



MINUTES

**Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting to be held
Monday 3 February 2025**

Shire of Nannup, 15 Adam Street

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Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday 3 February 2025

1. DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY:

The Presiding Member Cheryle Brown declared the Meeting open at 7.00pm.

Welcome to country was acknowledged by presiding member:

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Wardandi and Bibbulmun people. I acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and their contribution they make to the life of this region.

The Presiding Member, Cr Brown also made a special welcome to Geoff Allam the Shire of Nannup's new Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) and introduced Geoff to the Committee.

The Presiding Member, Cr Brown made announcement of the passing of Malcolm Cole he was a long-time firefighter in the Nannup area, Carlotta. Malcolm was a fire fighter for over 40 years. He was a Fire Contril Officer (FCO) for over 20 years and a Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control (DCBFC) officer for over 10 years. Malcolm made a significant contribution to the Nannup Community; he was a role model and support to many of Nannup's FCO's past and present

Cr Brown advised the attendees that the meeting is being record for minute taking purposes only.

Geoff Allam introduced himself to the committee. He advised he has lived in Nannup for 7 years. He has been involved with Nannup Bush Fire Brigade since 2018 and was also a member at the Nannup SES as a Local Manager.

2. ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES:

2.1 Attendance

Councillors	Staff
Cr Cheryle Brown (Presiding Member)	David Taylor – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Cr Patricia Fraser (Deputy to Presiding Member)	Geoff Allam – Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM)
	Lisa Atkinson –Executive Support Officer

Members (Full Voting rights)
John Patman – Darradup FCO/Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Mark Scott– Balingup Road FCO/Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Mike Vasey, North Nannup FCO/Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Peter Hastie, Carlotta FCO
Victor Lorkiewicz – East Nannup FCO
Geoff Allum - Nannup Townsite FCO/ CESM
John Jonker - Peerabeelup Coastal FCO

Other Attendees (Non-Voting rights)
Greg Hodgson – Forest Products Commission (FPC)
Bryce Edwards – Forest Products Commission (FPC)
Peter Thomas – District Officer – Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)
Helen Holzheuer – Parks and Wildlife, Blackwood District (DBCA)

2.2 Apologies

Members (Full Voting rights)
Gerald Bown – Cundinup FCO
Leigh Fletcher – Nannup Brook FCO
Brett Fowler – Peerabeelup FCO
Andre McNab – Scott River/Lake Jasper FCO

Other Attendees (Non-Voting rights)
Ed Hatherley – Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)

3. PETITIONS/DEPUTATIONS/PRESENTATIONS:

Nil.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:

4.1 Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting – 11 November 2024

That the Minutes from the Bush Fire Advisory Committee held 11 November 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record (Attachment 4.1).

Mike Vasey advised of a typo error in item 7.3.7 to the minutes it's says weigh in and should be WAERS as in the radio. The error was noted by the Presiding Member, Cr Brown

<i>MOVED Mike Vasey</i>	<i>SECONDED John Jonker</i>
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CARRIED

5. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST:

Nil.

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES:

This item has moved to agenda item 10.2.

7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

7.1 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

John Patman (CBFCO) advised that there have been a few fires around the area, including the mill in Nannup, Brockman Highway, Petunia Road, and Quongup Road. There were also several fires outside the area, with Donnybrook, Nannup Brook, and Darradup attending a fire in Donnybrook, and Cundinup Road attending the fire in Yoganup.

7.2 Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers

Mark Scott (DCBFCO) thanked the crews that responded to the Quongup Road Fire and raised concerns about the New Fire Behaviour Index. He explained that the risk is either over-allocated or under-allocated, with the current tendency being toward under-allocation.

Mike Vasey (DCBFCO) advised that the fire on Brockman Highway was accidental, and the owner was very proactive, staying on-site for 14 days to ensure it was fully under control for the brigades. The fire at Scott River was assessed and determined to be safe. Additionally, there was a follow-up call regarding the Nannup Mill; Manjimup had received a report from a visiting deputy who noticed smoke and appropriately reported it.

7.3 Bush Fire Control Officer

7.3.1 Balingup Road Bush Fire Control Officer

Nil.

7.3.2 Carlotta Bush Fire Control Officer

Peter Hastie (Carlotta FCO) reported that Carlotta has not received any official call-outs since November 2024. He added that they did receive five unofficial call-outs to check on flare-ups from a DBCA burn near Donnelly River along Graphite Road. There was nothing else to report.

7.3.3 Cundinup Bush Fire Control Officer

Gerald Brown (Cundinup FCO) was an apology and provided his report. Geoff Allam (CESM). The Presiding member, Cr Brown summarised the report. The Cundinup Fire Shed is complete, but it has not held an official opening. Appreciation was expressed for the former CESM Rob Bootsma, who played a key role in getting the project started. The Shire of Nannup held its November 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting at the Fire Shed, that set the deadline to complete the final tasks necessary to secure the building's certificate of occupancy.

In December 2024, the Fire Shed hosted a Christmas tree event for local children, it attracted many young families who had not previously been involved with the Cundinup Brigade. Going forward, its hoped that the shed will not only serve its primary purpose for firefighting but also provide a venue for other community activities to foster greater participation and involvement within the Cundinup community.

On 15 December, the Cundinup Fire Brigade responded to a fire at a property near the Quongup Road Cundinup Telstra tower, attending both the initial fire breakout and follow-up inspections over the following week. On 17 January, the unit responded to the Yoganup fire near Scott River.

The Cundinup light tanker participated in the Family Fun Day alongside Nannup Brook and other Nannup emergency services. It generated significant interest from both the youth and their parents. The next meeting for the Cundinup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade is scheduled for Sunday, 23 February 2025.

7.3.4 Darradup Bush Fire Control Officer

John Patman (Darradup FCO) advised they attend the Donnybrook fire. He added that he had received numerous phone calls and text messages from residents regarding fire break notices sent by the Shire, it was positive to see that residents are now aware of the fire break requirements.

7.3.5 East Nannup Bush Fire Control Officer

Victor Lorkiewicz (East Nannup FCO) reported the East Nannup Annual General Meeting was held, and all officers were re-elected. East Nannup attended a FPC fire on East Nannup Road, but nothing significant happened.

7.3.6 Nannup Brook Bush Fire Control Officer

Nil.

7.3.7 North Nannup Bush Fire Control Officer (Attachment 7.3.7)

Mike Vasey (North Nannup FCO) reported the Brigade attended five callouts that included Brockman Highway, Southampton, Nannup Mill, and Petunia Road. He added that he also received calls from residents regarding fire break compliance letters from the Shire. In November 2024, the brigade's appliance had a major overhaul that included new tyres, suspension, bearings, seals, and a hose replacement. During testing, the deluge system failed due to a blocked filter. It was noted to the previous CESM that vehicle checks should not be skipped.

7.3.8 Peerabeelup Fire Control Officer

Nil.

7.3.9 Peerabeelup Coastal Fire Control Officer

John Jonker (Peerabeelup FCO) thanked David Taylor (CEO) and Shire Councillors on behalf of the Lower Donnelly Association for taking time to visit the area and observe the challenges the community faces. They have 43 huts and its unique the only access is by river.

7.3.10 Scott River/Lake Jasper Bush Fire Control Officer

Nil.

8. REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

8.1 *Community Emergency Services Manager – Geoff Allam (Attachment 8.1)*

Geoff Allam (CESM) reported that the appliances and equipment at North Nannup are fixed. Nannup Brook's filter was found full of plastic, but this is not related to VPOWER. All brigades are to prepare a VPOWER. The Cundinup light tanker issue has been fixed.

Geoff has sent out membership applications, which are four pages long, requesting more information about each of the members. He also sent emails about various courses for the Academy. Mike Vasey (North Nannup FCO), Geoff and training officers will collaborate to create these courses. Over the past few weeks, Geoff has submitted 10 new member applications.

FCOs have received a new, easier-to-read training calendar from Donna Virgo. Geoff is currently working on a training needs analysis for FCOs and Captains. There are only four Level 1 Incident Controllers in Nannup, which needs to be improved as Captains should ideally be Level 1 Incident Controllers.

DFES is pushing to have PAFTAC implemented at incidents. If someone is unable to make a call during an incident, details should be sent to Geoff Allam or another Incident Controller, particularly in the Blackwood Valley response zone, to avoid unnecessary resources being deployed.

Mitigation works on Balingup Road, from Agg Road to Revelry Bridge, will follow 4 days on, 4 days off roster. Workers will not be paid until the end of the job, which will allow for faster completion, including weekends. Additionally, burn piles will be created near Agg Road and Revelry Bridge, and the Shire brigades will burn them at the appropriate time.

8.2 *Agenda Items, Community Emergency Services Manager (Attachment 8.2)*

Geoff Allam (CESM) reported receiving inquiries about car fires, such as the one on Graphite Road/Brockman Highway involving a vehicle hitched to a caravan. He clarified that if the fire occurs outside the gazetted area, the local fire brigades are responsible. However, if DFES (Department of Fire and Emergency Services) responds, they may take over, provided there is an appropriate handover. Within the gazetted area, DFES assumes control from the outset.

Peter Thomas (DFES) responded that the brigade will keep control of the fire unless DFES arrived to take over, but DFES usually won't take control of a car fire unless it's a major incident and won't use a formal Section 13 transfer. He added further that car fires outside the gazetted area trigger an automatic response from Nannup Fire and Rescue. This was agreed at a BFAC meeting a few years ago, with training provided to ensure local teams are prepared. Safety equipment should be worn and stay upwind of the fire. Decontaminate after, including washing masks and equipment. Peter Thomas noted that bushfire masks aren't suitable for car or structure fires. Stay upwind of the car fire and use monitors if available and focus on preventing the fire from spreading to nearby buildings or the bush. Set up a water source between the fire and any structures.

Peter Thomas (DFES) added There's an SOP for battery fires, but bushfire brigades may lack the proper equipment. Depending on the battery size, it could need up to 80,000 litres of water. Be aware of where the water flows, as it could go into creeks.

John Jonker (Peerabeelup Coastal) added not to stand in front or behind a burning car, as the battery could cause the vehicle to move or explode. Stand at an angle to stay safe.

Peter Thomas (DFES) noted that lithium batteries require a lot of water to cool during thermal overload. Recently, a battery fire continued bubbling 48 hours after being submerged in 1,000 litres of water, releasing harmful gases. This issue is becoming more common with electric vehicles and devices. In house fires, the first question asked is what is on charge? A recent fire in Busselton was caused by a failed battery in a PA system. The Presiding Member, Cr Brown added the phone recycle bin at the shire should be checked for safety reasons.

Vic Lorkiewicz (East Nannup FCO) added that the car on fire on Bridgetown Road had lifters and gas shock absorbers that exploded, with shock absorbers traveling a long distance. Peter Thomas (DFES) added that car fires can be complex, and he has been hit by debris, including from computers. Magnesium alloy is a concern because it explodes when exposed to water. The car can be covered in white foam, and tires, gas struts, and the fuel tank can also be involved. The main issue is often the air conditioning seals, which, when burned, release harmful hydrogen fluoride gas.

Peter Hastie (Carlotta FCO) asked Peter Thomas (DFES) about training for lithium battery fires. Peter Thomas (DFES) replied that there is no specific training yet, but some information is available. He added that he has provided training to his brigades and could provide a training session. He also advised he recently attended a seminar on electric fires on ships.

Geoff Allam (CESM) discussed plantation fires provided the example of confusion at Quongup Fire and who was leading the response. David Taylor (CEO) noted the fire at The Folly, where Vic Lorkiewicz (East Nannup) attended, the land is FPC-owned, but there is also DBCA land with FPC trees. He added that the Shire clarified that FPC pays DBCA as a response agency, but for FPC-owned land, local government is responsible for fire response.

David Taylor (CEO) explained that during the fire at Mount Folly, Vic Lorkiewicz tried to hand control back to FPC, but they didn't have trained staff available. Greg Hudson (FPC) responded that the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development crew were confused, and the FPC responder was unsure. Vic Lorkiewicz (East Nannup FCO) added that two FPC staff on had just completed fire fighting training. Greg Hodgson (FPC) added that it's the local Government's responsibility if they are comfortable the fire is under control it can be handed back to the landowner. Victor Lorkiewicz (East Nannup FCO) noted that the fire was nearly out, a firebreak was required, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development took control and created a firebreak.

Helen Holzheuer (DBCA) added that DBCA were there to assist. Historically, people assumed DBCA would handle FPC plantation fires, but as FPC now owns its own land, the roles need to be clarified. The confusion at The Folly highlighted this change. Greg Hodgeson responded that new plantation signage will help clarify responsibilities.

Peter Thomas (DFES) responded that the focus during a fire response should be on getting everyone to the scene and ensuring safety. Once the fire is under control, discussions can take place. DBCA and FPC have always supported each other, and it's important to keep that ethic. A good example is the Blackwood River Zone response, where multiple agencies and local governments work together to contain fires.

Victor Lorkiewicz (East Nannup FCO) mentioned that if the fire had spread just half a kilometre, either way it would have reached private property. David Taylor (CEO) confirmed all agencies were involved, and DBCA provided a bulldozer. Peter Thomas (DFES) added that fires on private property should be treated the same as any other. If a fire were on a farm, it wouldn't be handed over to the property owner until it's safe to do so.

Geoff Allam (CESM) raised that burn permits don't have a designated spot for signatures, only a large square at the bottom. To address this, we could ask individuals to write and sign their name there. David Taylor (CEO) added that the permit books are being reviewed. Currently, details like "call DBCA for a reference number" and "call the Shire" are handwritten, which can be missed. A uniform approach is needed across the Shire. Once the existing books are used up, the Shire will look into adding these details to avoid manual entry.

The Presiding Member, Cr Brown suggested using stamps for the books. David Taylor (CEO) responded that the books use carbon paper, so stamps wouldn't work. It would be more cost-effective to purchase new books.

Geoff Allam (CESM) spoke of the Quandup fire and asked if it had gotten out of hand? David Taylor, (CEO) responded that a permit was issued during the allowed season, but the fire wasn't extinguished and crossed the firebreak. He stated the 4-meter firebreak was marked, but since the requirement wasn't ticked off, an infringement couldn't be issued. He suggested making permit books easier to use and ensuring all relevant categories are ticked to allow enforcement if something goes wrong. Mark Scott (DBFCO) raised the issue that when FCOs issue permits outside their area, they should consult with the FCO for that area. In this case, the landowner approached an FCO from outside his jurisdiction.

Geoff Allam (CESM) discussed government grants and asked FCOs to review their brigade items for grants and send them to him for quotes. He noted that items range from 1,200 to 5,000, and anything above that is a capital grant.

Geoff Allam (CESM) discussed the Shire's gazetted area, highlighting that North Nannup is the main focus and Cockatoo Valley is not included. There was talk of including Jalbarragup, but more details are needed. Geoff asked for feedback on expanding the area for the Shire to manage.

Mark Scott (DBFCO) asked Geoff Allam (CESM) if the changes to the areas would affect the ESL. Geoff Allam (CESM) confirmed it would. Mark Scott (DBFCO) inquired further if Jalbarragup would become a multi-purpose brigade. Peter Thomas (DFES) responded that it would be a town brigade. Mark Scott (Balingup Road) questioned whether the town brigade had the volunteer capacity to manage that. Peter Thomas (DFES) acknowledged the concern but said the discussion was still in the early stages. Geoff Allam (CESM) added that further discussions would be held to explore the pros and cons. Mark Scott asked about the number of volunteers in Nannup. Peter Thomas (DFES) clarified that while there were more than four volunteers, the unit's membership wasn't strong. Mark Scott (Balingup Road FCO) asked how this would affect the brigades. Peter Thomas (DFES) explained they would remain with a different responsibility.

David Taylor (CEO) explained the issue arose from concerns about house and building fires in high-population areas. Peter Thomas (DFES) agreed, stating that the town brigade may not be able to handle structure fires, and external resources would likely be needed. Mark Scott (DBFCO) shared concerns about the lack of structural fire training in the area and the need for more courses. Peter Hastie (Carlotta FCO) asked about the relevance to his brigade. Mark Scott (DBFCO) explained that North Nannup might be transferred to the town brigade, which has limited resources.

John Patman (CBFCO) asked who raised the issue Geoff Allam (CESM) responded Phil Brandrett raised it. Peter Thomas (DFES) advised he would discuss the matter with Phil explaining Nannup doesn't have the capacity to provide structure firefighting. David Taylor (CEO) asked if brigades would still support under VFRS. Peter Thomas (DFES) confirmed that support could be provided to bushfire brigades, but questioned if residents should pay more for services the Shire cannot provide. Mark Scott (DBFCO) emphasised that bushfire brigades already support VFRS and noted that Nannup lacks the capacity for structure fires. Peter Thomas (DFES) mentioned similar challenges in other small communities like Walpole and emphasised the need for cooperation between agencies.

Vic Lorkiewicz (East Nannup FCO) asked about water availability during emergencies, if there were power outages. Mark Scott (DBFCO) confirmed that Nannup would not have enough water if the power went out, as WaterCorp's supply is limited and due to Legislation, they are unable to deliver potable water.

Geoff Allam (CESM) shared a warning received from the CESM at Donnybrook. A local man has been falsely presenting himself as a brigade member and attempted to invoice the Shire after some recent fires in the area. He has also been seen in the Collie area; everyone should be cautious.

9. REPORTS OF OTHER ATTENDEES:

9.1 Department of Fire and Emergency Services -Peter Thomas

Peter Thomas (DFES) thanked everyone for their efforts during the fires, including the Mill Fire. He stressed the importance of the PAFTACS system in the Blackwood Valley Zone for communication. This system helps ensure all agencies are aligned when responding, determining whether to continue or scale back efforts. Ground control and good communication are essential, especially given the challenges with comms in the area, particularly after the 3G switch-off.

Peter Thomas (DFES) reminded everyone to be aware of warnings. If assistance is needed, the Regional Duty Coordinators numbers and public information number can be provided through Geoff Allam (CESM). The public information number connects to a DFES representative available 24/7 to help with warnings.

9.2 Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions -Helen Holzheuer(Attachment 9.2)

Helen Holzheuer (DBCA) thanked everyone for attending the Petunia Road fire on DBCA land, which was kept under one hectare. It was a good turnout of agencies.

Helen provided an update on DBCA's spring prescribed burn in Nannup Shire, where they completed over 1,000 hectares at McCorkill Block, north of Jalbarragup. DBCA conducts a severity analysis post-burn to assess fire impact on biodiversity. The McCorkill burn was considered a success.

Helen also outlined upcoming burns. A burn is planned for Ellis Creek, covering several cells along Nannup-Balingup Road, including near Styles Tower and FPC pines. A small burn of over 400 hectares is scheduled for Dalgarp National Park this autumn. There is also a large burn planned for Beaton, covering 8,000 hectares, which will be broken into smaller cells over several seasons, starting with Tallison bush blocks. Additionally, DBCA is planning to target the Bidella Cell in the Millyeannup Soft Cell Mosaic project, covering 2,000 hectares at the corner of Vasse Highway and Stuart Road.

These burns are part of a larger program across Nannup Shire and the Blackwood District. However, weather conditions and resources will determine if all the burns can be completed.

9.3 Forest Products Commission – Greg Hodgson

Greg Hodgson (FPC) thanked everyone for attending the Yorganup fire. The machines on Mount Folly have been shut down since December 2024 and will start again in mid-March 2025. FPC will continue working on some heaping there and will set fire to those heaps when conditions are right.

Greg Hodgson and Bryce Edwards (FPC) had a meeting with Geoff Allum (CESM) to discuss FPC's role in the Shire, the history of fires, and current projects. He advised that FPC currently does not have a communications manager, a position responsible for community grants. He hopes the position will be filled soon, and FPC will provide a list of support options.

Greg Hodgson mentioned Water Corp has a large property just outside Lyndon (not in this Shire) with 15 hectares of pines managed by FPC. There is a new operations manager in Manjimup.

Greg Hodgson (FPC) spoke about FPC's maps. All FPC freehold properties will have a sign with a QR code. This will apply to plantations in 16 local governments. The information will also be available on FPC's website. FPC hopes to produce more maps by later in 2025. In Nannup Shire, there are 15 plantations, covering about 4,000 hectares, and maps should be available before Easter 2025. The QR code will link to a site where users can print required maps and access fire management plans.

David Taylor (CEO) asked Greg Hodgson (FPC) if FPC has agreements with private landowners, whether information about those plantations will be available. Greg Hodgson (FPC) responded that if FPC manages the plantation, the information will be available, but not if it is privately owned.

10. STANDING ITEMS:

10.1 Emergency Services Levy (ESL)

Geoff Allam (CESM) reported there is not much to update and will provide more detailed information at the next meeting. Presiding Member, Cr Brown commented this will be more relevant at the next meeting in May 2025 heading towards the end of the financial year.

10.2 Actions from previous meeting

11.3 Shire of Nannup to follow up on Gold Gully Road and Stellar Road with DBCA – Road's need Graded.

Action: Emailed Damon Lukins on 20 January 2025 to follow up with DBCA. A response will be provided at the May 2025 meeting.

11.4 Nathan Manning to email FCO's with the current details of the Fire Behaviour Index

Geoff Allam (CESM) emailed the Fire Behaviour Index to all FCO's on 28 January 2025

Mark Scott (DBFCO) discussed the importance of humidity in burn decisions. He mentioned that while temperature and wind speed are easy to find, humidity predictions are not. He asked asked Peter Thomas (DFES) if he knew of a source for humidity forecasts. Peter Thomas (DFES) confirmed that met eye has the information.

11. GENERAL BUSINESS:

11.1 Australian Weekly Climate Hazard Outlook for BoM 30 January 2025

David Taylor (CEO) advised he received the report by email and provided it for everyone's information. It is very in-depth and includes the outlook, precipitation, soil dryness levels, and predictions.

11.2

Mark Scott (DBFCO) further added that Malcolm served as Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer for at least 10 years, alongside Brian Thomas and John Rockman, who both have similar service records.

Mike Hastie (Carlotta FCO) asked who would write the letter. David Taylor (CEO) confirmed the Shire will write it with signatures from key officials, Chair of BFAC. Cr Brown, Shire President, Cr Anthony Dean, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, John Patman and David Taylor (CEO).

The Presiding Member, Cr Brown asked if anyone had any further information to share and emphasised the importance of keeping more documentation. She noted that what happens today becomes history in 20 or 30 years, so it's important to record it.

Action – Shire of Nannup to write a letter of condolence to the family of Malcolm Cole.

11.3 Mike Vasey (DBFCO) advised that he will be taking 8 weeks medical leave effective from the evening of 3 February 2025.

12. PROPOSED DATE FOR NEXT MEETING:

Monday 5 May 2025 starting at 7pm at the Nannup SES.

13. CLOSURE OF MEETING:

Presiding member, Cr Brown closed the meeting at 8.20pm.

Attachments

Attachments	Title
4.1	Minutes from the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Annual General Meeting held 11 November 2024
7.3.7	North Nannup Bush Fire Control Officer report
8.1	Community Emergency Services Manager report
8.2	Community Emergency Services Manager Agenda Items
9.2	DBCA Report 2025 Summer and Autumn
10.2	Actions from previous meeting 5 August 2024
11.1	Australian Weekly Climate Hazard Outlook for BoM 30 January 2025