



Agenda

Bush Fire Advisory Committee

Tuesday 12 March 2024

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NOTICE is given that a meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee will be held at the City of Busselton, Kaloorup Meeting Room, 2 Southern Drive, Busselton with the option of via Microsoft Teams video conference on Tuesday 12 March 2024 commencing at 6:30pm.

Your attendance is respectfully requested.



TONY NOTTLE
Chief Executive Officer, City of Busselton

I Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Busselton acknowledges the Wadandi and Bibbulmun people as the traditional custodians of this region and pay respects to Elders past and present.

The meeting will be declared open.

2 Attendance and Apologies

2.1 Present

2.2 In Attendance

2.3 Apologies

3 Disclosures of Interest

4 Confirmation and receipt of minutes

That the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting held 12 December 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

5 Presentations

5.1 Bushfire Mitigation Prioritisation Matrix: Neil McKay

5.2 Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Presentation: Ed Hatherley

6 Officer/ Delegate Reports

6.1 CoB/DFES: Emergency Services Report

6.1 Emergency Management Update

Reporting officer: Matt du Plessis

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives and notes the Emergency Services Update Report.**
- 2. Supports the 2024/25 Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGS) Capital Grant proposal.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides the overview of the operations and activities of City's Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades for the region.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee is established under the powers given in Section 67 of the Bush Fires Act 1954 (the Act).

To provide advice to BFAC and the Council regarding:

- all matters relating to preventing, controlling and extinguishing of bush fires
- purchase of capital equipment and infrastructure, training of personnel and plans and programs in preparation for bush fire emergencies.

BACKGROUND

Under the Bush Fires Act 1954, the City is responsible to make provisions about the organisation, establishment, maintenance and equipment of bush fire brigades. The City achieves this through the provision of Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery functions in order to provide a comprehensive approach to emergency management within the City. This is delivered by:

Prevention: The City administers and enforces the appropriate fire prevention provisions of the Bush Fires Act 1954. The City promotes and participates in appropriate community safety programs in consultation with DFES.

Preparedness: In addition to the applicable community safety programs identified against prevention, the City, through their staff and infrastructure, supports the emergency services preparedness programs developed and implemented by DFES. The City ensures that their bush fire brigade volunteers are trained to the appropriate levels.

Response: The City responds to day to day incidents through the turnout of the Bush Fire Brigades. City support, including access to volunteers, appliances and other resources as required, is extended to DFES controlled incidents when requested by the Incident Controller.

Recovery: The City undertakes recovery actions in accordance with its role as documented in the Emergency Management Act 2005.

Management and Administration: The City provides leadership and support to the development and management of their local emergency management arrangements. The City appoints a Community Emergency Services Manager to deliver the emergency services within the City. In addition to this, the City appoints a Bushfire Mitigation Officer and a Ranger and Emergency Services Administration Officer to enable service delivery.

OFFICER COMMENT

Significant Incidents in CoB region

Nil

Deployments

The City provided support to the following incidents outside of the region:

- Level 2 Collie Fire (12th – 13th January 2024)
 - Yallingup Rural 3.4 appliance
 - Sussex 3.4 appliance
 - **Total volunteer firefighters = 12**

- Level 2 HELMS Fire Jalbarragup (17th – 19th January 2024)
 - Vasse 3.4 appliance
 - Hithergreen 4.4 appliance
 - Yallingup Rural 4.4 appliance
 - Wilyabrup 3.4 appliance
 - Sussex LT appliance
 - Dunsborough 3.4 appliance
 - Busselton 12.2 appliance
 - **Total volunteer firefighters = 33**

Statistics update

The incident summary details all incidents responded by both DFES Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services and the City of Busselton Bush Fire Brigades up until 1 February 2024.

Large bushfires are down by 47% on the 5-year trend and small bushfires are down by 22%. There is an 37% increase of other/rubbish/vehicle fires.

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

Incident Type	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Average Excluding 2023/2024	% TREND this year
Called Off - No Attendance	40	12	9	21	17	20.5	-17.07%
False Alarm - System Initiated	39	37	39	50	47	41.3	13.94%
False Call - Good Intent	41	38	39	32	36	37.5	-4.00%
False Call - Malicious	1	0	0	0	1	0.3	0.00%
Fire - Bushfire (lge)	4	8	11	7	4	7.5	-46.67%
Fire - Bushfire (sml)	42	41	23	32	27	34.5	-21.74%
Fire - Other/Rubbish/Vehicle	25	22	20	15	28	20.5	36.59%
Fire - Structure	10	10	12	10	10	10.5	-4.76%
General Service Calls	0	1	2	1	4	1.0	300.00%
Hazardous Situation	4	6	6	8	3	6.0	-50.00%
Natural Hazard	0	6	30	8	28	11.0	154.55%
Rescue & Medical	29	33	38	30	21	32.5	-35.38%
Road Crash & Rescue	24	26	31	26	29	26.8	8.41%
Search	7	12	4	8	10	7.8	29.03%
Totals:	266	252	264	248	265	257.5	2.91%

% TREND compares this FY to the Average.

Hectares lost

This season has seen an early start with 20 hectares lost at the Brash Road fire at Yallingup.

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	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
All Bushfires	4	53	427	32	20

Bush Fire Brigade Memberships

The below chart shows the summary of the City's Bush Fire Brigades memberships up until 1 February 2024. Membership has seen an increase of **57 more** members from February 2023 figures. This is a 16% increase of membership across the brigades.

Volunteer Summary for LGIS	Age Group					Total
	<=18	<=55	56-65	66-70	71+	
Junior or Cadet Rank	1	0	0	0	0	1
Active Operational	2	213	66	46	47	374
Non-Operational	0	11	7	6	12	36
Total	3	224	73	52	59	411

Training

Bush Fire Training Calendar 2024 is live. The following courses will be delivered face to face:

- AllIMS Awareness x 1
- Bushfire Safety Awareness x 3
- Fire Fighting Skills x 4
- Incident Controller Refresher x 1
- Ground Controller x 2
- WAERN Refresher – on request
- Trainers Workshop x 1

Grants

LGGS Capital Grant Submissions for 2024/25 are:

- Yallingup Rural BFB: Facilities Extension
- Wilyabrup BFB: Water Tank – Emergency Water Supply
- Metricup BFB: Water Tank – Emergency Water Supply
- Yoongarillup BFB: Water Tank – Emergency Water Supply
- Yallingup Coastal BFB: Water Pumps – Emergency Water Supply
- Eagle Bay BFB: Ceiling Install and Insulation
- All brigades: CCTV systems

Statutory Environment

Bushfires Act 1954
Bush Fire Regulations 1954
Emergency Management Act 2005
Work Health and Safety Act 2020
Local Government Act 1995
Bush Fire Brigade Local Law 2023
Fire and Emergency Services Legislation

Relevant Plans and Policies

Not Applicable

Financial Implications

Not Applicable

External Stakeholder Consultation

Not Applicable

Risk Assessment

Not Applicable

Options

Not Applicable

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

The officer recommendation will be implemented in full, or in stages as per the following table:

Milestone	Completion Date
LGGS Capital Grants Submission	31 March 2024

6.2 CoB/DFES: Electronic Fire Danger Rating Signage

6.2 Bushfire Warning Systems – Electronic Fire Danger Rating Signage

Reporting officer: Matt du Plessis

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Support submitting an application “Bushfire Warning Systems – Electronic Fire Danger Rating Signage” for the Disaster Ready Fund (DFR) Round Two 2024-25.
2. Support the signage locations identified.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) is a communication tool that assists in educating and building community preparedness and understanding of bushfire risk that exists within the region on any given day.

Fire danger ratings provide information on actions to protect yourself and others from dangerous impacts of bushfire.

Implementation of 5 Australian Fire Danger Rating Signs (AFDRS) in strategic locations will increase awareness and improve communication of fire risks in the community.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee is established under the powers given in *Section 67 of the Bush Fires Act 1954 (the Act)*.

To provide advice to BFAC and the Council regarding:

- all matters relating to preventing, controlling and extinguishing of bush fires
- purchase of capital equipment and infrastructure, training of personnel and plans and programs in preparation for bush fire emergencies.

BACKGROUND

The DRF provides \$200 million of National funding towards projects aimed at helping communities prepare for the impacts of natural disasters. Projects must align with the four priorities of the Second National Action Plan. These are:

1. Understand disaster risk.
2. Accountable decisions.
3. Enhanced investment.
4. Governance, ownership and responsibility.

The DRF's Objectives are to:

1. increase the understanding of natural hazard disaster impacts, as a first step towards reducing disaster impacts in the future;

2. increase the resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness of governments, community service organisations and affected communities to minimise the potential impact of natural hazards and avert disasters; and
3. reduce the exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a natural hazard's impacts, including reducing the recovery burden for governments, cohorts at disproportionate disaster risk, and/or affected communities.

Project proposals require a 50% contribution (cash or in-kind) however this requirement may be waived under some circumstances.

Applications are submitted through State lead agencies, who coordinate application submissions to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). In Western Australia the Department of Fire and Emergency Services are the lead agency.

On the 1 September 2022 the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) was implemented across Australia. Previous to this date the fire danger modelling and rating varied from state to state. Fire danger ratings describe the potential level of danger should a bushfire start. They are important as they provide people with information in order to take action to protect themselves and others from the potentially dangerous impacts of bushfires.

In June 2022, DFFS secured funding from the Commonwealth to facilitate the procurement and replacement of existing analogue and digital signage. In addition, local governments were asked to assess the optimal number and locations of current signage. Prioritisation of the funding was for replacement of existing out of date signage, before implementation of new signs, with a 50% contribution required.

ADFRS signage is a communication tool that assists in building community preparedness and understanding of the risk of bush fire that exists within the region on any given day. The signs allow for real time, simple messaging to communicate daily forecasted fire danger ratings, along with targeted safety messages.

Previously, a proposal for seven AFDRS Digital signs to be placed at strategic locations across the City of Busselton was developed in consultation with the Bush Fire Advisory Committee. This proposal was submitted to Senior Management, however minimal detail was provided in relation to the associated costs. As such the proposal was declined.

In November 2022, the Eagle Bay BFB gifted the City a new AFDRS Digital sign. Subsequently the City has installed this sign on Cape Naturaliste Drive. This sign is managed and maintained by the City. As a result of this gift, staff now have a practical understanding of the installation and ongoing maintenance costs of these signs.

There have been on going requests from community during the past two summers to improve communication to the wider public and visitors to the region of the very real risk of bush fire that exists in the region over the summer period. Implementation of additional AFDRS in key strategic locations will allow improved communication of these risks in an easily accessible format.

As such, staff put forward the request to support an application under the DRF round 2 2024-25 grant for joint funding for the installation of 5 additional signs, along with support for expenditure to be allocated to the 2024-25 financial year budget for a 50% contribution of funding by the City.

Proposed Signage Locations:

In order of Priority:

1. Yallingup Beach - Near Intersection of Caves and Caves.
2. Moses Rock Rd intersection with Caves Road.
3. Commonage Rd near Cornerstone/Simmos.
4. Carunup River Store (North of bridge in the 80km zone on Bussell HWY)
5. Vasse HWY intersection with Neville Hyder Dr (Busselton Airport)

OFFICER COMMENT

The Busselton Region is highly prone to bushfires which pose considerable danger to lives and property. Fire danger ratings predict and describe the potential level of danger, should a bushfire start.

The population of the region significantly increases during summer months and there have been ongoing requests from community over the past two summers to improve education and communication to residents and visitors to the region of the significant bushfire risk that exists in the region.

Implementation would systematically build the long-term resilience of the Busselton Community in understanding and preparing for bushfire risks likely to impact the area.

Statutory Environment

Bushfires Act 1954
Bush Fire Regulations 1954
Emergency Management Act 2005
Work Health and Safety Act 2020
Local Government Act 1995
Bush Fire Brigade Local Law 2023
Fire and Emergency Services Legislation

Relevant Plans and Policies

Not Applicable

Financial Implications

Not Applicable

External Stakeholder Consultation

Bush Fire Ready Group:

Provide Bush Fire Preparedness advice to local communities and represent their needs through the group.

The Bush Fire Ready Group Regional Coordinator has raised the need for the signs for a number of years. This has been a standing item and with the introduction of the new Fire Danger Ratings, these signs would now be relevant and make an impact across the region.

Consultation with the Bush Fire Ready Group covered the various locations, including future possible locations for the signs. There is 100% support for this project and the group look forward to seeing these across the region.

Risk Assessment

Not Applicable

Options

Not Applicable

CONCLUSION

These signs will provide consistent and accessible information to help the community better understand their bushfire risk and responsibilities and take the appropriate action.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

The officer recommendation will be implemented in full, or in stages as per the following table:

Milestone	Completion Date
Disaster Ready Fund (DFR) Round Two 2024-25 Submission	14 March 2024

6.3 CoB: Update Firebreak and Fuel Hazard Reduction Notice

Reporting officer: Rachel Runco

Placeholder: Update Firebreak and Fuel Hazard Reduction Notice report will be distributed to Committee members prior to the meeting

6.4 CoB: Mitigation Activity Fund (MAF's) Funding

Reporting officer: Neil McKay

Placeholder: Mitigation Activity Fund (MAF) Funding report will be distributed to Committee members prior to the meeting

6.5 DFES

Reporting officer: Peter Thomas

Placeholder: DFES Report will be distributed to Committee members prior to the meeting

7 Work Health & Safety

7.1 Reportable Events

7.2 Facilities

7.3 Training

7.4 PPE/ PPC

8 Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee will be held on 11 June 2024.

9 Closure