



Unconfirmed Minutes

Bush Fire Control Officers Committee Meeting
Tuesday 18 March 2025

Date
Time
Location

Tuesday 18 March 2025
6.30pm
Shire of Wickepin
77 Wogolin Road, Wickepin WA 6370
Thursday 20 March 2025

Distribution Date

Terms of Reference

1. Name

Bush Fire Control Officers Committee

2. Members

Voting Members

- Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
- Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
- All Fire Control Officers

Non-Voting Members

- Representative(s) from DFES
- Representative(s) from Wickepin Police
- Shire of Wickepin CEO and nominated staff

3. Function of the Committee

To provide advice to Council in regard to all matters relating to bush fire control, prevention and management including recommendations on the annual firebreak requirements, capital (equipment) purchase, review of firefighting/prevention practices, firefighting training, etc.

4. Role and Scope of the Committee

To advise the local government regarding all matters relating to the preventing, controlling and extinguishing of bush fires, the planning of the layout of fire-breaks in the district, the formation of bush fire brigades and the grouping thereof under group brigade officers, the ensuring of co-operation and co-ordination of bush fire brigades in their efforts and activities, and any other matter relating to bush fire control whether of the same kind as, or a different kind from, those specified in this subsection.

5. Meeting Frequency

Twice per annum with scope to call additional meeting if need arises (i.e. post-emergency events) – actual dates to be determined by the Presiding Member in consultation with Committee Members and applicable Shire officers.

6. Delegated Powers

The Committee has no delegated powers and is an advisory committee to Council only. Recommendations of Committee meetings are to be presented to Council by Shire officers for noting or consideration as soon as practicable after unconfirmed minutes of Committee meetings are available.

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1 Declaration of Opening

The Presiding Member, Mr Trevor Leeson, declared the meeting open at 6.30pm.

2 Attendance

2.1 Present

Members

T Leeson	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
L Lansdell	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
R Butler	Fire Control Officer
D White	Fire Control Officer
D Stacey	Fire Control Officer
T Mullan	Fire Control Officer
T Russell	Fire Control Officer
M Pockran	
D Bird	

P Milne	Wickepin Police
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Employees

P Clarke	Acting Chief Executive Officer
G Cross	Manager Works and Services

3 Apologies and Leave of Absence

3.1 Apologies

C Sims	Fire Control Officer (Apology)
W Astbury	Fire Control Officer (Apology)
D Townsend	AO East Narrogin - DFES (Apology)
A Spencer	Wickepin Police (Apology)
J Hamilton	
P Russell	
G McDougall	

4 Presentations

4.1 Presentations

5 Declarations of Members and Officers Interest

Nil

6 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meetings

6.1 Minutes of the Bush Fire Control Officers Meeting held on 25 September 2024

Recommendation

Moved D White Seconded R Butler that the minutes of the Bush Fire Control Officers Meeting held on 25 September 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

CARRIED

6.2 Business Arising From Minutes

Nil

6.3 Business Arising From Minutes

7 Status Report

Where a resolution is formal, procedural or lost it has not been recorded (e.g. confirmation of minutes, meeting behind closed doors, lapsed, etc.).

Subject/Action	Officer	Progress	Status	Comment
Additional Fire Radios	CEO	That the Committee recommends to Council to purchase an additional two (2) base station fire radios and four (4) transferable vehicle radios to provide additional radio coverage for Bush Fire Control Officers, some of which are in light radio coverage areas.	✓	Funds allocated in the 2023-2024 Annual Budget. No further radios can be issued unless the Shire is to pay as the number of radios have been issued for the Shire of Wickepin.
Comments				
2024 Radio transfers completed. Any changes required for new bush fire season Update of Radio Listing is required. Please advise Shire of your details to admin@wickepin.wa.gov.au with details. For servicing of radios, contact RadioComms 94788222 to organise.				
Great Southern Fuels	CEO	Can there be fuel supplies during an emergency	✓	CEO & WMS has met with GSF on this matter and advice for the best

				situation possible in the case of an emergency. GSF and the Shire will work together to achieve this outcome during an emergency with a point to be able to link in the generator.
Comments				
GSF are able to provide at any time a generator in case of any emergency. Shire will require to activate through GSF if ever required.				
Blackspot Areas	CEO	To investigate the blackspot areas	○	CEO has discussed with WALGA on this matter, pending further information. To also be addressed at LEMC.
Comments				
To be followed up in 2025 for further assistance since 3G has closed off. Further information will be required to seek for any additional funding.				
Training	CEO	Training to be arranged, FCOS and volunteer members to also log into their portal to access the online training.	✓	CEO has arranged training and has also sent out to secretaries to send advice out.
Comments				
Training has occurred at both Wickepin and Harrismith/Tincurrin. Encourage to continue for AO to visit brigades within the district to continue to further increase members knowledge, training and maintenance of trucks. 2025 training dates were sent out to FCO's and BFB Secretaries and captains. It was noted that Face to Face training is preferable due to difficulties in completing on-line training modules				
Standpipe – Yealering & Keys		Standpipe at Yealering 86 to be fixed. Does all FCO's have keys?	✓	Standpipe fixed at Yealering 86. Standpipe keys are listed for Fire truck use at present. Shire controls the standpipes via internet with DCEO.

Comments

Full check in 2025 of standpipe keys required. Recent incident needs to help identify best practice during fires and also reporting if cut etc during the fire season.

It was considered that training on the operation of Standpipes should be provided. It appears that all FCO's do not have keys.

Manager Works suggested that a Procedure Manual (laminated sheet) be provided at each Standpipe to assist in operation.

If not noted, please insert numbers of items once attended to and return sheet to CEO.

○ = in progress ✓ = completed ✕ = superseded

8 Motions of Which Notice Has Been Given

Nil

9 Notices of Motions for the Following Meeting

Nil

10 Reports and Information

10.1 David Townsend - Department of Fire and Emergency Services

No report provided.

10.2 Chief Bush Fire Control Officers Report

Thank you to all the Fire Control Officers (FCO) for your continued support in assisting with harvest and vehicle movement bans (HVMB), call ups and the management of the fires this season. Thanks to former FCO Tim Heffernan for his valuable input on call ups and HVMB. Again, another challenging fire season with our usual few harvest related fires, several lightning strikes and another two structure fires. The structure fires now total at four in under 12 months. A great effort all-round by our FCO's, volunteers and Shire staff to keep all fires to a minimum.

Thank you to the Shire of Wickepin for your continued support in supplying staff and equipment at fires and also to the admin staff for their behind the scenes work.

Thank you to DFES for your work within our shire brigades and your support with fires.

Overall, I feel that our FCO's, volunteers and farmers are adapting really well to the latest changes implemented by DFES in the last few years. Some of these changes include the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) introduced 01/09/2022, AFDRS calculator and burning permits are only valid on days of forecast moderate conditions during burning permit season. These changes have been a challenge to our FCO's in particular, as being at the forefront and having to answer to farmers and community members.

Noted Fires

- 20/09/24 - Rabbit Proof Fence Road/Muller Road Harrismith. Scrub/Road verge fire. Minimal area burnt. Incident 687512.
- 26/09/24 - 48 Dumbleyung Road, Wickepin. Structure fire, house burnt. Wickepin Fire Truck, VFRES Narrogin and Pingelly attended. Incident 689184
- 01/10/24 - Bayley's at Harrismith. Burning hayshed fires escaped. 14Ha of standing oat crop burnt.
- 22/10/24 - King/Coxon Road Yealering. Crown land burnt logs under material dumped, possibly illegally. Yealering fire truck was unable to attend. Shire staff and equipment were used to sort this matter.
- 15/11/24 - Angwin's at Greg Williams old farm, Toolibin. Header comb struck a rock.
- 7/12/24 - Green Acres, Harrismith North Road.
- 10/12/24 - Medlen's at Derek Taylor's Farm, Healy Road Dudinin. Header hit a rock approximately 100ha majority standing crop burnt.
- 12/12/24 - WK.910 Fire truck attended Troy Smith's Brookes Road. Several Wickepin farmer units attended as well. Header front caught on fire. Possible cause bearing? 25-30ha burnt. Narrogin Shire.
- 29/12/24 - Malcom Russell's farm Russell Road. Leased by Simon Parson's. Ballard Hay Baling contractor started the fire. Pick up of baler started the fire. 25-30ha stubble, several straw bales and windrows burnt. Controversy with the amount of water on hand. Approximately only 400L on a ute that had to be jump started?? FCO's proposed that a letter to be sent to those involved being Simon Parson's and Roger Ballard. After I had a discussion with our CEO Kellie Bartley the letter was sent to the land owner (Malcom Russell) as it is his responsibility to ensure that the lease holder adheres to local government requirements.
- 01/01/25 - Multiple Lightning Strikes.
- 1) Gary Lang's Farm leased by Wittwer's 25ha burnt; 2) Mutton's 2ha burnt; 3) Marty's? Yealering; 4) Corke's, Yealering; 5) Russell Dawes, Yealering, several fires; 6) Mark Graham's, Elson Rd, windrows kept flaring up (Great work Luke for getting Mark to take responsibility and personally watch his own fire); 7) Pauley's Farm, Sprigg Rd, Leased by Landsdell's. 20ha? stubble/bush burnt.
- 02/01/25 - Lightning strike flared up the following day at Stacey's 20ha? Bush burnt. Corrigin shire. Craig Jespersen FCO for Corrigin. Yealering Fire truck attended.
- 07/01/25 - Lightning strikes Harrismith 1) Wes Astbury's. 2) Des's?
- 24/01/25 - Vilma Pauley, Central Ave Wickepin. Structure fire, shed and multiple vehicles burnt. Wickepin Fire Truck, VFRES Narrogin and Pingelly attended. Incident 707463
- 24/01/25 and 26/01/25 - Tincurrin Fire Truck attended the Wagin Fire. Thanks to the volunteers who manned the truck.
- 02/02/25 - Adrian Webster's Kylie Farm. Header hit a rock while harvesting. Lots of unpicked rocks were noted in the paddock.
- 03/03/25 - Grayden Lang's leased by Wittwer's. Speedtiller started the fire and got into some bush. 3ha burnt. Incident 063943

We had a number of volunteers attending neighbouring shire fires as well. Overall, the fires were very well attended and contained as a result. A big thank you to all our volunteers and their equipment for this fire season. Thank you for your support for the past three years. I look forward to supporting the new Chief and Deputy going forward.

Trevor Leeson
Retiring CBFCO

Recommendation

Moved T Russell Seconded D White that the CBFCO's Report be received.

CARRIED

Roger Butler expressed thanks to Trevor Leeson for the tireless work that he has undertaken during his tenure as CBFCO for the Shire of Wickepin.

This appreciation was received by acclamation from all Members present.

11 Appointments 2025/2026 Fire Season

11.1 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

The A/CEO acted as Returning Officer for the appointment of CBFCO and DCBFCO.

Mr Luke Lansdell was nominated as the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer of the Shire of Wickepin for the 2025/2026 bush fire season:

Mr Lansdell advised that he was prepared to accept the nomination.

There being no further nominations the Acting Chief Executive Officer declared Mr Luke Lansdell elected to the position of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer of the Shire of Wickepin for the 2025/2026 fire season.

11.2 Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Officer Recommendation

Mr Toby Russell was nominated as the Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer of the Shire of Wickepin for the 2025/2026 bush fire season:

Mr Russell advised that he was prepared to accept the nomination.

There being no further nominations Acting Chief Executive Officer declared Mr Toby Russell elected to the position of the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer of the Shire of Wickepin for the 2025/2026 fire season.

Following the above election process, Mr Trevor Leeson continued to Chair the meeting at the request of the newly appointed CBFCO.

11.3 Fire Control Officers/Bush Fire Radio Operators/Fire Weather Officers

Recommendation

Moved D Stacey Seconded D White that it be recommended to Council that the following persons be appointed as Fire Control Officers/Bush Fire Radio Operators and Fire Weather Instrument Officers of the Shire of Wickepin for the 2025/2026 bush fire season:

Officers 2025/2026

*Phil Russell
Daniel White
Gordon McDougall
Wes Astbury
Jim Hamilton
Trevor Leeson
Dave Stacey
Roger Butler
Luke Lansdell
Todd Mullan
Toby Russell
Cal Sims
Matt Pockran
Daniel Bird*

CARRIED

11.4 Clover Burning Permits

Recommendation

Moved T Russell Seconded L Lansdell that it be recommended to Council that the following persons be appointed as Clover Permit Issuing Officers for the 2025/2026 fire season:

Mr W Astbury and Mr D White

CARRIED

11.5 Dual Fire Control Officers from Wickepin

Recommendation

Moved R Butler Seconded L Lansdell that it be recommended to Council that the following persons be appointed as Dual Fire Control Officers for the 2025/2026 fire season:

Officers 2025/2026 -

David Stacey, Jim Hamilton, Matt Pockran

Trevor Leeson, Luke Lansdell and Phillip Russell

Trevor Leeson, Roger Butler and Luke Lansdell

Gordon McDougall and Wes Astbury, Daniel Bird

Dan White, Daniel Bird

Roger Butler and Jim Hamilton

Wes Astbury, David Stacey, and Todd Mullan

Shire of Corrigin

Shire of Narrogin

Shire of Cuballing

Shire of Dumbleyung

Shire of Wagin

Shire of Pingelly

Shire of Kulin

CARRIED

11.6 Dual Fire Control Officers from adjoining Shires

Nil

11.7 Shire of Wickepin Fire Break Notice 2025/2026

Bush Fires Act 1954

Shire of Wickepin

Annual Firebreak Notice 2025/2026

Action is required by owners and/or occupiers of all land in the Shire of Wickepin. Please read this notice carefully. Any queries should be directed to the Shire of Wickepin Administration Centre or Local Shire Bush Fire Control Officer. Pursuant to the powers contained in Section 33 of the Bush Fires Act 1954, owners and occupiers of property within the Shire of Wickepin are hereby required on or before 1 October 2025 and thereafter to 14 April 2026 to plough, scarify or otherwise provide and maintain firebreaks clear of all inflammable material at least 2.5 metres wide as follows:

Rural Land

Inside the boundary of all land held by each owner or occupier, their firebreaks need not follow the perimeter of any paddock but will be acceptable following land contours in an endeavour to overcome water erosion;

- To subdivide each holding into lots of no greater than 400 hectares; and*
- To surround the homestead, out buildings and fuel storages on any such land.*
- That from the 15th October all harvesting and baling (including cutting and raking) operations, there shall be an operational mobile engine powered firefighting unit or units with a minimum combined capacity of 1,200 litres of available water, located in or immediately adjacent to the paddock being harvested and/or baled. The minimum capacity off any single firefighting unit shall be 600 litres of available water. The responsibility to supply and operate the firefighting unit is that of the landowner/occupier.*

Townsite Land

All lots within the townsites of Harrismith, Tincurrin, Toolibin, Wickepin and Yealering are required to be cleared and maintained free of all debris or inflammable material. Failure to comply with these requirements renders the owner or occupier liable to a penalty of \$5,000.

Clearing of Fence Lines

When clearing for new fence lines adjoining road reserves, you must have written approval from the Shire of Wickepin prior to commencement of clearing works. Landholders are asked to consider locating the fence three (3) metres inside their boundary to avoid any clearing on road reserves. Old fences should first be removed. If landholders wish to place their fence on the boundary, they may clear no more than one (1) metre beyond their boundary. This may be varied in special circumstances at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer. Any timber removed from the road reserve is to be pushed onto the owner's property.

Fencing of Road Reserves

Council encourages farmers to fence off road reserves running through their properties to protect trees on these reserves and to allow new growth of vegetation.

Burning on Roadsides

Should property owners wish to carry out burning of the road reserve adjacent to their property, it is necessary to obtain council approval prior to any burning taking place.

Burning Periods

Restricted Burning – 1 October 2025 to 13 November 2025

Prohibited Burning – 14 November 2025 to 7 February 2026

Restricted Burning – 8 February 2026 to 14 April 2026

Harvest and Fire Ban 2025/2026 Season

Harvesting is banned on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Lighting of fires is banned on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Recommendation

Moved D White Seconded T Mullan that it be recommended to Council that the wording for the 2025/2026 Fire Break Notice be approved for distribution to the community at the appropriate time.

CARRIED

12 General Business

12.1 Shire Notes

- ROAC Meeting - 17th April 2025
- Telstra SMS Messaging
Telstra SMS Harvest Ban Messages – Regular Logins
BFCO that have access to the Telstra harvest ban SMS are to log in at least once a year to keep profile active.
- LGGS - Standpipe trailers and 12,000 Water vehicle to be requested
- Bushfire Policies
- Operating Personal Vehicles on fire ground (information only) See **Attachment 12.1**
- Bushfire Advice - LGIS - See **Attachment 12.2**

12.2 FCO Issues

- **R Butler**
Pushed up Timber on Gilimanning Road not cleared from road reserve appropriately - should be placed in an orderly and burnt.
Lacking water supply in north west of Shire - Potentially a mobile facility of 36,000lts should be sourced.
- **T Russell**
A number of training days to be conducted for fire truck operation - 1st April being the first course with 2 more to follow.
- **D White**
Hand held two way radios required. Also noted that 5 permits to be issued on 19 March for burning of timber piles with appropriate conditions to be imposed.
- **D Bird**
Advised of the other Shires implementing Weather Stations through Orego e.g., Dumbleyung. Suggested would be ideal for Shire of Wickepin with 10 required and for this to be considered in Shires 2025/2026 Budget.
- **P Milne (WAPOL)**
Discussed potential litigation issues for Members and their appropriate safety when attending fires. Stressed that Members should not be putting themselves at risk.
Also raised issue concerning townsite properties that required clearing of material as they were unsightly but also a fire hazard. The A/CEO advised that the Shire through it's Rangers monitored the status of unsightly properties and when necessary, landholders were written to directing them to clean-up the property in question.
- **D Stacey**
Raised the issue of available Shire equipment to assist in fighting Shires e.g., water truck/s, graders and loader etc. Manager Works advised that this equipment is available if the Shire employee operating the equipment has the necessary fire training.

12.3 Mr Trevour Leeson - FCO Proposal for Shire to engage CESM or Fire Liaison Officer

Mr Leeson advised, that as outgoing CBFCO, he felt the need to submit the attached proposal to Council for consideration. As outlined in the proposal, Mr Leeson is extremely concerned with the compliance issues imposed upon CBFCO's, DCBFCO's FCO's, Shire staff and Volunteers and that there needs to be a designated CESM or Fire Liaison Officer appointed at the Shire of Wickepin to alleviate the unnecessary burdens being placed upon the above Officers.

Recommendation

Moved D White Seconded T Mullan that the Shire of Wickepin BFAC Members fully support the Proposal submitted by Mr Leeson and recommends to Council that immediate action be taken to investigate opportunities to engage a CESM/Fire Liaison Officer to assist all Bush Fire Volunteers and Shire Staff with the onerous compliance obligations and to maximise grant funding for the Bush Fire Brigades and the Shire of Wickepin.

CARRIED

13 Closure

The next Bush Fire Control Officers Committee meeting will be held in September 2025.

There being no further business the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 7.58pm