



Shire of
Serpentine
Jarrahdale

Bush Fire Advisory Committee

Minutes

6 December 2023

1900hrs

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In Person

Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

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Open Monday to Friday 8.30am-5pm (closed public holidays)



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Dear Committee Member

Minutes of the Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting held in the Civic Centre, 6 Paterson Street, Mundijong, on Wednesday, 6 December 2023. The Director of Community Engagement, Mr Brian Oliver declared the meeting open at 7.01pm and welcomed Committee Members. The Director of Community Engagement, Mr Brian Oliver advised he would be presiding over the meeting until the appointment of the Presiding Member.

Brian Oliver
Director Community Engagement

In accordance with Schedule 2.3 of the Local Government Act 1995 the Director of Community Engagement, shall preside at the commencement of this Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting to enable the election of the Presiding Member and the Deputy Presiding Member.

Minutes

1. Attendances and Apologies (including leave of absence):

Voting Delegates

Mike Ross	Oakford Captain (Presiding Member from 7:05pm.)
Jess Gibson	Byford Captain (Deputy Chairperson)
Chris Burgess	Keysbrook Captain (Via Teams)
Shae Mack	Council Delegate
Nathan Bishop	Council Delegate
Leigh Mulholland	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Nathan Carrall	Emergency Support Brigade Captain
Emma Chapman	Serpentine Captain
Nathan Houweling	Mundijong Captain

Non-Voting Delegates

Brian Oliver	Director Community Engagement
Dave Richer	Coordinator Emergency Services
Mike Ward	A/District Officer Southeast Department Fire and Emergency Services
Ken Elliott	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer 1
David Gibson	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer 3

Apologies

Sarah Davis	Jarrahdale Captain
Tina Bullman	Minute Taker / Administration



Jason White Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer 2
Brodie Selby Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Observer

Ken Parker Manager Governance and Strategy

1.1. Election of Presiding Member

The Director Community Engagement, Mr. Brian Oliver advised one nomination for the position of Presiding Member for the period ending at the next Ordinary Local Government Election in October 2025 was received in writing prior to the meeting from Oakford Captain Mike Ross.

The Director of Community Engagement asked if there were any further nominations.

No further nominations were received.

There being no further nominations, the Director Community Engagement declared Oakford Captain Mike Ross as Presiding Member for the period ending at the next Ordinary Local Government Election in October 2025.

Captain Mike Ross assumed the Chair as Presiding Member of the Bushfire Advisory Committee at 7:05pm.

1.2. Election of Deputy Presiding Member

The Presiding Member called for nominations for the position of Deputy Presiding Member for the period ending at the next Ordinary Local Government Election in October 2025.

Byford Captain, Jess Gibson nominated herself from the floor.

The Presiding Member asked if there were any further nominations.

No further nominations were received.

There being no further nominations, the Presiding Member declared Byford Captain, Jess Gibson as Deputy Presiding Member of Bushfire Advisory Committee for the period ending at the Local Government Elections in October 2025. .

1.3. Introductions

Following the election each member was asked to introduce themselves to the committee for the benefit of the new members.

2. Declaration of Councilors, Officers and Committee Members interest:

Nil

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting/s:

3.1. Bush Fire Advisory Special Committee Meeting - 24 August 2023

4.1/12/23 BUSHFIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

Moved: C Burgess; Seconded: N Houweling

That the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on 24 August 2023 be confirmed (E23/9951).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



4. Standing Items:

4.1. Status Report

The status report provides members with a list of resolutions passed by the Committee and any actions associated with the resolution. This report will be updated as required until resolutions have been completed.

Outstanding Resolution No.	Status
5.1.1/4/23 BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RESOLUTION (Extract) That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends that Council REQUESTS the Chief Executive Officer to investigate where other local governments have implemented changes to their Volunteer Bushfire Brigades as a result of a new Career Fire Station and work with the brigades to understand the impacts and options available, and present a discussion paper to Bush Fire Advisory Committee following the investigations.	In progress. Officers undertaking research to inform development of Discussion Paper, scheduled for April 2024 BFAC meeting.
5.1.2/4/23 BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RESOLUTION That the Bushfire Advisory Committee DOES NOT RECEIVE the update on the progress made against the corrective actions identified the audits on the management, facilities, and operations of the Volunteer Bushfire Brigades and that a review to be undertaken in consultation with the brigades for an updated and accurate report to be presented to a special BFAC meeting for endorsement and to be presented to Council.	Refer to item 4.1.1 in this agenda.



4.1.1. Resolution 5.1.2/4/23 – Status Update - Audit Findings Corrective Actions (SJ3914)

4.1.1 – Status Update - Audit Findings Corrective Actions (SJ3914)	
Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Emergency Services
Senior Officer:	Director Community Engagement
Disclosure of Officer's Interest:	No Officer involved in the preparation of this report has an interest to declare in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> .

Authority / Discretion

Information	For the Council / Committee to note.
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Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) on the progress made against 134 corrective actions identified in response to the following third-party audits of the Volunteer Bushfire Brigades (for compliance with the WHS Act and Regulations):

- VBFB Facility Review - LGIS - October 2021
- WHS Audit Report - Workplace Safety Consultants - November 2021

Relevant Previous Decisions of Council

OCM160/07/22 - COUNCIL RESOLUTION - extract

That Council:

3. *REQUESTS the Chief Executive Officer convene a special working group of Shire Officers, the CBFCO and brigade Captain's to develop an enhancement strategy plan for the next 5 years to be presented via BFAC in November and to the OCM December 2022.*

Background

The Shire proactively undertook audits of the management, facilities and operations of the Volunteer Bushfire Brigades as a gap analysis and to determine what corrective actions for minimum compliance with the WHS Act and Regulations to be completed by 31 March 2023. The Worksafe Commissioner has provided a further update that the transitional period for minimum compliance with the new WHS Act and Regulations is 12 months from 31 March 2023.

Following the formation of the Volunteer Bushfire Brigade Enhancement Working Group, and as a result of further internal consideration of the audit outcomes by the Working Group, it was determined there was a need to establish an overall program for tasks, within three key program areas:

1. Facilities: 109 corrective actions identified, as outlined in **attachment 1**.



2. Training: 4 corrective actions identified, as outlined in **attachment 2**.
3. IT and Procedures: 21 corrective actions identified, as outlined in **attachment 2**.

Consistent with the Shire's Project Management Framework, these were structured with clear scopes, project sponsorship, project management and project resources allocated to achieve the intended program outcomes.

Community / Stakeholder Consultation

A report was presented to the 20 April 2023 BFAC meeting with a status report on the progress of works achieved up to 31 March 2023. BFAC members requested Officers to undertake further consultation with the Brigade Captains about the status of the compliance works to ensure agreement on the accuracy of the report. A further report was presented to a Special BFAC meeting on 24 August 2023 and again BFAC members requested Officers to undertake further consultation with the Brigade Captains.

Over the past 3 months, consultation has been undertaken with Brigade Captains to ensure that there is agreement relating to the status of the facility WHS remedial works. The results of this consultation is captured in the updated Corrective Action Tables at **attachments 1 and 2** and summarised in the Comment section of this report.

Statutory Environment

Bushfires Act 1954

Work Health and Safety Act 2020

Comment

Summary

The Shire has worked with the Brigades to progressively close out actions relating to facilities maintenance and repair identified in the original audits and the status of each item has been agreed by both the Shire and the individual Brigades as outlined in **attachments 1 and 2**.

Following feedback from Brigade Captains at the August Special BFAC meeting, the corrective actions registers have been updated to state whether the corrective action is "complete" or "Controlled with additional actions required" to ensure the register accurately represents the current situation at the time of writing this report.

The status of each item been classified as follows:

1. Completed - Controls in Place

All items that have been addressed, with the hazard either eliminated or with a control in place have been marked as completed. Generally, ongoing monitoring is expected to be undertaken by Brigade Captains and/or Shire WHS Officers to mutually ensure ongoing compliance.

2. In Progress

This describes that an action is controlled, with additional actions or controls recommended to further reduce or eliminate the risk.

3. Not Started



It is noted that no items in the audits have been classified as not started. All items are either completed, or in progress.

The table below provides a summary of the current status of all corrective actions identified by the third-party audits of the Volunteer Bushfire Brigades, as per the program areas identified by the Working Group:

Audit	VBFB Facility Review LGIS	WHS Audit Report - Workplace Safety Consultants		Totals
Program Area	Facilities	Training	IT and Procedures	
Corrective Actions Identified	109	4	21	134
Complete	92	0	8	100
In Progress	17	4	13	34

Completed Items

From the commencement of this project there has been a significant increase in the level of facility compliance across all brigades. This is evidenced by a reduction in the number of hazards and corrective actions identified at the monthly WHS inspections, being undertaken by the Shire's WHS Officer.

Of all the 134 corrective actions identified, there are controls in place to mitigate the risk. Each of these items are specifically referenced in **attachments 1 and 2**, with 92 completed actions relevant to facilities and 8 items relevant to IT and Procedures.

- Officers and brigade volunteers have worked together to meet the minimum training requirements identified in the audit, to ensure that the brigades are staffed by appropriately qualified and competent crews for the management and suppression of Bushfires in the area. This has included brigade officers obtaining minimum qualifications, and all active members completing their pre-season competencies.
- A Brigade Volunteer portal has been developed, creating an online platform for the completion of the brigade monthly reporting, as well as vehicle and facility fault reporting. This is currently in the testing phase with the Mundijong Brigade.

Items In Progress

Of the 134 corrective actions initially identified in the audits, there are 34 items that are currently in progress. The status of these items is detailed in **attachments 1 and 2**.

Ongoing Actions and Next steps



Facilities - Project Development

In undertaking corrective actions to date and in consultation with the Brigades, additional actions to further mitigate or eliminate hazards within the facilities have been agreed via the following projects:

- c) Construction of the Oakford Fire Station.
- d) Byford Fire Station Enhancement Project.
- e) Serpentine Fire Station Enhancement Project.

Given the scope and scale of the projects identified with the Byford and Serpentine enhancement projects, additional dedicated project officers have been allocated to these projects following the adoption of new positions in the Shire's 2023/24 Budget. Following the appointment of new officers to these new roles, the Shire made significant progress in advancing the planning and development of the Byford and Serpentine enhancement projects.

With regards to the Oakford Fire Station project, ongoing engagement has occurred between the Shire, Oakford Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade and SJ Emergency Support Brigade via an Oakford Brigade Working Group to finalise the Concept Design for the new facility.

A summary of the status of the three facility projects is provided below:

Project/Facility	Status
Oakford Fire Station - New Build	Concept Design complete following engagement with Oakford Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, SJ Emergency Support Brigade and Department of Fire and Emergency Services. Tender documentation has been prepared and is scheduled for presentation to the Shire's Project Board for endorsement to go to Tender early December and closing end of January 2024.
Serpentine Fire Station - Enhancement Project	Concept design has been agreed and a builder has been appointed to carry out the works. The PPE storage racks have also been delivered and the project team is working with the brigade to ensure the project is delivered in a timely manner without impacting the Brigade's operations.
Byford Fire Station - Enhancement Project	Concept design in progress to enable the project to progress to design and construction. Engagement is ongoing with the Brigade.

Training

- Continued collaboration between the Shire and the Brigades is to occur, to develop and deliver fire fighters competencies that are appropriate for the roles undertaken.
- Monitoring of Individual Training plans to ensure progress is being made towards full competency for each position held will be undertaken.



- Updated training requirements to be incorporated in the Brigade Operating Procedure. IT and Procedures
- It is acknowledged that the following steps are still required to be undertaken, identified as “in progress”:
- Finalise the user testing process and finalise the development of the Brigade user portal.
- Roll out the user interface across all brigades.
- Complete the revisions to the Brigade Operating Procedures and issuing of the updated Brigade Operating Procedure to Brigades.

Options and Implications

Option 1

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council:

1. RECEIVES the update on the progress made against the 134 corrective actions identified in the audits on the management, facilities, and operations of the Volunteer Bushfire Brigades, which identified:
 - a) All 134 corrective actions have been controlled to mitigate their risk;
 - b) 100 corrective actions have been completed; and
 - c) 34 corrective actions with controls in place have additional works identified to further reduce risks.
- 2) REQUESTS that the CEO provide a report to the April 2024 BFAC meeting identifying:
 - a) Costings for all outstanding items associated with the 34 corrective actions in progress.
 - b) the approved budget allocated for the completion of these works: and
 - c) any additional funding required to complete the identified works for consideration by council.

Option 2

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council:

DOES NOT RECEIVE the update on the progress made against the corrective actions identified the audits on the management, facilities, and operations of the Volunteer Bushfire Brigades.

Option 1 is recommended.

Conclusion

The Shire and Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades have worked collaboratively over the past 19 months, to address corrective actions identified for compliance with the WHS Act and Regulations.

Of the 134 corrective actions originally identified, 100 have been completed and 34 are in progress with controls in place and additional actions identified to further reduce risks.

The Shire will continue to work with the Brigades to complete items identified in the audits, in particular on the delivery of three key projects, being the Oakford Fire Station (new build), Serpentine Fire Station (Enhancement Project) and Byford Fire Station (Enhancement Project).

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee is requested to receive the status update of the progress made towards achieving minimum compliance with the WHS Act and Regulations, as contained in this report and the associated attachments.

**Attachments (available under separate cover)****Attachment 1** – Corrective Action Plan Status – Facilities December 2023 (E23/10766)**Attachment 2** - Corrective Action Plan Status – Training, and IT and Procedures - December 2023 (E23/10320).**Alignment with our Strategic Community Plan**

Outcome 1.3	A safe place to live
Strategy 1.3.1	Comply with relevant local and state laws, in the interests of the community
Strategy 1.3.2	Support local emergency services

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Risk Implications

Risk has been assessed on the Officer Options and Implications:

Officer Option	Risk Description	Controls	Principal Consequence Category	Risk Assessment			Risk Mitigation Strategies (to further lower the risk rating if required)
				Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating	
1 & 2	Nil.						

Voting Requirements:

Simple Majority

Officer Recommendation

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council:

1. RECEIVES the update on the progress made against the 134 corrective actions identified in the audits on the management, facilities, and operations of the Volunteer Bushfire Brigades, which identified:
 - a) All 134 corrective actions have been controlled to mitigate their risk;
 - b) 100 corrective actions have been completed; and
 - c) 34 corrective actions with controls in place have additional works identified to further reduce risks.
- 2) REQUESTS that the CEO provide a report to the April 2024 BFAC meeting identifying:
 - a) Costings for all action items associated with the 34 corrective actions in progress.
 - b) the approved budget allocated for the completion of these works: and



- c) any additional funding required to complete the identified works for consideration by council.

Moved: N Houweling; Seconded N Carrall

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council:

1. RECEIVES the update on the progress made against the 134 corrective actions identified in the audits on the management, facilities, and operations of the Volunteer Bushfire Brigades, which identified:
 - a) All 134 corrective actions have been controlled to mitigate their risk;
 - b) 100 corrective actions have been completed; and
 - c) 34 corrective actions with controls in place have additional works identified to further reduce risks.
- 2) REQUESTS that the CEO provide a report to the April 2024 BFAC meeting identifying:
 - a) Costings for all action items associated with the 34 corrective actions in progress.
 - b) the approved budget allocated for the completion of these works: and
 - c) any additional funding required to complete the identified works for consideration by council.

AMENDMENT

Moved: Jess Gibson; Seconded: Mike Ross

The word “mitigate” in point 1 A be changed to “reduce”

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

AMENDMENT

Moved: E Chapman; Seconded N Carrall

The following updated be made to the resolution:

- 1 b) The number 100 be changed to 99.
- 1 c) The number 34 be changed to 35 to reflect the status of item 4.07 Attachment 1.
- 2 a) The number 34 be changed to 35.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE / SUBSTANTIVE MOTION

Moved: N Houweling; Seconded N Carrall

1. RECEIVES the update on the progress made against the 134 corrective actions identified in the audits on the management, facilities, and operations of the Volunteer Bushfire Brigades, which identified:
 - a) All 134 corrective actions have been controlled to reduce their risk;
 - b) 99 corrective actions have been completed; and
 - c) 35 corrective actions with controls in place have additional works identified to further reduce risks.

**2) REQUESTS that the CEO provide a report to the April 2024 BFAC meeting identifying:**

- a) Costings for all action items associated with the 35 corrective actions in progress.
- b) the approved budget allocated for the completion of these works: and
- c) any additional funding required to complete the identified works for consideration by council.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**5. Agency and Brigade Report****5.2 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer / Emergency Services Department**

Leigh presented his report (refer *Attachment 5.2.1*).

5.3 Department of Fire and Emergency Services

M Ward discussed the early start to the fire season and the extended Bushfire season in the Northwest due to the climate conditions. Thanked Serpentine Jarrahdale Brigades for supplying volunteers for these campaign fires across the state and over east.

High season fleet is “Located” in the Local Governments, not “allocated” to them and due to the late extended fire season in the north they are not yet available. Air wing has 2 Blackhawk rotary wing and the LAT starting from December 1.

5.4 Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Apology for meeting with no report.

5.5 Byford Brigade

Captain of Byford Brigade - J Gibson provided Update Report (refer *Attachment 5.5.1*).

5.6 Mundijong Brigade

Captain of Mundijong Brigade - N Houweling provided Update Report (refer *Attachment 5.6.1*).

5.7 Jarrahdale Brigade

Captain of Jarrahdale Brigade - S Davis apology with Update Report provided (refer *Attachment 5.7.1*).

5.8 Serpentine Brigade

Captain of Serpentine Brigade – E Chapman provided Update Report (refer *Attachment 5.8.1*).

5.9 Keysbrook Brigade

Captain of Keysbrook Brigade - C Burgess provided Update Report (refer *Attachment 5.9.1*).



5.10 Oakford Brigade

Captain of Oakford Brigade - M Ross provided Update Report (refer *Attachment 5.10.1*).

5.11 Emergency Support Brigade

Captain of Emergency Support Brigade - N Carrall provided Update Report (refer *Attachment 5.11.1*).

Moved: J Gibson; Seconded: E Chapman

5.2/12/23 BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council NOTES the report from the Chief.

5.3/12/23 BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council NOTES the report from Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

5.4/12/23 BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council NOTES no report was received from Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

5.5/12/23 BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council NOTES the report from Byford Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.

5.6/4/23 BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council NOTES the report from Mundijong Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.

5.7/12/23 BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council NOTES the report from Jarrahdale Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.

5.8/12/23 BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council NOTES the report from Serpentine Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.

**5.9/12/23 BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council NOTES the report from Keysbrook Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.

5.10/12/23 BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council NOTES the report from Oakford Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.

5.11/12/23 BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommends Council NOTES the report from Emergency Support Brigade.

CARRIED EN BLOC BY ABSOLUTE MAJORITY 9/0

6. Urgent Business:

6.1 Mundijong Captain, N Houweling raised the following item as urgent business:

During conversations between some of the Captain's group, it is unclear whether there is a conflict of interest (perceived or otherwise) in Cr Bishop's role on BFAC as an active member of the Oakford Brigade.

This in no way implies disrespect to Cr Bishop and his impartiality on this committee, however, I believe that clarification must be sought to maintain the integrity of decisions made at BFAC.

I therefore wish to move a motion formally via BFAC to council to seek clarification.

Motion: That BFAC recommends to council:

1. Formal clarification is obtained from the shires Governance team to confirm (or otherwise) if a conflict of interest exists with Cr Bishop undertaking the role of council delegate on the Shires Bushfire Advisory Committee due to his active membership of the Oakford Volunteer Bushfire Brigade; and
2. Until clarification is obtained, Cr Bishop is to refrain from participation in the shires Bushfire Advisory Committee discussions where they directly (or indirectly) relate to the operations of the Oakford Bushfire Brigade.

The Shire's Manager Governance and Strategy, Dr Parker, provided the following information in regards to the matter raised by Mr Houwelling:

Section 67 of the Bush Fires Act 1954 provides that a: "local government may at any time appoint such persons as it thinks fit as a bush fire advisory committee".

At the 6 November 2023 Special Council Meeting, Council made appointments of members on this basis.

The terms of reference of the Committee states that while the committee is not a committee under the Local Government Act 1995, provisions under that legislation relating



to interests apply. On that point, the Department's guideline on interests notes that it is up to each member to determine their own interests based on the nature and extent of that interest on any given matter presented before Council and/or a Committee. There is no provision in the legislation to exclude membership entirely based on a general or specific interest where that person has been properly appointed.

While the Committee may make recommendations to Council regarding its membership, this is no power of the Committee to exclude any member that has been properly appointed under the Bush Fires Act 1954.

Following discussion by the committee, Mr Houweling withdrew his motion and the agreed action was for the Terms of Reference to be circulated to all Committee members.

7. General Business:

- 7.1 Keysbrook Captain raised the issue that Moving forward that the correct council policies followed in relation to, after every BFAC meeting, the minutes of the meeting are presented to council for noting.

8. Next meeting:

Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale Civic Centre	19:00hrs 18 April 2024
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9. Closure:

There being no further business, the Chairperson, Mike Ross, declared the meeting closed at 20:24hrs.

The Chairperson thanked attendees for participation.