

Bush Fire Advisory Committee – Mullewa Meeting

Minutes

Meeting Name	Bush Fire Advisory Committee - Mullewa	Meeting No.	3/2022
Meeting Date	13 October 2022		
Meeting Time	09:30am		
Meeting Location	Chambers Room, Mullewa District Office		
Attendees	Cr Jerry Clune–Councillor- Moonyoonooka FCO Steve Cooper–Councillor Tarleah Thomas–Councillor - Teams Michael Librizzi–Councillor Gerard Rowe–Mullewa South Captain Daniel Critch–Tenindewa Captain Craig Moran- Mullewa Central - Captain Murray Preston–Casuarinas Captain Zac Grima–Tardun/Pindar- Captain/FCO Brett Steele- Mullewa South FCO Mathias Moerman–DFES Area Officer – Teams Tony Crudeli–Mullewa VFRS Captain Chris Lee–CGG Director Infrastructure Services Wayne Ellis–CGG Coordinator Emergency Management Elle Woinar–Minutes	By Invitation	District Officer, Dept. Fire & Emergency Services
		Apologies	Julia French Ross McKim Richie Boykett Murray Smith Peter Barnetson Brendan Weir
		Distribution	All

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:33am and welcomed all present and announced apologies.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Committee Recommendation:

RECOMMENDED that the minutes of the Bushfire Fire Advisory Committee held on 24 March 2022 as previously circulated, be adopted as a true and correct record of proceedings.

3. ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1. The City to hold training sessions in Mullewa for community volunteers that may attend fires

The City has run six courses, two complete "minimum training" packages in Mullewa in August. Both courses were run during the week and were well attended.

3.2. The City to provide a phone number for registering a burn.

Contacting the number to register a burn has, for a number of years, been one of the requirements to conduct any burn under permit conditions. The number is Perth based, and when contacting and identifying the location of the burn, a record is made on the "emergency WA" webpage which all have access to online. www.emergency.wa.gov.au that number is 9395 9209.

3.3. The City to follow up the use of Machinery for Mullewa Fires.

The City has investigated that the time variance between getting a City employee on standby and overtime to an incident versus a City based contractor does not justify the substantial cost variance. To ensure that a contractor is always call and available to respond, the City has a standing contract with three City based contractors.

- C Lee advised something that is not supported not an option we are not resourced or insured and trained for it.

Action – Cr J Clune advised leaving with Councillors to negotiate.

3.4. The City to notify all FCO's of restricted and prohibited burning times.

Texts and emails were sent to all Captains and FCO's at the beginning of August reminding all of the prohibited and restrictive burning periods.

4. AGENDA ITEMS

4.1. Proposal to change the restricted/prohibited burning period for Mullewa- B Steele

- The general consensus for the Mullewa District is to have permits from the 01st March until the 15th March, then unrestricted at the other end of the season, have permits from the 15th September until the 30th September.
- Then no burning at all after that remembering that these dates can be moved either way by 14 days.
- B Steele is concerned that the new fire rating system may reduce the number of burning days available.

Action – W Ellis to seek clarification of the new system and its impact in relation to proposed permit dates.

Action – W Ellis to circulate the new rating system flyer in the next Smoke Signals publication.

5. AGENCY AND BRIGADE REPORTS

5.1. Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and

5.2. Coordinator, Emergency Management – Wayne Ellis

- The City has investigated the possibility of having equipment and drivers available 24/7 to respond to an incident. Due to the fact that the City cannot force any person to work overtime, nor ensure that a driver or piece of machinery will be available 24/7. As a result, the City has entered into a contract with three separate companies in Geraldton who have indicated that they are able to supply equipment when required.

- The City has just completed its final training course for members needing to achieve minimum training competency this year. The City, in the interests of giving all members who may not have completed the required courses, have run an unprecedented 27 courses or nine complete packages between January and end September this year. The uptake by members was spectacular, with a total of 226 volunteers completing the courses they enrolled in. Although most volunteers needed to enrol in all three courses to meet the requirements, there were instances where a member needed only one or two of the courses to obtain their competency, having completed some of the courses previously.
 - The City also offered, to those who qualified, the opportunity to showcase their knowledge and competency levels by completing a Verification of Competency (VOC) challenge and obtaining the required competency accreditation that way.
 - The locations for the training opportunities was not just confined to Geraldton or only on the weekends.
Six courses (two complete packages) were offered in Mullewa during the week as well as three courses (one complete package) offered in Walkaway, also during the week.
 - Unfortunately, even after all the opportunities presented some members had still done the required training. As a result of this, the City had to take the hard decision to remove those members from the ranks.
 - On a positive note the City would like to welcome more than 40 new members that have joined and done the required training since the last fire season.
 - Fire break inspection have commenced on the 5th October.
 - On the 15th October the City will be entering Prohibited Burning Period, so after this time all fires spotted should be reported to 000. All permits will cease on the 14th October across the City. Restricted burning returns on 15 February 2022
 - Mullewa South's has a new 4.4 Rural. The TATRA 4.4 has been commissioned and the brigade has received training on its operation. The appliance is currently housed at Gerrard Rowe's property in Devils Creek.
 - The new Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) is now active. The changes have been communicated to all Captains and FCO's via email and to all members in the latest "smoke signals".
- Department of Fire & Emergency Services - **Mathias Moerman** □
 - Advised of the new Fire Danger Rating System.
 - Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attraction – **Julia French**
 - Brodie Selby has left the Murchison District for another position in the Department. I will be Acting as District Fire Coordinator until late December or until someone is permanently appointed.
 - DBCA hopes to complete water bomber reloader training in Geraldton in Nov – hope to have dates confirmed for this asap. This will be held on a Saturday or Sunday with potential for brigade involvement.
 - Geraldton depot should receive a second gang truck – ETA November 2022. Jurien depot should receive a second gang truck – ETA November 2022. Both resources available for bushfire suppression.
 - 6 conservation employees started in the district at the beginning of the year. They have completed their bushfire crew member training and will be heavily involved in fire management activities (prescribed burning, bushfire suppression, machine operations, fire access track maintenance etc).

- Fire access track maintenance program has begun and hope to have priority tracks identified and maintenance commenced by November.
- Reserves identified for autumn prescribed burning are Barnong, Wandana Nature Reserve, Indarra Springs Nature Reserve and Pallotine Nature Reserve. Prescriptions will be written for these area's and burns prioritised.
- Richard Boykett (Regional Leader – Fire Management DBCA) and Mark Teale (Shire of Irwin) have been in discussions regarding potential for a Fireline construction course aimed at machine operators. The cost is approximately \$500/pp and if interested please speak to Mark Teale.

5.5. Mullewa Central Bush Fire Brigade- **Craig Moran**

- Nil to Report

5.6. Mullewa South Bush Fire Brigade- **Gerard Rowe**

- Spare tyre is only for rear tyres, not the front – Murray is aware.
- St Johns has replenished the truck with first aid equipment.

5.7. Tenindewa Bush Fire Brigade – **Daniel Critch**

- Commended Murray Smith on his patience in regard to the courses he has conducted.

5.8. Pindar/Tardun Bush Fire Brigade – **Zac Grima**

- Nil to report

5.9. Casuarina Bush Fire Brigade – **Murray Preston**

- Nil to report

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1. Fire Control Nominations

- Nominations for Fire Control Officers (FCO) normally come through to the City during this period, The City will commence reissuing and gazetting Fire Control Officer Positions.
- Tenindewa Bush fire Brigade Daniel Critch will be stepping down from Captain.
- Mullewa South Bush fire Brigade Brett Steele will be stepping down from Captain.
- Mullewa South nominated Gerard Rowe.

6.2 Volunteer Training

- W Ellis advised all volunteers who are in support roles can do anything but fight the fire if they haven't done the WHS training.
- FCO can authorise people to sign on in an emergency situation.
- DFES and The City have the training records on their portal for the Volunteers.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for 02 February 2023.

8. CLOSE OF MEETING

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 10:45 am.