

SHIRE OF MT MARSHALL



Bush Fire Advisory Committee

**Minutes of the Mt Marshall Bush Fire Advisory
Committee meeting held in the Beacon Town
Hall, Beacon on Friday 7 October 2022,
commencing at 3.04pm.**

Mr Damian Tomas
Chairman

This page has
been left blank intentionally

DISCLAIMER

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE REQUESTED TO READ THROUGH AND FAMILIARISE THEMSELVES WITH THE DISCLAIMER

No responsibility whatsoever is implied or accepted by the Shire of Mt Marshall for any act, omission or statement or intimation occurring during Council or Committee meetings. The Shire of Mt Marshall disclaims any liability for any loss whatsoever and howsoever caused arising out of reliance by any person or legal entity on any such act, omission or statement or intimation occurring during Council or Committee meetings. Any person or legal entity who acts or fails to act in reliance upon any statement, act or omission made in a Council or Committee meeting does so at that person's or legal entity's own risk.

In particular and without derogating in any way from the broad disclaimer above, in any discussion regarding any planning application or application for a license, any statement or intimation of approval made by a member or officer of the Shire of Mt Marshall during the course of any meeting is not intended to be and is not to be taken as notice of approval from the Shire of Mt Marshall. The Shire of Mt Marshall warns that anyone who has an application lodged with the Shire of Mt Marshall must obtain and should only rely on written confirmation of the outcome of the application, and any conditions attaching to the decision made by the Shire of Mt Marshall in respect of the application.

Minutes of the Mt Marshall Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting
Held on Friday 7 October 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Declaration of Opening**
- 2. Record of Attendance/Apologies**
- 3. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meetings**
 - 3.1 Minutes of the Mt Marshall Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on Friday 25 March 2022.**
- 4. Reports of Officers**
- 5. Other Reports**
- 6. General Business**
- 7. Next Meeting – to be advised**
- 8. Meeting Closure**

Minutes of the Mt Marshall Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting
Held on Friday 7 October 2022

1.0 Declaration of Opening / Announcement of Visitors

Mr Damian Tomas welcomed committee members to the meeting and declared the meeting open at 3:04pm.

2.0 Record of Attendance / Apologies

In Attendance

Mr Damian Tomas	CBFCO / Chair / Committee Member
Mr Garry Huckstep	Deputy CBFCO / Committee Member
Mr Brett Clark	BFCO Wialki / Committee Member
Mr Jack Walker	BFCO Bencubbin / Committee Member

Mr Ben Sachse	BFCO Welbungin
Mr Steven Kett	BFCO Gabbin / Captain Gabbin BFB
Mr Shaun Gratte	BFCO Gabbin
Mr Daniel Spencer	BFCO Bencubbin

Miss Jordan Bairstow	Regulatory Officer
----------------------	--------------------

Apologies

Miss Siobhan Bishop	DFES Area Manager
Mr Tony Sachse	BFCO / Captain Welbungin BFB
Mr Craig Walker	BFCO Welbungin
Mr Noel Miguel	BFCO / Captain Beacon VESU
Cr Stuart Putt	BFCO Welbungin / Councillor
Mr Terry Gobbart	BFCO Gabbin
Mr Tim Cashmore	BFCO Cleary
Mr Brandon Lancaster	BFCO Beacon

3.0 Confirmation of Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the Mt Marshall Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held Friday 25 March 2022

BFAC2022/003 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION / COMMITTEE DECISION:

That the minutes of the Mt Marshall Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting held on Friday 25 March 2022 be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

Moved: S Kett

Seconded: D Spencer

Carried

Minutes of the Mt Marshall Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting
Held on Friday 7 October 2022

Business Arising from Previous Minutes

Mr J Walker from Bencubbin BFB discussed the following topics;

- Firebreak Order remains unchanged. It was discussed and agreed that we will be operating under the current firebreak order until wording can be agreed upon.
- Scott Promask's are yet to be issued. As discussed in the previous meeting on March 25th 2022, training needs to be provided on how to use/wash the masks. This is yet to be arranged. Regulatory Officer, Miss J Bairstow to liaise with DFES to arrange the necessary training

4.0 Reports of Officers

4.1 Regulatory Officer

Regulatory Officer, Miss J Bairstow provided updates on the following;

Welbungin Fire Shed – The Shire has engaged with Department of Planning, Land and Heritage who have briefly assessed the situation and have advised that the current purpose of the land is 'Hall and Recreation', therefore a case will need to be created for the change of purpose of the reserve to include the intended construction of a fire shed over the land. They have advised that the standard timeframe for this request is 6 – 12 months however, they have made note that it is time-sensitive due to funding and will prioritise the application. The Shire has also engaged with a contractor in regards to designing the proposed shed. This will keep the process moving whilst the application with Department of Planning, Land and Heritage is underway. Chief Bushfire Control Officer, Mr D Tomas has suggested including an external vehicle compound within the design to secure volunteers vehicles whilst they are attending fires. Mr D Tomas would like to see this inclusion in all new shed designs going forward. Miss J Bairstow to suggest this option to the design team to determine potential additional costs.

PPE Audit – The Shire reminds volunteers of the importance to ensure all people who attend bushfires are equipped with the correct PPE. If anyone within the brigades require any PPE, they will need to contact the Shire for ordering. Mr D Tomas informed the Committee that although volunteers are required to be adequately trained, our priority is to have volunteers and farmers attend fires with acceptable PPE to ensure their safety. If required PPE is not worn, volunteers/farmers will be turned away at the scene. Regulatory Officer, Miss J Bairstow to confirm minimum requirements and notify the committee.

Workplace Trainer – The Shire has engaged with DFES in regard to members of our local brigades becoming workplace trainers. DFES have advised that in order to be a workplace trainer, the volunteer needs to be suitably skilled and experienced, complete a 4 day DFES workplace trainer assessor course and then apply to be an assessor for the courses they will deliver. This has been extended to all brigades in the hope that members may volunteer for the role. Item will be followed up in the new year as more members become available due to current farming commitments.

Minutes of the Mt Marshall Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting
Held on Friday 7 October 2022

Current Training - The Shire has been supplied with a report from DFES which confirms the percentage of volunteers from each brigade with minimum training marked as complete;

Brigade	Percentage
Bencubbin BFB	35%
Welbungin BFB	80%
Gabbin BFB	45%
Wialki BFB	25%
Tampu BFB	35%
Cleary BFB	40%

This information will be supplied directly to each brigade and members who have not completed the necessary training will be notified each time DFES offer these training sessions. A suggestion was made to include weekend training courses which will be requested to DFES by Regulatory Officer, Miss J Bairstow on behalf of the Committee.

Fire Index Rating Change

- The Shire's fire danger rating signage is in the process of being replaced. At this stage, we have not been supplied with an expected date of arrival for the new signage. The Shire will continue to keep the Committee updated as we find out further information. Mr D Tomas discussed the option of having further fire rating signs at various places throughout the Shire, however this will need to be assessed by the Shire in regards to cost of signs as well as staff that need to manually change the signs during bushfire season. It has also been suggested that the Shire compile a list of community members who wish to be a part of a text service advising them of daily updates to the fire rating sign. This will be considered by the Shire with the Committee being updated once a decision has been made.
- The Shire is in the process of reviewing camp fire signage that was updated last year to reflect the new fire danger ratings. Mr J Walker has made a suggestion for the camp fire signs to take more of a minimalistic approach to avoid confusion/overload of information to those who are reading them. If the camp fire signs cannot be repurposed and are required to be remade, the Shire will consider this suggestion.
- New fire permit books displaying the new ratings have been ordered which we expect to arrive in the coming weeks.

4.1.1 Information for the Committee

Nil

5.0 Other Reports

5.1 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer – Mr Damian Tomas

Recreation Grounds Water Pump

The current location of the water pump at the Recreation Grounds is in an unsuitable position. Suggestion from Mr D Tomas to obtain quotes to move the pump closer to the water tanks to avoid blocking off the entry to the Recreation Grounds. Mr J Walker advised that at the 2021 Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting, there was indication

Minutes of the Mt Marshall Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting
Held on Friday 7 October 2022

that there was to be an allowance within the 2022/2023 budget to include this. Regulatory Officer, Miss J Bairstow to enquire with the Shire.

Issuing of Fire Permits

Fire Permits are currently being issued on a day to day basis. The Committee briefly discussed and agree that this should remain as standard.

Reminder to all who issue permits to send both front and back of permit to applicant. All permits must also include location number as well as nearest cross section to assist with volunteers should they be required to attend the property.

Issuing of Radios

Mr D Tomas enquired as to how many radios are required to be issued to each vehicle as per DFES standards. Unclear amongst Committee members. Regulatory Officer, Miss J Bairstow to confirm with DFES and advise the Committee.

Hydration

Mr D Tomas has requested for the Shire to supply hydrolyte powder/sachets in each vehicle along with water. Request noted and to be followed up by Regulatory Officer, Miss J Bairstow.

Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban Calculator

All members attending the meeting were supplied with details on how to access the Aurora Fire Behaviour Calculator to ensure all BFCO's are using the same calculations when assessing potential Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans. Website provided is; <https://aurora.landgate.wa.gov.au/fbc/#!/harvestAndVehicleBan>.

Increase of Fire Behaviour Index

Discussions took place to amend current Shire policy - FC.3.1 Harvest and Movement of Machinery in Paddocks Ban in relation to the increase of the Fire Behaviour Index from 32 (very high) to 37 (high) as per DFES recommendation. Policy wording in regards to calculating the Fire Behaviour Index will need to be reviewed.

BFAC2022/004 COMMITTEE DECISION:

Amendment to Policy FC.3.1 Harvest and Movement of Machinery in Paddocks Ban to reflect a change to the current Fire Behaviour Index whereby a harvest and movement of vehicles in paddocks ban will be imposed when the Fire Behaviour Index registers 37 (high) using the Aurora Fire Behaviour Calculator.

Moved: J Walker

Seconded: G Huckstep

Carried

Ute mounted/ Slide on Units

Discussions took place to transition from farmer owned trailer fire fighting units to utility mounted/slip on units.

BFAC2022/005 COMMITTEE DECISION:

Allow a period of three years for privately owned fire fighting units to be transitioned from trailer units to utility mounted/slip on units. After this period, non compliant vehicles will be unable to attend fire emergencies.

Moved: D Spencer

Seconded: S Kett

Carried 7/1

5.2 Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer – Mr Garry Huckstep

- Quiet year. Mr G Huckstep suggested camp fire signage to be checked at Billiburning Rock and Tampu Well as part of our Shire wide review.

5.3 Bush Fire Control Officer – Beacon

Servicing of Vehicles at Beacon

No issues reported by attending Brigades. Continue as per current procedures.

Water Tank at Beacon Airstrip

Regulatory Officer, Miss J Bairstow informed the Committee of the current status of the proposed water tank at Beacon Airstrip. The Shire has engaged with DFES. DFES have advised the Shire of two important considerations. One, if DFES are to assist with the funding towards the installation and maintenance of the water tank at Beacon Airstrip, it will be solely for the use of bushfire brigades only and cannot be accessed by farmers for personal use. Two, there is a lengthy process to be approved as a potential base with the details of the process outlined (but not limited to the below);

- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, DFES and the Shire of Mt Marshall should assess the location of the proposed base as well as ensure there is sufficient volunteers (both BFB and LG staff) to assist with all emergencies as it will be used to assist with fire fighting within the district, not just the Shire of Mt Marshall.
- The Shire of Mt Marshall would need to develop a funding strategy for works and reloader equipment as well as long term maintenance of the facility and annual equipment servicing to be presented to DFES.
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Fire Aviation will then assess the airstrip in company with a water bomber contractor representative to ensure the strip meets their aircraft minimum safety requirements.
- Other considerations must be considered such as whether the area is supported by the VHF Search and Rescue (SAR) communications.

The Committee agreed that if the water tank was to go ahead, no business or personal use by local farmers would be agreed upon. The Committee would like to receive more information about becoming a potential base as the information becomes available from DFES. The Shire will provide updates to the Committee as information becomes available.

5.4 Bush Fire Control Officer – Wialki

Dividing the Shire (Harvest Bans)

Minutes of the Mt Marshall Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting
Held on Friday 7 October 2022

Mr B Clark, BFCO Wialki suggested the option to divide the Shire in regards to Harvest and Movement Bans. Mr D Tomas would not feel comfortable doing so due to volunteer numbers. During Harvest and Movement Bans, it would be beneficial to have all volunteers available to attend an emergency.

5.5 Bush Fire Control Officer – Cleary

Nil

5.6 Bush Fire Control Officer – Gabbin

Gabbin Fire Shed

Maintenance required to the concrete floor in Gabbin Fire Shed. The Shire will review and obtain quotes for repair as required.

5.7 Bush Fire Control Officer – Welbungin

New Fire Appliance

New truck received by Welbungin Brigade in July 2022.

5.8 Bush Fire Control Officer – Bencubbin

Fire at refuse site

Brigade attended a fire at Bencubbin refuse site. With the assistance from Gabbin BFB and Trayning BFB, the fire was extinguished successfully.

Bencubbin Fire Shed

Request for the Shire to have the front of the Bencubbin fire shed sprayed for bugs/ants. Ants nest make it difficult to access the shed without issue. Shire to arrange pest control.

Hose Fittings

Hose fittings that were ordered late last year were scheduled to be returned. Mr D Tomas to investigate and advise which items can be used and which ones will need to be returned.

Hydrant Accessibility

Bencubbin Brigade advised that the hydrant located behind the Bencubbin Sports Club bowling greens cannot be accessed despite attempts to dig in the area. The Shire to arrange works crew to assess the site and clear away covering dirt as required.

5.9 Beacon Volunteer Emergency Services Unit

Nil

5.10 Department of Fire & Emergency Services

Nil

Minutes of the Mt Marshall Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting
Held on Friday 7 October 2022

6.0 Next Meeting – to be advised

Suggestion of March meeting to be arranged to regroup at the end of the fire season.
Dates to be suggested closer to March.

7.0 Closure of Meeting

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4:49pm

These Minutes were confirmed at the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on

Date

Mr Damian Tomas

Chair