Kowal****Against: Nil.****CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8:0****Recommendation/Committee Decision BFAC24/004****Moved: SoM / Coolup VBFB D McLarty****Seconded: K Jones PVFRS****That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee:****Recommend to Council that the following positions be re-advertised amongst member brigades with nominations being referred to the CEO for consideration:**

- Fire Weather Officer
- Deputy Fire Weather Officer
- Shire Training Coordinator

In Favour: Ange Rogers, Douglas McLarty, Nicole Stevens, Anthony Cocivera, Peter Thurkle, Jim Camplin, Kevin Jones and John Kowal**Against: Nil.****CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8:0**

Recommendation

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee:

1. Invites all Voting Members to participate in an anonymous ballot, to recommend to Council either:
 - a) Mr. Robert Wilson: or
 - b) Ms. Nicole Stevensas the Shire of Murray Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.
2. Recommend to Council that Mr. Peter Thurkle and Ms. Justyn Bennett be appointed as joint Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers.
3. Endorse the following persons be appointed to the position of Bush Fire Control Officer and to the position of Bush Fire Control Officers – Permit Issuing Only:

Bush Fire Control Officers

Douglas McLarty – Coolup VBFB

Anthony Cocivera – Dwellingup VBFB

Brendan Webster - North Dandalup VBFB

Jim Camplin – South Yunderup/Ravenswood VBFB

Justin Crotty – West Murray VBFB

Bush Fire Control Officers – Permit Issuing Only:

Chris Sattler – Coolup VBFB

Stuart Kirkham – Coolup VBFB

Lorraine Webster – North Dandalup VBFB

Graeme Baldwin – South Yunderup/Ravenswood VBFB

Andrew Taylor – West Murray VBFB

Kevin Jones – Pinjarra VFRS

Dave Turner – Dwellingup VBFB

4. Recommend that Mr John Waite be appointed as the Shire Training Coordinator.
5. Recommend the following positions be re-advertised amongst member brigades with nominations being referred to the CEO for consideration:
 - Fire Weather Officer
 - Deputy Fire Weather Officer

Reason for Change: After one of the two nominations for CBFCO was withdrawn the day before the meeting, the recommendation was changed to reflect the one remaining nominee.

Process of voting for Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CEO)

1. *Ballot papers will be provided to all persons that are eligible to vote at the meeting.*
2. *Both candidates will be provided up to ten (10) minutes to present and discuss their application in any format they wish.*
3. *Voting will be on a ballot paper that will then be placed anonymously in the box.*
4. *The Returning Officer will count the votes and declare the successful candidate.*
5. *In the event of a tie, another ballot will be undertaken.*
6. *If the second vote is still tied, the matter will be referred to Council for decision to select the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer at the June 2024 Council meeting.*

Bush Fire Advisory Committee Terms of Reference**Voting Members**

External Representatives

- Pinjarra Volunteer Fire and Rescue - Captain

Shire Representatives

- Shire of Murray Councillor – (BFAC Chairperson)
- Shire of Murray – Manager Ranger and Community Safety
- Shire of Murray – Community Emergency Services Coordinator
- Shire of Murray – Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
- Bush Fire Control Officer – Coolup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
- Bush Fire Control Officer – West Murray Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
- Bush Fire Control Officer – North Dandalup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
- Bush Fire Control Officer – South Yunderup Ravenswood Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
- Bush Fire Control Officer – Dwellingup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

Ex-Officio Members (Non-Voting)

- Shire of Murray – Chief Executive Officer (or Delegate)
- Shire of Murray – Emergency Management Officer/Ranger Administration Officer
- Department of Fire and Emergency Services – District Officer
- Department of Parks and Wildlife Manager
- Shire of Murray – Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

In Brief

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) is to consider and recommend to Council the appointment of the following positions in accordance with the *Bush Fires Act 1954* (the Act):

- Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
- Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer/s
- Bush Fire Control Officers
- Bush Fire Control Officers - Permit Issuing Only
- Fire Weather Officer and Deputy Fire Weather Officer; and

- Shire Training Coordinator.

Background

In accordance with the Shire of Murray Bush Fire Brigades Local Law 2024 (Local Law) and the Shire of Murray Bush Fire Brigades Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's), presented for decision is the appointment of the positions as stated above.

It should be noted that the nominations for Bush Fire Control Officers (FCO) and Bush Fire Control Officers - Permit Issuing Only are determined by each brigade at their respective Annual General Meetings (AGM) and this then also supports the Shire's BFAC membership structure.

Report Detail

In consideration of the role and the responsibilities of the CBFCA, there are several matters that need to be taken into consideration and these matters are further explained in the following sections.

Work Health & Safety Legislation

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WHS Act) came into effect on 31 March 2022 and with it came significant changes including the requirement that volunteers were considered as employees under the WHS Act. Due to these requirements the onus was placed on organisations such as local governments to ensure that volunteers were being provided the appropriate type and level of training and the Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment that was commensurate with their respective role and responsibilities. The introduction of these new requirements has changed the landscape when it comes to managing volunteers not only from the provision of the appropriate level of training, and provision of PPC/E, but also from the perspective that all organisations having the established structure, policies, procedures that also cover volunteers and the mechanisms for the reporting of any incidents, hazards or near misses. We are not saying that organisations who managed bushfire brigade volunteers did not have these things in place previously, however what can be said is that the introduction of the requirements via the WHS Act provided further emphasis for organisations to absolutely ensure that all requirements in accordance with the WHS Act had been established, all volunteers had been trained and had been made aware of WHS Act requirements as they pertain to bushfire brigade volunteers and these requirements are adhered to by all bushfire brigade volunteers.

The Changing Risk and Legislative Environment

Society is becoming more risk sensitive and litigious. In recent times, insurers who cover local government and other sectors have introduced a raft of changes including ensuring that local governments have undertaken a comprehensive and formal Risk Assessment process across all areas of their business and operations. Simply, this is done not only to identify what risks each local government may be exposed to, but also to provide solutions to mitigate risk based on the Risk Level i.e. Likelihood versus Consequence. There is also the requirement for each local government to continually review, update and report on their Corporate Risk Management Plans. This is seen as being a proactive management approach to reduce the risk exposure for local governments and is therefore seen as also reducing a local governments liability.

Bushfire poses significant exposure to associated risks for local governments, especially those local governments who are the Combat Agency for bushfires, meaning that they have the responsibility to prepare for, respond/manage and recover from bushfires within their local government districts.

From the information as provided in this report that summarises the vast array of responsibilities persons that are appointed by the Shire in accordance with the Act, the Shire has the ultimate responsibility for bushfire brigades, bushfire volunteers and the management of bushfires and secondly these responsibilities lie with the CEO, the CBFCA and in the absence of the CBFCA, with the DCBFCA.

In recent times, local governments have appointed full-time staff to the roles of CBFCO with some local governments including the CBFCO's responsibility to the Community Emergency Services Manager. This move can be attributable to the significant responsibilities as summarised in this report that are additional to the traditional responsibilities in relation to just responding and managing bushfires. These include:

- Available to respond to fires 24/7/365;
- Available to be Incident Controller for up to Level 2 incidents and provide ongoing bushfire advice and support to organisation such as DFES and DBCA for incidents of Level 2 and above and on land under their jurisdiction;
- Delegate specific tasks to DCBFCO, BFCO or Brigades;
- Attend brigade training, meetings and other brigade events;
- Promote the AIIMS Incident Management system to BFCOs, Brigades and volunteer firefighters and ensure an Incident Controller is appointed for all Incident Levels (1-3);
- Encourage and ensure that bushfire brigade volunteers are undertaking the required level of formal and informal training at the brigade level commensurate with their role and responsibilities;
- Attend and contribute to local, district and state meetings, workshops and forums;
- Ensure compliance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* and the Shire's Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedures including the reporting to the Shire's WSH Officer of any incidents, accidents, hazards and near misses. Promote hazard identification and risk management to minimise risk to volunteer fire fighters;
- Ensure the proper management and maintenance of brigade firefighting appliances, equipment and buildings, reporting any issues to the Shire;
- Ensure the proper recording by brigades of membership details and ensuring the provision of this information to the Shire;
- On an annual basis, ensure brigades provide the Shire with a list of all brigades' assets including all PPC/E;
- Ensure succession planning which is reflected within active recruitment efforts formally mentoring new Brigade members, ensuring a continuous interest is encouraged, with clear guidance on the training pathways available to ensure roles are filled with competent people, who are mentored into new roles;
- Promote community fire preparedness, prevention as a priority, to identify and reduce fire hazards;
- Demonstrate positive leadership and mentor DCBFCOs, BFCOs, Captains, Brigade Officers and Brigade members.

Local governments have become increasingly aware of the significant and increasing responsibilities that may be placed on the CBFCO role as undertaken by volunteers and the impact that this may have on their working, family and private lives together with their mental and physical welfare. Whereas, the appointment of staff members such as a manager or coordinator to the role can provide support from an entire department to assist in their role, including administrative support. In major emergency incidents support for the role may come from several departments to provide support for the various facets relating to the management of the major emergency incident.

This information is provided purely with the intention of illustrating the increasing risks and responsibilities of local government and the risk facing it and its Chief Executive Officer, Shire officers the CBFCO and volunteers.

Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

As per the SOP's, an Expression of Interest (EOI) process was undertaken and circulated to members of all brigades on the 17 April 2024 with a closing time and date of 4pm Monday 6 May 2024. Two EOI's were received for the CBFCO role and 2 EOI submissions were received, being Mr Robert Wilson and Ms Nicole Stevens. A copy of the EOI submissions are attached at **Appendix 2a and 2b**.

Upon review, it was considered that both submissions for CBFCO satisfied the requirements of the position description criteria as stipulated in the SOP's.

Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Two nominations were received, being Mr Peter Thurkle and Ms Justyn Bennett. While Ms Bennett did not satisfy all the requirements, the statement by the applicant to ensure that the required formal training would be undertaken within first 12 months of the appointment and the applicants relevant fire management experience with Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions was also taken into consideration. These submissions are attached at **Appendix 3a and 3b**.

The recommendation to appointment two DCBFCO's is proposed to meet the Shire's succession planning goals and mirrors many other local government bushfire management structures. However, if the Committee wish to appoint only one DCBFCO, an anonymous vote will be conducted as per the process being used to select the CBFCO.

Bush Fire Control Officers & Bush Fire Control Officers – Permit Issuing Only

These nominations are direct from each member Brigade.

Fire Weather Officer, Deputy Fire Weather Officer & Shire Training Coordinator

One nomination was received via email from Mr John Waite the current brigade Training Officer with the West Murray brigade. A copy of the email is attached at **Appendix 4a**.

No nominations were received for the positions of Fire Weather Officer and Deputy Fire Weather Officer.; therefore, it is recommended that these positions be re-advertised and that a decision be made by the Chief Executive Officer as per delegated authority.

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 other natural disasters.

Other Strategic Links

Nil.

Statutory Environment***Bush Fire's Act (1954)******Bush Fire Control Officers***

Section 38(1) of the Act states that 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 the 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. The appointment of all positions may be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer under Section 48 of the Act.

Section 38(2A) states –

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.

Fire Weather & Deputy Fire Weather Officers

Section 38(6)(c) states that a local government may appoint to the office of fire weather officer such number of senior bush fire control officers as it thinks necessary. The appointment of Fire Weather officers may also be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer under Section 48 of the Act.

- (ca) Where more than one fire weather officer is appointed by a local government the local government shall define a part of its district in which each fire weather officer shall have the exclusive right to exercise the power conferred by paragraph (h).
- (cb) An approved local government may appoint one or more persons, as it thinks necessary, to be the deputy or deputies, as the case may be, of a fire weather officer appointed by the local government and where 2 or more deputies are so appointed they shall have seniority in the order determined by the local government.
- (cc) Where the office of a fire weather officer is vacant or whilst the occupant is absent or unable to act in the discharge of the duties of the office, any deputy appointed in respect of that office under paragraph (cb) is, subject to paragraph (cd), entitled to act in the discharge of the duties of that office.
- (cd) A deputy who is one of 2 or more deputies of a fire weather officer is not entitled to act in the discharge of the duties of the office of that fire weather officer if a deputy who has precedence over him in the order of seniority determined under paragraph (cb) is available and able to discharge those duties.
- (d) The local government shall give notice of an appointment made under paragraph (c) or (cb) to the Authority and cause notice of the appointment to be published at least once in a newspaper circulating in its district and the Authority shall cause notice of the appointment to be published once in the *Government Gazette*.
- (h) A fire weather officer of an approved local government, or a deputy of that fire weather officer while acting in the place of that officer, may authorise a person who has received a permit under section 18(6)(a), to burn the bush in the district of the local government notwithstanding that for any day, or any period of a day, specified in the notice the fire danger forecast issued by the Bureau of Meteorology in Perth, in respect to the locality where the bush proposed to be burnt is situated, is “extreme” or “very high”, and upon the authority being given the person, if he has otherwise complied with the conditions prescribed for the purposes of section 18, may burn the bush.
- (i) This subsection does not authorise the burning of bush during the prohibited burning times.

Note: Fire Weather Officers must be appointed as Fire Control Officers pursuant to clause (6)(c) of the Act.

Section 48: Delegation by local governments

- (1) A local government may, in writing, delegate to its chief executive officer the performance of any of its functions under this Act.
- (2) Performance by the chief executive officer of a local government of a function delegated under subsection (1) —
 - (a) is taken to be in accordance with the terms of a delegation under this section, unless the contrary is shown; and

(b) is to be treated as performance by the local government.

(3) A delegation under this section does not include the power to sub-delegate.

(4) Nothing in this section is to be read as limiting the ability of a local government to act through its council, members of staff or agents in the normal course of business.

The Shire Training Coordinator position is not an appointment specified under the Act. However, Council has traditionally recognised this position to assist the Shire and brigades with the management and the coordination of training.

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>
High	As detailed within this report.

Consultation

In accordance with previously established procedures, all brigades are cognisant of the process for each brigade to nominate an FCO, PIO and a Fire Weather Officer.

All Brigades were contacted to ensure that they forwarded their AGM minutes to the Shire. This was to ensure that Shire had a record of each brigade’s AGM minutes and also a copy of each brigade’s respective nominations for FCO’s.

Resource Implications

Financial

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

Workforce

Nil.

Options

The Committee has the following options –

1. Support the recommendation, as proposed.
2. Support the recommendation, subject to any changes.

3. Reject the recommendation and determine an alternate position.

Conclusion

The Committee recommendations are to be presented to Council to formally appoint the persons recommended by this Committee.

6 REPORTS – EXTERNAL AGENCIES

6.1 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

File Ref: D24/16338
Author and Title: Peter Thurkle. Acting Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Appendices: Nil

In Brief

Once again, our local volunteers have shown huge amounts of courage and competency in relation to the volunteer bushfire services.

The shire has seen an extended fire season with very dry conditions and above average call outs both within our shire and assisting other Local Governments or combat agencies.

We all need to take notice of Lesson Learnt and highlight to each other so we can grow.

Every person on every day should take home one new knowledgeable point as we all learn.

These larger local and regional fires have been quite accelerated by weather patterns but containable with the quick and committed responses by all local brigades' crews which as a shire we are proud.

From such I and the unable to be here tonight, wish to thank all brigade members involved, plus every members family to allow such time commitment you are the backbone of the Shire of Murray fire service.

Last but not least to Robert Wilson you are a legend, and I am proud to be part of that team, this may never be rebuilt.

Just a brief overview, Thanks! DBFCO/ CBFCO

6.2 Shire Training Coordinator

File Ref: D24/16339
Author and Title: Jim Camplin, Shire Training Coordinator
Appendices: Nil.

In Brief

I have not been very active this year. Apart from conducting four rounds of Bush Fire Safety and Survival and Bush Fire Suppression one of which was to Coolup's senior Cadets most of whom are now old enough to crew the fire units. We also managed to get a couple more instructors validated and they can take over those courses.

We held a survey of training needs and discussed the results at a meeting but it only identified the usual requests for training namely on and off road driving courses which have been very hard to get people on. Nicole solved that problem by teeing up an instructor and scheduling the training in the Shire over a two month period.

Apart from running members through their Basic Skills logbook used as a training aid the usual problem of getting people to training is the usual worry. Use of the logbooks identified the use of radios as a need but I would say that everybody got plenty of practice on that one during the fire season just passing.

I have not renominated for the Training Coordinator's position, it is time for somebody else to have a go.

6.3 Community Emergency Services Coordinator

File Ref: D24/16340
 Author and Title: Nicole Stevens - John Kowal, Manager Ranger and Community Safety
 Appendices: Nil

In Brief

Operationally our brigades have had a very busy season noting the figures below as of 01/05/2024

Brigade	
COOLUP BFB	78
DWELLINGUP BFB	29
NORTH DANDALUP BFB	83
STH YUNDERUP / RAVENSWOOD	64
WEST MURRAY BFB	112

The table below also includes SES and VFRS (figures as of 01/05/2024)

Incident Type	2023/2024
Called Off - No Attendance	6
EVENT - Not an Incident	1
False Alarm - System Initiated	16
False Call - Good Intent	55
False Call - Malicious	0
Fire - Bushfire (lge)	21
Fire - Bushfire (sml)	68
Fire - Other/Rubbish/Vehicle	32
Fire - Structure	11
General Service Calls	0
Hazardous Situation	9
Natural Hazard	8
Rescue & Medical	4
Road Crash & Rescue	38
Search	0
Totals:	269

We have had a complex fire late in the year of 2023 which involved a incident in Hopeland Road, incident on Hines road & lakes road which BCoE became the incident control point for all. This saw assistance from metro and the greater regions assisting the week-long duration of these incidents in mop up.

Additional Hopeland road incident which bordered SJ which saw the LAT attend and do 3 drops to protect assets and infrastructure.

Forrest Highway was another interesting incident where we had the Ampol Foodary under threat. Yunderup island Fire had its complexities and usage of the South Yunderup boat.

Waroona fire which in crotched into the Shire of Murray.

And the many more that could have had potential to cause damage but the quick response from our brigades managed to keep these to smaller scale incidents.

Extended prohibited Burning Period a couple times due to the weather and with open season here we have seen additional fire calls with the ground still being dry and fires escaping properties.

Some Key points

- LGGs Acquittals & Overspends approved, awaiting the line 9 items the brigades applied for. Should know this sometime in the new financial year.
- The New North Dandalup LT due for delivery in end of June.
- Awards Function booked for 19th July 2024.
- MAF Approved of 38K including hazard reduction burns the brigades will be notified of soon to be undertaken.
- State Government Mitigation funding of \$50k Disaster Ready funding, including a street meet.
- New Local Laws 2024 adopted came into operation 7th May 2024.
- Completion of training needs analyse report for all leadership roles within the brigades which aid the training coordinator, brigade training officers and Shire in knowing what training is required to upskill our current members.
- West Murray celebrating their 40th anniversary this weekend which is open to the community.

Dwellingup trialled a 1.4 which was found not fit for purpose. We are currently awaiting answers to whether awaiting on a decision by another brigade in the SW region whom are receiving a new LT would like to do a swap for the 1.4. We hope to know the answer to this by the end of the financial year and working towards the possibility of Dwellingup having a total of 2 Light tankers in their fleet alongside their 3.4.

Application to Burn Shire Land – verges etc a form has been created and will be distributed where the residents apply for approval, Shire will assess and then let the FCO know a permit can be issued or not issued due to what reasoning.

BART has been rolled across, trialled and been successful within our brigades, just waiting feedback from Dwellingup but so far BART has been a great system for quick responses to incident turn outs, meetings requests, deployment opportunities and other functions the brigades have decided to adopt.

Health & Safety.

This season we have has a few incident reports of members sustaining injuries on the fire ground. Thank you to the brigades for their quick notification to the Shire and appropriate channels. I do wish everyone a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing everyone back to full health back on the fire ground for next season.

On & off-road driving – currently 3 weekends with the first being this weekend.

All in all, it's been a busy season and I couldn't be any prouder of the efforts everyone has given to the community of the Shire of Murray and the aid of other local governments & regions with their incidents. The time we do give up to protect the community we love is invaluable. We are now moving into our training season where we use this to upskill our current skill and expand on them.

Please make sure you spend quality time with your families as the next season isn't too far away.

Again, thank you again for the ongoing support and I look forward to what's next for us all.

6.4 Manager Ranger and Community Safety

File Ref: D24/16343
Author and Title: John Kowal, Manager Ranger and Community Safety
Appendices: Nil

In Brief

The Manager Ranger and Community Safety's report has been tabled jointly with the Community Emergency Services Coordinator report.

6.5 DFES Representative

File Ref: D24/16344
Author and Title: John Kowal, Manager Ranger and Community Safety
Appendices: Nil

In Brief

The DFES Representative was not in attendance at the meeting, therefore the report has been not submitted.

6.6 DBCA Representative

File Ref: D24/16345
Author and Title: John Kowal, Manager Ranger and Community Safety
Appendices: Nil

In Brief

The DBCA Representative was not in attendance at the meeting, therefore the report has not been submitted.

7 VOLUNTEER BRIGADE REPORTS

7.1 Coolup VBFB

File Ref: D24/16346
Author and Title: John Kowal, Manager Ranger and Community Safety
Appendices: Nil

In Brief

The Coolup Brigade was kept very busy as were all brigades in Murray. A big thank you goes out to all the brigade members for an amazing effort this season.

The Coolup Brigades Cadet program has been a big highlight for the year. Cadet numbers are rising, with many cadets completing training and even spending time out on the fire grounds.

Thanks to Bluey and Pete for their leadership throughout the year along with the support from Nicole, John and the Admin staff.

7.2 Dwellingup VBFB

File Ref: D24/16347
Author and Title: Anthony Cocivera, Fire Control Officer
Appendices: Nil

In Brief

Dwellingup attended 21 incidents in the last 12 months, we would like to thank all the members for their assistance in these incidents.

Dwellingup carried out 12 hectares of control burns in the last 12 months with one burn assisted by North Dandalup and we thank them for their assistance.

Dwellingup had the opportunity to trial a new ¼ Iveco, the rear module had some great features, there was some issues with the Iveco vehicle with the vehicle being too low to the ground causing damage to fuel tanks and air lines. The vehicle had a safety issue descending hills too fast. On its first emergency call the vehicle went into limp mode with overheating issues in the engine and the vehicle was returned to Iveco for major work.

It has never been Dwellingup's decision to take control off a ¼ appliance, for the past 5 years we have had conversations with different CESMS around Dwellingup's preference off 2 x Light tankers and 1 ¾ as the vehicle fleet into the future.

The permit offices off Dwellingup wish that our contact details are published in the book that is printed each year, there was too much confusion, and the permit offices received more calls from confused residents.

Dwellingup wants to thank Murray Deputy Peter Thurkle for his support for the last 12 months. The Dwellingup bush fire brigade does not support DFES officers in the Murray Chief Role, the Murray chief we believe should be a volunteer within our brigades.

Lastly we want to thank Robert Bluey Wilson for his support and work he has done for Dwellingup and the shire, Dwellingup supports Bluey 100% and we are disappointed that Bluey is not continuing in his role but we understand the reasoning and support him in his decision. You don't know what you had until its gone and we feel the shire will realise this into the future around the Murray Chief Role.

7.3 North Dandalup VBFB

File Ref: D24/16349
Author and Title: Peter Thurkle, Fire Control Officer
Appendices: Nil

In Brief

My brigade report will be straight to the point, my role has been of a mild one at the brigade due other roles which I carry out. The brigade has been progressing very well with recruitment this year achieved well, while officers have been continuing to grow with their brigade roles which I can certainly appreciate and be able to say well done to all for their service to our communities. Brigade turnouts have been numerous in support of our community and other areas please keep this up.

The appliances have had some concerns to achieving repairs and seems to be an ongoing problem, still need completion.

Appliances are road worthy currently; station is currently operable.

Firstly thanks to my Wife Julie she puts up with everything,

To all members past and present of the North Dandalup community and volunteer brigade, I wish to say Thanks for your support over last few months and the past year, and so it begins.

Good night and be safe.

7.4 South Yunderup / Ravenswood VBFB

File Ref: D24/16350
Author and Title: John Kowal, Manager Ranger and Community Safety
Appendices: Nil

In Brief

The past 12 months have been difficult for the brigade however we have managed to keep functioning despite the difficulties. There have been a number of problems faced commencing with the resignation of our first lieutenant Gary Brehaut citing work commitments. The second and third Lieutenants, Lawrence Caffin and Riley Jenkins moved up a place and as it turned out virtually ran the brigade for several months while Captain Dean recovered from personal problems.

We also lost one of the founding members of the brigade when Ron Young passed away. Ron with several others founded the brigade and helped build the station some forty years ago. He was the first brigade FCO and was instrumental in obtaining the first fire boat and a former Swan River Trust work boat. Where recently the current Fire Boat was used again to combat the island fire last month.

This fire season has, as we all know, been a busy one with not only the Waroona Fire but a number of smaller incidents as well as the usual spate of false alarms that annoy everybody. I am happy to say that there has been a core group of South Yunderup fire fighters that have stepped up to every fire despite most of them being either shift workers or FIFO workers. Unfortunately, a couple of them have moved away from the area and are no longer available, they will be sorely missed.

Through all of our problems we have been supported and encouraged by the Chief Bluey Wilson who has offered advice and guidance when we most needed it. We as a brigade will miss him and would like to thank him for all he has done for us. We offered him membership of our brigade a couple of years ago, the offer still stands.

Following our AGM last week there were some minor positional changes but most of the top officers remain the same. Unfortunately for our secretary Sue Daley nobody applied for her job. Sue has been a driving force behind the organisation of the brigade. We are lucky to have her since she has a huge workload with her business and its related enterprises.

7.5 West Murray VBFB

File Ref: D24/16351
Author and Title: No representative/ FCO
Appendices: Nil

In Brief

No report was provided by the West Murray VBFB due to the brigade having no FCO.

8 MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

Nil.

9 NEXT MEETING

The next Bush Fire Advisory Committee is to be held in approximately 12 months. The time and location are to be advised.

10 CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business the Presiding Member declared the meeting closed the time being 6.45pm.

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CHAIRPERSON