

Bush Fire Advisory Committee - Greenough Meeting Minutes

Meeting Name	Bush Fire Advisory Committee - Greenough	Meeting No.	2-2023
Meeting Date	14 September 2023		
Meeting Time	3:00pm		
Meeting Location	Function Room, Civic Centre – City of Greater Geraldton		
Attendees	<p>Deputy Mayor Cr Jerry Clune (Fire Control Officer/Chair) Cr Steve Cooper Cr Kim Parker</p> <p>Aaron Halliday – CGG Training Officer Andrew Gaze – CGG Manager Regulatory Services Daniel Treasure – Moonyoonooka Fire Control Officer Jaymie Knight – Waggrakine Captain John Prins – DBCA Regional Leader - Fire Julia French – DBCA District Fire Coordinator Kieran Mussen - DFES District Officer Moana Wilson–Minutes Neil Johnstone – CGG Emergency Operations Officer/ Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Phil Melling – Director Development Services Warren Treasure - Moonyoonooka Fire Control Officer William McKay – Moonyoonooka Captain</p>		
Apologies	<p>Anita Kirkbright - DFES A/Volunteer Management Support Officer Brendan McCann – Walkaway Captain Ian Grant – Eradu Captain Matt Dadd - DFES Acting Area Officer (Fire Midwest) Murray Smith – DFES A/Bushfire Risk Management Officer Rob Roffey – Cape Burney Captain/Fire Control Officer Shane Karatti – Geraldton VFRS Captain</p>		
Leave of Absence	Nil		
Purpose of Committee	<p>The City of Greater Geraldton Bush Fire Advisory Committees are formally appointed Committees of Council established under section 5.8 of the <i>Local Government Act 1995</i>, and are responsible to that body.</p> <p>The City of Greater Geraldton Bush Fire Advisory Committees provide advice regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters relating to the preventing, controlling and extinguishing of bush fires; • Planning layout of fire breaks in the district; • Prosecutions for breaches of the <i>Bush Fires Act 1954</i>; • The formation of Brigades; and • Coordination and cooperation between Brigades and Agents. <p>Refer to Committee Book</p>		

All Committee Members, including external members, are subject to the same rules as a Council Meeting concerning confidentiality, public statements, conflicts of interest and behaviours of members, pursuant to the [Local Government \(Model Code of Conduct\) Regulations 2021](#).

The Presiding Member is to refer to the following Policy, Meeting Procedures and Regulations when chairing a meeting.

[Meeting Procedures Local Law 2011](#)

[Council Policy 4.4. Operation of Advisory Committees](#)

[Council Policy 4.2 Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates](#)

1 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed members and each gave a short introduction. Apologies were noted as per page one.

2 Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to respectfully acknowledge the Yamatji people who are the Traditional Owners and First People of the land on which we meet/stand. I would like to pay my respects to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Yamatji people.

3 Disclosure of Interests

Nil.

4 Applications for Leave of Absence

Nil.

5 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Committee Recommendation:

RECOMMENDED that the minutes of the Greenough Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting held on 8 February 2023 as previously circulated, be adopted as a true and correct record of proceedings.

COMMITTEE DECISION:

MOVED CR COOPER, SECONDED CR PARKER

RECOMMEND that the minutes of the Greenough Bush Fire Advisory Committee held on 8 February 2023 as previously circulated, be adopted as a true and correct record of proceedings.

CARRIED 3/3

Not Voted: 0

No Votes: 0

Yes Votes: 3

Name	Vote
Deputy Mayor Clune	YES
Cr. Cooper	YES
Cr. Parker	YES

6 Voting Members

The Council members present expressed a commitment to extending the voting rights to the local brigade representatives at the reformation of Council committees after the October 2023 elections. It was acknowledged that the expertise and experience of brigade members needs to be represented as voting members of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee.

7 Actions From Previous

Item 3.5 – Fire Weather Boundaries

Fire boundaries will operate under state legislation, traction has been lost on this issue due to recent officer shortages as part of industrial action.

NOTED: At the DOAC Wednesday, 13 September 2023 that fire weather boundaries are going to stick to shire boundaries to avoid confusion. No action taken or official communications received on same.

ACTION: Kieran Mussen will continue to provide update to the committee on this topic.

Item 4.2 Glengarry Debrief Results

It was stated that the City was not capable of completing the report. No report with recommendations was received. The group hopes that in future any major incidents will come to the Bush Fire Advisory Committee with actions and recommendations.

The group was assured that large fires requiring debrief will receive same in future. It was additionally suggested that a debrief with the brigade crews happen as soon as possible post incident to capture everything learnt during the incident and for the accurate reporting of same.

NOTED: The second debrief template document provided to the City by DFES is the best to use.

5.3 DFES – Water Corp Hydrant Maintenance

Response received from Water Corp was not favourable - funding could not be agreed upon. Kieran Mussen will provide the Chair Water Corp's response.

6.2 Drones

The City have investigated drone options, diagrams, required training and creation of a drone policy for the purpose of Emergency Services – watch this space as more investigation is needed.

NOTED: Can refer to DFES for advice on training and providers of same and Water Corp have excellent drone program – the group was encouraged to reach out as part of their investigation.

6.3 Roadside Numbers

The cost of replacement was prohibitive however the City has agreed to printing and making the numbers available on request and at the landowners expense.

NOTED: Visible roadside numbers are essential to assisting people in reporting fires but also for Emergency Services attendance.

QUESTION FROM THE GROUP: Was the State Government funding the signs?

RESPONSE: Yes, initially it was state funded however not anymore and the onus is again on the landowner.

QUESTION FROM THE GROUP: Are the new vehicle supplied to Mullewa South and Cape Burney fit for purpose?

RESPONSE: Yes, all are fit for purpose.

6.5 Crew Relief Vehicles

A request was submitted for crew relief vehicle to be supplied but this was unsuccessful for submission. **NOTED:** DFES crew relief vehicle replacements are slow, they currently have 2000 vehicles but these are being distributed at 100 per year.

NOTED: With notice DFES can assist with crew relief transfers via the SES vehicles and the teams have the resources for same with adequate notice.

8 Agency and Brigade Updates

8.1 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Neil Johnstone provided update and highlights were as follows:

- New team at the City, thank you for your patience and understanding;
- Training in Mullewa next week for half a dozen new members;
- AVL in all appliances are being replaced with 4G devices as 3G is being closed out;
- **REMINDER:** Please submit vehicle fault issues ASAP to allow the City to resolve;
- City received \$285K MAF funding, 7x works zones – work are underway and acquittal due June 2024;
- City mitigation works are 80% complete and should be finished in a few weeks;
- Firebreak inspections start 5 October 2023;
- New infringement process will mean property owners who were infringed last year will receive infringement at first inspection rather than at failure of a second, however these property owners will be email reminded this fortnight to advise same; and
- **REMINDER:** Fire reports to be submitted in a timely manner as these reports also assist in the application for new appliances;
- **REMINDER:** during permit season is the fire rating is at HIGH+ any permits provided become invalid so please ensure you're educating community members on this as you write up permits;
- Unsuccessful in gaining shed and appliance funding this year but will continue trying;
- Water bomber reloader training is running 29/10/2023 and looking for interested participants; and
- There will be two assisted burns in Waggrakine between now and 15 October 2023 so will be looking for Waggrakine Brigade assistance.

8.2 City of Greater Geraldton Emergency Operations Officer

Andy Gaze addressed and thanked the group for their presence and dedication advising that he is looking forward to working with everyone and appreciates the experience with special thanks to his City team. The group was advised that if the City's help is needed please ask and don't hesitate to bring forward any issues – the City is committed to helping you as best as possible. The updated infringement

process is an attempt to have more grass cut on time and is only targeting property owners who have been infringed previously.

NOTED: Coordinator Emergency Services position is still vacant however interviews are this week and there is hope that a successful candidate will be determined within the fortnight.

QUESTION FROM THE GROUP: Slashing contractors have previously provided information confirming that they have been contracted to complete slashing and that the delay in same is an operational issue there end – will this still be acceptable evidence to withdraw and infringement?

RESPONSE: Yes and no, it would still be assessed on a case by case and would really depend on when the contractor was engaged. If the contractor was only engaged a couple of days before the deadline then this is not likely to be accepted.

8.3 Department of Fire and Emergency Services

Kieran Mussen provided update and highlights are below (emailed update also attached):

- Grain harvest aerial support is not 100% confirmed but hoping this will commence on 1 November 2023 – per collaborated advice from DPIRD, DBCA & DFES.
- **NOTED:** Harvest may start as early as 1 October 2023 – advice taken on notice but DPIRD has currently advised a 1 November 2023 commencement date would be appropriate;
- Midwest Volunteers Leader Forum please RSVP by tomorrow 15 September 2023;
- This forum is limited to Chief Fire Control Officers or their Deputy should they be absent – Brigade Captains and members are not currently eligible;
- WAPOL have wide drone resources and DFES can call on them for incidents as necessary;
- Lithium fires in vehicles and devices continue to be a concern – no EV fires in Geraldton as yet;
- Heavy rescue cache and trucks for large vehicle incidents are available including 40-180T lifts;
- Regional exercise to be undertaken on 27-28 December 2023; and
- AFDRS – see state fuel editor for predictions across the state.

8.4 Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attraction

Julia French and John Prins provided update and highlights were as follows:

- Mark Teale, Fire Operations Officer starts next Monday to assist with fire duties – new position created under the Planning Parks initiative;
- Water bomber reloader training coming up 29/10/2023 at 12PM and participants welcome - will continue to liaise with Neil and the SES for participants;
- Water bombers aren't confirmed for Geraldton but it is highly likely – hoping they'll be located in Geraldton and Narrogin;
- Crew member and crew leader training will be undertaken shortly;
- As a region we have reported on the Canadian fires deployment;
- No spring burning planned but we are supporting requests outside the district and region, the group is encouraged to reach out if in need of an extra truck. The team are available through the week and have good experience;
- 23/24 prescribed burn options for Autumn are in preparation now to improve performance;
- Intention is to provide strategic protection for larger blocks and will kick off mid-March to early April 2024 and continue into late May 2024;
- Map circulated and attached for mitigation works detail; and
- Will provide a program update at the next BFAC.

NOTED: Water Corp have an amazing drone set up. They have 4-5 drones with multiple settings being raised for prescribed burns and have the ability for remote viewing. Discussions regarding use for fire monitoring has been had and they will look at providing same.

QUESTION FROM THE GROUP: Are these drones based in Geraldton?

RESPONSE: No but the fire team are happy to travel and go anywhere.

QUESTION FROM THE GROUP: Is drone use permitted during fires?

RESPONSE: Drone use will prevent water bombing aircraft from operating therefore, drones would have to be grounded prior to calling water bombers.

8.5 Cape Burney Bush Fire Brigade

Not present, no update provided.

8.6 Eradu Bush Fire Brigade

Not present, no update provided.

8.7 Moonyoonooka Bush Fire Brigade

William McKay provided update and the highlights were as follows:

- 35 incidents attended since last meeting;
- Members: 32 total / 17 active
- Off road training coming up shortly – searching for one more person to participate;
- Emergency team equipment is now in the Emergency Management building – the team and Moonyoonooka have exclusive use of the Emergency Management building until the new building happens; and
- Nothing else to report, vehicles are ready to go for incidents.

8.8 Waggrakine Bush Fire Brigade

- 31 members - In process of updating member records to determine active members;
- 15 incidents attended some of which have been in the Shire of Chapman Valley;
- Betterment of communication with Shire of Chapman Valley is needed in relation to response areas;
- **NOTED:** Manager Regulatory Services has been trying to speak with the Shire of Chapman Valley CEO and working on fostering this relationship. Chief Fire Control Officer (CFCO) Neil Johnstone has spoken with Shire of Chapman Valley's CFCO who is happy to collaborate but need to confirm same with CEO; and
- 9 planned burn assists, some more to come including the box thorns for the City.

8.9 Walkaway Bush Fire Brigade

Not present, no update provided.

9 General Business

9.1 Availability of City Equipment for Incidents

This issue was raised at a Concept Forum with all Councillors and the City but the request was unsuccessful - City preference remains to use contractors. Acknowledged by the group that it's frustrating to be declined equipment when City workers are 3km from an incident and contractors are uncontactable or unavailable.

NOTED: Manager Regulatory Services is investigating the specific reasons why this request has been refused to see if they are reasons that can be overcome or if the reasons are steadfast.

9.2 Water Tank Fittings

Half of the available water tanks brigades have attempted to use during the last season don't have the correct fittings to adapt to the trucks. Changes to the fittings would result in better turn around in logistics.

QUESTION FROM THE GROUP: Can the contractors on the list make sure they have 10M lay flat hose with a BIC fitting?

RESPONSE: All the trucks are different and a consistent fitting change may not be possible but Emergency Operations Officer will investigate with irrigation contractor.

9.3 Bulk Water Cart from DFES

Operations have approved this application but the request is now sitting with fleet and there is only 1x 12.2 water cart available. 4x heavies and 6x light tankers have also been requested but fleet have not yet approved and is unlikely to be approved given the needs across the state.

9.4 Waggrakine Captain Queries

Waggrakine Brigade Captain Jaymie Knight posed the following questions and provided the following feedback to the group:

QUESTION FROM THE GROUP: With the upcoming election changes will there be a review of the Fire Control Officer list?

RESPONSE: No this is not relevant to the election.

QUESTION FROM THE GROUP: Waggrakine Fire Control Officer was not invited to today's meeting (Trevor Morrison).

RESPONSE: The City will ensure he is invited to the next meeting and that his contact details are correct.

- No access to the channel at the station – advised that there should be 1x hand held for same.

ACTION: Emergency Operations Officer – Neil Johnstone will investigate and remedy.

QUESTION FROM THE GROUP: DFES training calendar cancellations were disappointing. Can we pre-register for courses next year?

RESPONSE: DRAFT Calendar is coming out at the end of October 2023 and brigades will be issued with this information. The current industrial action has also had an impact in this space however if there is an operational need please let DFES know and they can run a stand-alone course.

NOTED: Waggrakine Trainer Assessors are happy to assist DFES with delivery of training. The City will review this information and feedback to review needs. The City Training Officer role has been filled and Aaron Halliday is looking forward to championing training.

QUESTION FROM THE GROUP: Is there any plan to update the Bushfire Response Plan on City website? Last update was in 2017 and the wording and context is out of date.

RESPONSE: Andy will review and action update whatever necessary.

9.5 Thank You

Moonyoonooka Brigade gave thanks relating to the provision of the truck driver licensing for two of their brigade members.

9.6 Tank Repairs

Neil has spoken with the City irrigation team and actioned the tank repair on Giles Road.

9.7 Training

The Council members present expressed that the same recommendations as put forward at the Mullewa BFAC may also be relevant to the Greenough BFAC group.

10 Date of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 21 March 2024 (Recommended).

11 Close

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 4:09pm.