

#### BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2022 General Meeting – 5.30pm Derek Fletcher Training Room, Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade / State Emergency Service, 20 Raymond Road, Walliston

#### 1. OPENING OF MEETING

Chairperson - Cr. John Giardina welcomed attendees,

### 2. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

#### **Attending Members:**

Cr. John Giardina – City of Kalamunda, Councillor – South East Ward Mike Ward – CESM, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Steve Lake – Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Tony Moiler AFSM – Captain, Kalamunda Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service Sean Winter – Captain, Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

#### **City Staff:**

James Wickens - Manager Environmental Health and Community Safety

#### **Ex- Officio Members:**

Natalie Smailes – First Lieutenant, Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade. David Carroll – Fire Control Officer, Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, Paul Southam – DFES District Officer South East Michael Pasotti – DBCA – Fire Coordinator

#### Visitors: Nil

#### **Apologies:**

Cr. Andrew Osenton – City of Kalamunda, Councillor – North Ward Brian McGinley – Foreman, Kalamunda Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service Jayden Flint – Second Lieutenant, Kalamunda Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service. Michael Hall – City of Kalamunda Senior Fire Mitigation Officer Peter Varelis – City of Kalamunda, Director, Development Services Warwick Martindale – Local Manager State Emergency Service

#### **Minutes:**

Andrew Haselden – Senior Firefighter, Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

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#### 3. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Moved: Steve Lake Seconded: Tony Moiler

#### 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 4.1. Pickering Brook Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade *Recommendation from the July 2022 BFAC AGM to be presented to Council at the next general council meeting.* James Wickens reports that the BFAC recommendation was submitted to Council in August. James notes that additional investigation was requested by Council regarding the sourcing of funding from the City's perspective. The recommendation and additional information are to be submitted to Council again in November 2022.
- **4.2.** Arrangements for Managing of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades *Recommendation from the July 2022 BFAC AGM to be presented to Council at the next general council meeting.* Mike Ward advises that the comments made from the last BFAC meeting were presented to the Council, reviewed and have been send to WALGA. Due to time constraints to respond to WALGA, the response was issued initially unendorsed but was resubmitted to WALGA post its review and acceptance by the Council.
- **4.3.** Acknowledgement of Volunteer Leadership Service *Mike Ward to request that the Chief Executive Officer action the two below motions.* 
  - Motion 1: Request the Chief Executive Officer to write to the Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, Kalamunda State Emergency Service and the Kalamunda Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service acknowledging their efforts, service, and commitment to the City of Kalamunda community.
  - Motion 2: Request that the Chief Executive Officer to write to Mr. David STEWART, Mr. John IDLAND, Mr. Andrew HASELDEN, and Mr. Andrew STUBBS acknowledging their efforts, service, and commitment to the City of Kalamunda and its community.

Mike Ward advises that letters have been collated and sent as recommended to all noted members. Letters were also presented by James Wickens to members present at this meeting.

#### 5. CORRESPONDENCE IN/OUT

5.1. Correspondence In/Out - Nil,

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#### 6. GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1. Lack of Backfilling of the CESM position. – Sean Winter discusses that a letter has been sent to Council regarding the Brigade's concerns around the lack of relief staffing for Mike Ward's CESM position while he was recently on leave. Sean asserts that due to the criticality of the position, it should be funded for twelve months of the year, not eleven. Sean also notes that while on leave, Mike was still responding to calls and emails to deal with important City matters. Further to this Steve Lake in his role as Deputy Chief has also fulfilled some of these normally paid tasks as a volunteer.

Paul Southam advises that there is currently a salary harvesting process within DFES to recover overspend created during the COVID19 restrictions. Paul notes that the City has sent a formal letter to the DFES Commissioner, and a response is yet to be received. Paul provided his apologies with regards to this last leave period and further noted that there was an internal coverage process agreed with local DFES resources should coverage be required at a major incident. Mike Ward advises that that while the current leave issue is now in the past, we need to plan for staffing and coverage the future. **Attachment #1 – Letter from the City to the DFES Commissioner**.

CR Giardina asks whether the Local Member has been notified. Sean Winter advises no, as he did not want to overstep the Local Government pathway. Cr Giardina advises that he agrees that the committee should wait until a response is received from the DFES Commissioner.

#### 7. AGENCY UPDATE

#### **7.1.** Department of Fire and Emergency Services - Paul Southam.

DFES – Paul Postma will be covering Paul Southam's District Officer position for the 22/23 fire season while Paul Southam is on planned, extended leave.

The Australian Fire Danger Rating System has been rolled out. Paul notes it is anticipated that there will be teething issues in the first fire season around when residents can and can't burn. The procurement process for replacement fire danger rating signage has been completed. The installation of new signage to align with the revised danger levels is expected to begin in the next month

Section 13 transfer of control – Changes have been made this season whereby if control is transferred from the Local Government to DFES, DFES will take over the role of the controlling agency until transferred back.

Paul advises that the emergency phone notification system will be used by DFES for all emergency warnings. Paul advises that Local Governments should also consider using this process.

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Karnet Prison Farm (section 95) inmates are currently working within the City of Kalamunda for hand mitigation works. This is currently achieving good results and will continue over the next few months. There is possible expansion of this project into recovery works in the future, pending training.

Aircraft for the season – largely the same as last year with the exception that the large air tanker will be based in WA this year on a full-time contract basis. Attachment #2 – Fire & Emergency Aviation Fleet 2022-23.

#### 7.2. Department of Parks and Wildlife – Michael Pasotti

Four areas have been burnt in the Kalamunda patch, Mundaring Wier Road, Watsonia Road/Gooseberry Hill, Welshpool Road East (Lesmurdie High School), and Ashendon Road in Pickering Brook. Michael notes that the opportunities to conduct further burns before summer as slim due to current conditions.

Overall, the fuel loads in the City look good however Michael notes that main risk area is still around the scarp. Attachment #2 – DPAW Fuel Age and Burn Progress Maps, October 2022.

Seasonal staff will be coming online shortly, contract dozers and machinery will be available in a few weeks. Notes that DPAW's overall capacity will be reduced this year with approximately ten trucks available for larger fires. David Carrol asks if this is an organisational issue? Michael advises that there has been a churn of staff during the COVID period with experienced staff moving on and a resulting skills gap with new employees.

The fire spotter aircraft is now conducting reconnaissance flights regularly. Water bombers will be bought online shortly in advance to assist with harvesting operations around Geraldton.

#### 7.3. City of Kalamunda Community Emergency Manager – Mike Ward

Sean Winter advises that the Kalamunda Bush Fire Brigade are in the middle of their busy preseason period. This includes hazard reduction burns, training new members and community engagement. The 2022 trainee school will be graduating soon with approximately twelve to fourteen new members expected to graduate.

CR. Giardina asks if there is a reason the number of new members required this year is so high? Sean Winter advises that the intake numbers were due to natural attrition in the brigade. The Bush Fire Brigade needs to replace about ten members per year, and as they did not run a recruiting process last year, the total numbers sought were higher this year.

Mike Ward advises that the Volunteers from the KVBFB that run the Bush Fire Ready Groups have also been busy with several "street meets" and a burn smart demonstration.

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Andrew Haselden has been appointed as the replacement Volunteer Fire Control Officer position (FCO2), following Steve Lake moving into the Deputy Chief FCO role.

One of the KVBFB long standing members, Mike Lennon, has this month stood down from active Fire Fighting after more than twenty years of service to the City of Kalamunda. Sean Winter requests that the City provide a letter of acknowledgement of service, similar to those provided under Action item 4.3, *A motion is raised by Steve Lake that "The City provides a letter of acknowledgment to Mike Lennon for his years of service and contributions to the City of Kalamunda". The Motion is seconded by CR. Giardina. Voting commences and the motion is passed unanimously.* \*

# \* Subsequent to the meeting, Mike Lennon advised the Brigade that he will remain an active member of the Brigade in a support role. As such the approved letter is no longer required.

Sean Winter advises that as we have moved into the restricted burning period, the KVBFB are attending a number of illegal burns. The Brigade is utilising the logbooks created last year, which are working well. Steve Lake notes that these are being forwarded to Community Safety and Ranger Services. Steve advises that it would be appreciated if the City can forward any feedback on findings or actions to Mike Ward.

Tony Moiler advises that the Kalamunda Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services attended an illegal private burn in the City on the preceding high fire danger day when all burning should have been ceased.

Cr. Giardina asks why the fire danger rating system has been modified as discussed earlier. Paul Southam advises that the existing system was created over sixty years ago and still utilised old science which was applied and represented differently from state to state. Paul notes that the new system is good but there are some details in the background that need to be refined to make it better. The advantage for the public is that there are consistent action messages which accompany each of the rating levels, providing advice on to how the public should act in respect of the fire danger.

#### 8. NEXT MEETING

**8.1.** Next general meeting, Thursday the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2023, 1730hrs, Derek Fletcher Training Room, Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade / State Emergency Service, 20 Raymond Road, Walliston.

Future Meetings for 2023,

- Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2023 (AGM) and
- Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2023.
- 9. CLOSURE

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9.1. Meeting closed at 1826hrs

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Attachment #1 - Letter to DFES Commissioner Darren Klem RE: Backfilling of CESM position.

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19 September 2022

Commissioner Department of Fire and Emergency Services GPO Box P1174 Perth WA 6844

Dear Sir,

#### Coverage for City of Kalamunda - Community Emergency Services Manager

The City of Kalamunda has received correspondence from the Volunteer Kalamunda Bushfire Brigade (KBFB) expressing concern with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) decision not to backfill the Community Emergency Services Manager position while Mike Ward is on annual leave for 4 weeks. A copy of this correspondence is enclosed for your information.

The City and DFES have historically backfilled this position for periods of extended annual leave or secondments. It is the City's understanding that there's been an acting duties policy shift at DFES and this has occurred without consultation with Local Government.

While I understand "informal" arrangements have been put in place to ensure appropriate coverage of essential matters while Mike Ward is on annual leave, it's the City's preference that this position is formally backfilled.

The City appreciates the constructive and on-going working relationship with DFES but does have concern with this position not being backfilled for all the reasons outlined by the KBFB.

Should you have any queries or wish to discuss this matter further, please, do not hesitate to contact the City's Director Development Services, Mr Peter Varelis.

Yours sincerely

Rhonda Hardy Chief Executive Officer

Encl. Letter from Kalamunda Bushfire Brigade

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## KALAMUNDA VOLUNTEER BUSHFIRE BRIGADE

20 Raymond Road, WALLISTON WA 6076 All Correspondence: C/- KVBFB, PO Box 93, WALLISTON WA 6076 Tel: (Duty Mobile) 0418 915 951

ABN: 81 346 297 118

Rhonda Hardy CEO, City of Kalamunda PO Box 42 Kalamunda WA, 6926 CC: Mayor Margaret Thomas BFAC Chair John Giardina BFAC Rep. Andrew Osenton CESM Mike Ward DCBFCO Steve Lake

#### Re: Lack of coverage for CESM role while Mike Ward is on holidays

#### Dear Rhonda

I write on behalf of the Kalamunda Volunteer Bushfire Brigade (KVBFB) to raise our concern about the fact that the CESM position is not being backfilled by DFES while Mike Ward is on holidays between September 19<sup>th</sup> and October 16<sup>th</sup> 2022. We believe the CESM position is too important to leave vacant for a month, particularly at this time of the year during the ramp up to the fire season. While I understand that this is not a decision supported by the City of Kalamunda and has been made unilaterally by DFES, the CESM role sits within the City management hierarchy. It has responsibility for overseeing emergency service processes within the City, including being ultimately responsible for a number of functions that directly support the efficient running of the KVBFB. Beyond that, the CESM role has a range of wider responsibilities that require a suitably qualified person to be filling the role at all times. It is not a role that should simply be left vacant for a month.

The DFES decision seems to be based on a belief that the CESM role is purely operational in nature, and that it is only of importance during the summer months of the bushfire season. This seems at odds with the CESM's Business Plan which shows that operational response is only part of the role. Beyond that it fails to acknowledge that the CESM has ultimate operational responsibility for emergency incidents within the City of Kalamunda that fall outside the gazetted fire district, and that these occur all year round – the CESM isn't just responsible for bushfire response. Crucially the CESM has responsibility for overseeing expenditure of LGGS funds that support the operation of the KVBFB. The role is essentially a bottleneck between volunteer brigades and the City, and the lack of anyone filling this role for even a month causes significant downstream delays, and affects the KVBFB's ability to protect the community it serves. It would appear that DFES neither understands the scope of the role, nor values it enough to ensure it is properly staffed.

Of significant concern is the fact that the spring period, leading up to the fire season, is actually the busiest time of the year with regard to Preparation and Preparedness, two of the key CESM roles. This is the period where mitigation programs are gearing up, and where volunteer Brigades such as the KVBFB are most active in conducting hazard reduction programs and preparing for the upcoming fire season. There are a range of key events occurring over this period that the CESM should be overseeing and attending. Beyond that there are ongoing projects and processes that need a CESM in place to ensure they continue. Of specific concern are the following:

- There are three community events running during the next month which the CESM would normally attend and provide support for. These include two Bushfire Ready Street Meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October, and the Burnsmart Demo on the 8<sup>th</sup> October;
- There are also two crucial events occurring in the two weeks after he returns from holiday that require preparation: the BFAC meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup>, and the Rural/Urban Interface exercise to be held on the 29<sup>th</sup>. The latter in particular requires considerable community engagement to ensure it proceeds smoothly;
- Beyond this there are a number of regional events taking places at which the CESM would normally represent the City. These include the Metro Pre-season Forum to be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> October, and presumably other crucial pre-season planning sessions within DFES;
- The Restricted Burning Period commences on the 1<sup>st</sup> October, during a year in which a new Fire Danger system (the AFDRS) is being implemented. It is expected that there will be significant confusion within the public as to how this system will work and how this will impact burning by residents within the City. The CESM would normally be a key part of community education for processes such as this;
- The KVBFB is running two DFES level courses over the next month, the Advanced Firefighter Course on the 8<sup>th</sup> October, and the Crew Leader Course on the 9<sup>th</sup>. The CESM would typically arrange resources for these courses and ensure all the DFES level administration is dealt with;
- It is our understanding that at least one of the KVBFB's three appliances that are overdue for replacement, is close to being completed and handed over to the Brigade. As the conduit between the City and DFES it would normally be the CESM who ensures this transition occurs smoothly;
- As we go into peak burning season the KVBFB and the Kalamunda VFRS both need Permits issued to allow them to conduct hazard reduction burns, often at short notice. It is usually the CESM who oversees this process and ensures both Brigades are able to take advantage of the increasingly short window of opportunity for burning that is available each year;
- On average the KVBFB has contact two to three times per week with the CESM over financial matters. In particular the CESM okays the disbursement of LGGS funds to support Brigade operations;
- The CESM is also the Kalamunda Chief Bushfire Control Officer. In his absence this role will be filled by the Deputy Chief Steve Lake, a volunteer. While Steve is eminently qualified to fulfil this position in an operational sense, he is a volunteer with a full time job of his own. It has been well over 30 years since the Kalamunda Chief has not been a paid staff member, and this will be the first time in over three decades where the role has been occupied by a volunteer for more than a couple of days at a time;
- The arrangements for covering the CESM role during Mike's holidays, while necessary, are ad hoc and rely on two people (Mike Hall and Steve Lake) who have full time jobs with other responsibilities, to ensure they run smoothly. This is unfair to both these individuals;
- Mike Ward as the CESM should be able to plan and take holidays without having to worry about how the functions of his job will be fulfilled while he is away, and what he might have to deal with when he gets back. This also unfair to him; and
- The bigger picture is that under increased fire risk caused by climate change we should be increasing our resources to deal with emergencies, not reducing them in this way.

The CESM role is ultimately paid for by the ratepayers of the City of Kalamunda via the Emergency Services levy. It is a role considered important enough to justify a full time paid position and I would note that the CESM already struggles to achieve the requirements of the position during a calendar year. Vacating the position for a month out of the year makes that even harder. I would suggest that this decision should make the City question whether it is getting best value from the arrangement of a DFES employed CESM, or whether a model employed by neighbouring local governments, where the CESM is wholly a local government employee, would be a better option. Nothing in this letter should be taken to suggest that the KVBFB does not wholly support Mike Ward as CESM within the City of Kalamunda. He has our total support and has been an excellent CESM over the past years. Mike goes above and beyond to ensure that the community of the City of Kalamunda is protected from emergency incidents. We simply think it is crucial that the CESM role is backfilled while he takes holidays.

It is my intention to raise this as an agenda item at the next BFAC meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> October.

Yours sincerely

So With

Sean Winter Captain Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Sean.Winter@kalamundabfb.org.au | www.kalamundabfb.org.au



Attachment #2 - Fire & Emergency Aviation Fleet 2022-23.

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ESTERNAUSTRALIA Department of Fire & Emergency Services (DFES)					Department of Biodiversity Conservation & Attractions (DBCA)						()
"RAC RESCUE" State Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service 24/7 All-Hazards Rescue Aeromedical, AISR, Transport Tactical AISR				S	Fire detection surveillance patrol program / Air Observa (Managed by DBCA Parks & Wildlife Service District Offices)						
Jandakot RESCUE 651	RAC	Bunbury RESCUE 652	Jandakot 1 Nov → (306 days)	and Services	Jandakot Perth Hills	Spare	Bunbury Wellington	Manjimup Donnelly	Man	jimup kwood	Albany Frankland
Technical Backup He	Mappin Radios, Night Vi	P Twin Engine with FLIR, 3D ; Hoist, AVL, Multi-agency 'ersonnel/Equipment Transport, ion Goggles and Systems asking by St John Ambulance	FIREBIRD 661 AS365 Dauphin Type 2 FLIR & Fire/Flood Mapping / Video	Year-Round	American Champion Scout Light Fixed Wing Observation Aerop				SPOTTER FIRE SPOTTER plane king by DBCA P&W District Office:		
Seasonal Air Attack Supervision and Aerial Intelligence Remote Sensing (AISR)     Strategic AISR     Strategic AISR   Seasonal Air Attack Supervision / Utility     Jandakot   1 November → (329 days)   Jandakot   1 Nov – 15 Apr (166 days)     FIRESCAN 125 King Air B200   FIREBIRD 623 AS355 Twin   FIREBIRD 662 AS365     Multi-Spectral / IR Linescanner   Supirrel Type 3   Jught Utility Helicopter   Dauphin Type 2 Utility     Joo0 litre bucket   Fuel Tanker   HaZMAT). 1,200 litre bucket   HAZMAT). 1,200 litre bucket					Jandakot Jandakot Bunbury Manjimup Albany   FIREBIRD TBC BIRDDOG BIRDDOG BIRDDOG BIRDDOG   As350 Squirrel Type 3 American Champion Scout Light Fixed Wing (Owned, Operated by DBCA P&WS) Other light				rotary Remote Sensing raft as Cessna 182		
DFES-Managed Aerial Fire Suppression					DBCA-Managed Aeria					Aerial Support	
Jandakot 1 Nov – 15 Apr HELITAK 671 HELITAK 672 Jet A1 Jet A1 Fuel Tanker Bell 214 Big-Lifter Type2 Helitankers	Jandakot 1 Dec – 15 Apr HELITAK 673 HELITAK 673 HELITAK 674 Jet Al Gruener Fuel Tanker 2,650 litre belly tank 3,000 litre bucket	Busselton 15 Dec – 31 Mar HELITAK 676 HELITAK 677 HELITAK 677 Fuel Tanker	Serpentine 20 Dec - 3 Apr HELITAK 678 HELITAK 679 UH60 Black Hawk Type 1 Helitankers 4,500 litres	Seasonal Term-Contract Services	98 d BOMBER BON	BOMBERs lays+ BOMBER MBER	Bunbury 98 days+ BOMBER BOMBER BOMBER	Manjimup 98 days+ BOMBER BOMBER	Albany 98 days+ BOMBER BOMBER	Bunbury Seasonal Type 3 Light Utility Kodiak quest Fixed Wing	Kimberley Seasonal Yupe 3 Light Utility GA8 Airvan Fixed Wing
Fuel Tanker     DDOG 125   Busselton Dec – April     132   132     BOMBER 132     COULSO     N132CG     BOMBER 132     C-130H Large Air Tanker (LAT)     15.141 Litres									Tasking by DBCA Districts		



Attachment #3 – DPAW Fuel Age and Burn Progress Maps, October 2022.

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Spring 2012.



odiversity, Conservation and Attractions does not guarantee that this map is without flaw of any kind and bility for any errors, loss or other consequence which may arise from relying on any information depicted. ay contain unmarked hazards and their surface condition is variable. Exercise caution and drive to conditions on all roads.

proposed. - Future =



Produced at 3:43pm, on Oct 17, 2022