



MINUTES
of the Shire of Cranbrook
Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting
held on **Wednesday 4th October 2023**
at **7pm** at the **Frankland River**

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MINUTES OF THE CRANBROOK BUSHFIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

**HELD ON Wednesday 4th October 2023
COMMENCING AT 7pm at Frankland River Hall**

1. ATTENDANCE

Baz Marshall	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO)	
J Roberts	Lieutenant	Bokarup/Unicup
M Walsh	Lieutenant	Central
J Climie		Central
A Murray	Captain	Frankland River
G Bernhardt	Lieutenant	Frankland River Town
J Egerton-Warburton	Captain	Gordon
D Packard	Lieutenant	Tenterden
M House	Lieutenant	Tenterden
K Gibson	Lieutenant	Tenterden
A Sokolowski		Cranbrook Town
P Eddy	Captain	Cranbrook Town
S Morgan	Captain	Tunney
A Hearn	Lieutenant	Tunney
K Warren	Lieutenant	Frankland River
P Horrocks	Lieutenant	East Cranbrook
B Smith	Lieutenant	Woolonga
N Preston	Captain	Woolonga
S Beech	Lieutenant	Kybellup
M Bunker	Lieutenant	Nunijup
L Watterson	Captain	Nunijup

1.1 Observers

CEO Shire of Cranbrook
 CESM Shire of Cranbrook/Volunteer Training Officer
 Base Radio Operator
 Council Representative
 DFES Area Officer
 CESM Cranbrook
 Department of Biodiversity, Conservation
 and Attractions - Parks and Wildlife
 South Coast Fire Coordinator
 Department of Biodiversity, Conservation
 and Attractions - Parks and Wildlife Regional
 Leader Fire Management Warren Region

1.2 Apologies

Peter Ettridge
Simon Hilder
Harley Smith
Tom Ettridge
Chris Tomlinson
Teresa Jones
Rebecca Ettridge
Rhys Bonshaw
Simon Hilder

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES.

Previous Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting and Annual General Meeting of the Cranbrook held **18th April 2023** as attached, be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Moved: Phil Horrocks,

Seconded: Adam Hearn

2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES.

2.1 Fire Shed

Linda Gray, CEO of the Shire of Cranbrook, spoke about attending the Appeal Panel in Perth in an attempt to reverse the decision not to award us funding for the building of a new Fire Shed in Cranbrook. She gave a presentation that highlighted the importance of the building in protecting the infrastructure of the district due to Cranbrook's location on two highways and the rail line, plus the growth in the size of the CBH storage facility. Hopefully, the presentation may be of value in assessing our next application for a Cranbrook Fire Shed.

2.2 Vehicle Radios

Derek Jones, DFES District Officer, spoke about the difficulties with contractors at the moment. All vehicles except Simon Hilder's should have been done. There was some comment about radio brackets not being secure enough, and the speakers being located behind the drivers seat.

There was a suggestion to do a scheduled check of radios.

Action: Baz Marshall, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, requested that every Friday, one day a week, to do a radio check at 7.00 am.

2.3 Smoke Over Roads

Derek Jones spoke about when at a fire, that you must consider whether the fire or rather the smoke will impact on road users, especially on major roads. The permit should then include that the fire cannot be lit if it will send smoke over a road, and in the case of a wild fire, you need to call for help to deal with the safety of roadusers.

2.4 PPE issuing out to members

There was a suggestion to keep spare PPE on fast fills.

2.5 Tims messaging (Propose change over to what's app)

Whilst this is expensive, the system works well so no change for this year, except to have in place back up for Teresa Jones, if she is out of range.

3. REPORTS

5.1 Chief Bushfire Control Officer Report

5.2 DFES Report – Derek Jones

- **As per attached report**

The report was very much about the extremely dry season for Western Australian based on a positive Indian Ocean Dipole as well as the El Nino climate influencer in the Eastern States. The drop in soil moisture levels being equivalent to a month later, and fires already being happening. There was a general discussion about communications and public warnings. Advice given by DFES was that if you needed to deal with Western Power, it would be quicker to ring Comcen (000). It would be easier to use that channel as they have these agencies' contact numbers for emergency matters. Some discussion on evaluating fuel loads.

5.3 Volunteer Training Officer Report

The new CESM has only just commenced work but will be supplying training as needed.

5.4 CEO Cranbrook Report - Linda Gray

A notice of the expected Spring prescribed Burning DBCA in reserves was received from Walpole DBCA, with a request to comment. Unfortunately, the Albany side do not provide this information.

Baz asked Butch Packard about the past history of DBCA's spring burning which unfortunately is when the wildlife is breeding including birdlife, and also allows any escape burn or peat fire to run into the warmer dryer weather.

There were several factors involved in the decision of using a spring burn model; the vintage harvest and there is not enough DBCA personnel to do an autumn burn.

5.5 CESM Report – Shane Harris

- Introduce myself to BFAC members
- Preseason training
- Update Volunteer contact register
- Fire Appliance AVL Upgrades 3G to 4G
- PPC/PPE requirements/issues
- Fire appliance outstanding works/issues, Preseason checks
- Western Power Insulator cleaning
- ABC Radio Broadcasting of Harvest Bans
- Permit to burn register

- EV/Lithium Battery at fires & risks
- Farmers shed (Chemical HAZMAT)
- Structure fires/Risk to Volunteers
- Incident reporting (Critical that we know who was in attendance)

5.6 Brigade Captain/Secretary Reports

5.7 Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions Report

Shane Harris, the new CESM, read the DBCA Report – Albany District Report.

- Track maintenance with firebreak spray and machine work. We have sprayed many kilometres of fire breaks in the Stirlings and will hopefully complete the remainder of this work this year. There was a big issue with water erosion on the tracks post the 2018 and 2019 fires and there is a works program to address this.
- Staff changes in the Stirlings, Lindsay Baker Senior Ranger and Mike Harris as Ranger. Lindsay comes with a long history in the Department with some great fire skills.
- Prescribed burning in the Stirling Range National park will be as per the attached prescribed burning plan. Two burns north and south of the 2019 Monurup Peak fire, Marri track bur 3014 hectares and SRNP Cell 3 7791 hectares. The aim of these burns is to break the remaining older fuels in the Stirlings North south half.
- We will commence our fire duty roster from 12th October 2023.
- The water bombers will likely commence the second week of December.

5.8 Other Agency Reports

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

There was a general discussion about the enforcing of the standards of Building Protection Zone around on farm buildings, and the best way to ensure compliance. Joe Duina, the Shire Ranger, will be co-ordinating some inspections.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Baz Marshall and Derek Jones talked about lithium batteries and the impossibility of putting them out. Also the importance of ensuring that your fire unit is ready for the fire season.

Derek handed out the DFES Water Bomber Request form and advised how important it was to identify the ground controller.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee will be held in **Cranbrook on Wednesday 17 April 2024.**

9. CLOSURE

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairperson, Baz Marshall CBFCO, thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

DRAFT