

Attachment 7.2 Report to the City of Busselton Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) meeting to be held on 13 June 2023

Agency: City of Busselton/Department of Fire & Emergency Services

Officer Representing: Matt du Plessis, Community Emergency Service Manager (CESM)

Matters to be reported:

Significant Incidents

- There were no Level 2 or Level 3 Fire incidents in City of Busselton (CoB) region this season.

Deployments

The City, through its volunteer Bush Fire Brigades, provides critical support to Level 2 and Level 3 incidents across the state. The below summarises the deployments for 2022/2023 season:

- **Bridgetown and Noggerup fires:**

The City sent a Task force team to the Bridgetown and Noggerup fire in Donnybrook in January. This was a great turnout and the City provided valuable support to the South West region.

- **Total Personnel deployed:** 76 volunteers from 10 Brigades
- **Total Appliances deployed:** 11 Appliances over the event
 - **Appliance Breakdown:**

- 1 x Light Tanker – Dunsborough
- 1 x Light Tanker – Ambergate
- 1 x Light Tanker – Vasse
- 1 x Light Tanker – Wilyabrup
- 1 x 3.4 Heavy – Vasse
- 1 x 3.4 Heavy – Dunsborough
- 1 x 3.4 Heavy – Yallingup Rural
- 1 x 2.4 Heavy – Wilyabrup
- 1 x 3.4 Heavy – Sussex
- 1 x 3.4 Heavy – Hithergreen
- 1 x 12.2 Water Tanker – Vasse

The **State Emergency Services Busselton** Branch had **21 volunteers** assisting the Bridgetown and Noggerup fires with the mixing and loading of retardant for the air attack aircraft at Busselton Airport. They were working on a roster system throughout the week. Interesting fact, on one Saturday afternoon the SES volunteers loaded 162,000 litres into the aircraft.

- **Kimberley - Tropical Cyclone Ellie:**

The City's Community Emergency Services Manager was deployed to assist with the Kimberley cyclone recovery in February.

- **Kimberley – Mitigation Burning Program**

Volunteers within the City have offered assistance to the Kimberley Mitigation Burning Program in June. Due to the extensive area that needs to be covered, the Kimberley relies on support of volunteers from various LGAs.

Statistics update

The incident summary details all incidents responded by both DFES Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services and the City of Busselton Bush Fire Brigades. Although there have been no Level 2 or Level 3 fires this year, there has been an **increase of Bush Fires across the region** compared to the previous 4 years.

Incidents: Year to Date Comparison: July 1 to June 1

Incident Type	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	Average Excluding 2022/2023	% TREND this year
Called Off - No Attendance	4	56	22	20	31	25.5	21.57%
False Alarm - System Initiated	76	75	63	67	71	70.3	1.07%
False Call - Good Intent	47	60	52	61	59	55.0	7.27%
False Call - Malicious	4	1	0	0	0	1.0	0.00%
Fire - Bushfire (lge)	9	6	15	17	12	11.8	2.13%
Fire - Bushfire (sml)	38	68	54	40	57	50.0	14.00%
Fire - Other/Rubbish/Vehicle	24	38	32	37	26	32.8	-20.61%
Fire - Structure	19	20	16	18	15	18.3	-17.81%
General Service Calls	2	0	2	2	1	1.5	-33.33%
Hazardous Situation	12	12	8	10	16	10.5	52.38%
Natural Hazard	18	72	14	34	9	34.5	-73.91%
Rescue & Medical	6	49	48	61	46	41.0	12.20%
Road Crash & Rescue	47	40	44	49	42	45.0	-6.67%
Search	0	13	16	7	13	9.0	44.44%
Totals:	306	510	386	423	398	406	-1.72%

% TREND compares this FY to the Average.

Hectares lost to Bushfires within the City of Busselton

Size of fires is not always available; fires less than 1 hectare are not included.

Hectares Lost	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
All Bushfires	2,274	4	53	426	31

Bush Fire Brigade Memberships

There has been a 16% increase in volunteer members this year. There were 326 members in 2021/22 season and 378 members in 2022/23.

Volunteer Summary for LGIS	Age Group					Total
	<=18	<=55	56-65	66-70	71+	
Active Operational	5	192	66	43	37	343
Non-Operational	0	10	6	8	11	35
Total	5	202	72	51	48	378

Mitigation Works

The City employs a number of methods to mitigate the risk of bushfire in the region. Mitigation activities include building firebreaks, chemical and mechanical treatments, as well as reducing fuel loads and planned burns (also known as hazard reduction burns) to minimise the potential risks of fires.

- Mitigation Activity Fund 2022-23 – we received \$500,000 for 49 Treatments
 - **Mechanical works** - Mechanical treatments can be used to target specific areas and plant types while avoiding sensitive areas. Examples of mechanical treatments used by the City includes slashing, mulching and parkland clearing along roadside reserves, within City Managed Reserves or by creating/clearing fire breaks.
 - 18 treatments – various locations – between February and May- including, Wyadup Road, Wildwood Road, Commonage Road, Bunker Bay and Farmbreak Roads, Cape Naturaliste Road, Big Rock and Jones Roads,
 - Also works in Bina Reserve (on Yungarra Drive), Reserve on corner of Yungarra Drive and Caves Road, Yoongarillup Reserve firebreaks
 - **Chemical works** - Herbicides are applied to weeds with direct, targeted application. This treatment can also be used to prevent the germination of invasive species to encourage the growth of native plants. This treatment is most effective when combined with mechanical treatments or applied after a planned burn.
 - 1 treatment - Schooner Reserve near Dunsborough-, completed in February
 - **Planned Burns** - can be an effective way to reduce vegetation from an area, copying a natural bushfire at much cooler conditions that are easier to manage. This treatment method is carried out to protect life, community assets and infrastructure, as well as to protect natural resources and species from damage from bushfire by reducing the vegetation fuel load within City managed reserves. Planned burning is done under cool burn conditions with experienced personnel onsite to monitor the burn intensity.
 - Ambergate Reserve – partial burn of reserve – 17ha – 05/05/2023
 - Marri Reserve – partial burn of reserve – 2ha – 20/05/2023
 - City Reserve on corner of Caves Road and Yungarra Drive -1ha – 17/05/2023
 - Bina Reserve - Flash Fuel burn (reduction of Grass trees fuels) – 8ha – 01/06/2023
 - Undeveloped Road Reserve off Kinross Loop - Flash Fuel burn (reduction of Grass tree flash fuels) – 2ha – planned mid June 2023
 -
- Mitigation Activity Fund 2023-24 – Applied for \$400,000 for 22 Treatments – awaiting approval mid-June
 - Plan is to complete all treatments by November 2023 to allow for application in Round 2 (September) which can be completed January to June 2024 to allow for variations and new treatments not known yet
 - These treatments include follow up chemical works on mechanical works and planned burns completed 2022/23, and additional planned burns and mechanical works across the region.
- Other mitigation treatments
 - Kaloorup Hall/BFB reserve – partial burn of reserve burnt by brigades 20/05/2023
 - Dunsborough Waste Facility – perimeter burn planned for mid-June by brigades

Appliances

- Annual servicing:
 - Commenced 29 May 2023 – schedule communicated to brigades
 - Appliance Checklists to be completed prior to service

Training (Mar – May)

- Courses Completed:
 - 15 – 16 April: Bush Fire Safety Awareness
 - 20 – 21 May: Fire Fighting Skills
- Upcoming Training:
 - 8 July: Train the Trainer – all CoB BFB trainers (accredited and non-accredited)

- 15 – 16 July: Bushfire Safety Awareness

BART

- Conducted information session at Secretary's Workshop 8 May 2023.
- Further training to be provided to BFBs prior to 2023/24 fire season.

Orders:

- Meal Grab Packs – Completed and to be collected
- Contamination PPC Bags completed and to be collected
- FLIR – Completed and to be collected
- PPC – Surplus stock ordered to ensure volunteers have access to uniforms in a timely manner