

Bush Fire Advisory Committee Annual General Meeting Agenda



1. **Welcome, Record of Attendance and Apologies**
2. **Confirmation of Minutes of the Previous Meetings**
 - 2.1. Annual General Meeting held on 6 May 2024
3. **Business Arising from Minutes**
4. **Election of Office Bearers**
 - 4.1. Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
 - 4.2. Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
 - 4.3. Captains (DBFB, MBFB, DFRB)
 - 4.4. Lieutenants (DBFB, MBFB, DFRB)
 - 4.5. Brigade Equipment Officer
 - 4.6. Brigade Training Officer
 - 4.7. Secretary
 - 4.8. Treasurer
 - 4.9. Fire Control Officers
 - 4.10. Dual Fire Control Officers
5. **General Business**
 - 5.1. DFES Budget Actuals 23/24 and Year to Date 24/25
 - 5.2. DFES Operation and Capital Grant 2025/2026
 - 5.3. Fire Brigade Unit Reports
 - 5.4. DFES Local Government Report Package
 - 5.5. Fire Restriction Periods and Fire Break Order
 - 5.6. Gazettal of Restricted Periods
Recommendation to Council
6. **Date of Next Meeting**
7. **Closure**

Dowerin Bush Fire Advisory Committee Annual General Meeting Minutes 5.00pm Thursday 13 March 2025



1. Welcome, Record of Attendance and Apologies

The Chief Executive Officer welcomed those in attendance and declared the Meeting open at 5.08pm.

Present:

Manisha Barthakur - CEO - Chair
Cr Robert Trepp - Shire President
Cr Adam Metcalf (*from 5:26pm*)
Kahli Rose - MGCS
Ben Forbes - MIP
Gary Rowles - DFES Area Officer
Paul Millstead
Gavin Hagboom
Gavin Howard
Shane Melvin
Phil Pickering
Peter Richards
Tania Petersen
Josh Ward (*from 5:15pm*)

Online Attendance:

Simon Emmott

Apologies:

Cr Wayne Allsopp

2. Confirmation of Minutes of the Previous Meeting(s)

2.1 Bush Fire Advisory Committee Annual General Meeting held on 6 May 2024
[Attachment 2.1A](#)

Recommendation - 2.1

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority Absolute Majority

Moved: Paul Millsted **Seconded:** Phil Pickering

1070 That the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held 6 May 2024, as presented in Attachment 2.1A, be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

CARRIED

3. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

Nil

4. Election of Office Bearers

All positions were be declared vacant and the CEO called for nominations for the following positions:

Please note, the Shire of Dowerin has historically taken on the Secretary, Treasurer, Brigade Equipment Officer, and Brigade Training Officers positions. Due to formalities, these must be declared as vacant at the AGM.

4.1 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Nominee: Paul Millsted - Nominated by: Phil Pickering

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority Absolute Majority

Moved: Phil Pickering **Seconded:** Gavin Hagboom

1071 There being no further nominations, BFAC recommend to Council that: Paul Millsted be elected unopposed as Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

CARRIED

4.2 Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Nominee: Gavin Hagboom - Nominated by: Paul Millstead

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority Absolute Majority

Moved: Shane Melvin **Seconded:** Gavin Howard

1072 There being no further nominations, BFAC recommend to Council that:
Gavin Hagboom, be elected unopposed as Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

CARRIED

4.3 Captains of:

Dowerin Bush Fire Brigade

Nominee: Gavin Howard - Nominated by: Gavin Hagboom

Minnivale Bush Fire Brigade

Nominee: Wes Metcalf - Nominated by: Glen Metcalf

Dowerin Farmer Response Brigade

Nominee: Gavin Hagboom - Nominated by: Paul Millstead

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority Absolute Majority

Moved: Gavin Hagboom **Seconded:** Gavin Howard

1073 There being no further nominations, BFAC recommend to Council that:
Gavin Howard be elected unopposed as the Captain of the Dowerin Bush Fire Brigade
Wes Metcalf be elected unopposed as the Captain of the Minnivale Bush Fire Brigade
Gavin Hagboom be elected unopposed as the Captain of the Dowerin Farmer Response Brigade

CARRIED

4.4 Lieutenants of:

Dowerin Bush Fire Brigade

1st Lieutenant Nominee: -Phil Pickering Nominated by: Paul Millstead

2nd Lieutenant Nominee: Peter Richards- Nominated by: Paul Millstead

3rd Lieutenant Nominee: Jasmine Hedland Nominated by: Paul Millstead

Minnivale Bush Fire Brigade

1st Lieutenant Nominee: Rhys Stratford - Nominated by: Glen Metcalf

2nd Lieutenant Nominee: Shane Metcalf - Nominated by: Glen Metcalf

3rd Lieutenant Nominee: Kane Ralph - Nominated by: Glen Metcalf

Dowerin Farmer Response Brigade

1st Lieutenant Nominee: Shane Melvin - Nominated by: Gavin Hagboom

2nd Lieutenant Nominee: Jason Sewell- Nominated by: Gavin Hagboom

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Moved: Phil Pickering

Seconded: Gavin Hagboom

1074 There being no further nominations, BFAC recommend to Council that:

1. Phil Pickering, Peter Richards, and Jasmine Hedland, be elected unopposed as the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Lieutenants of the Dowerin Bush Fire Brigade.
2. Rhys Stratford, Shane Metcalf, and Kane Ralph, be elected unopposed as the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Lieutenants of the Minnivale Bush Fire Brigade.
3. Shane Melvin and Jason Sewell, be elected unopposed as the 1st and 2nd Lieutenants of the Dowerin Farmer Response Brigade.

CARRIED

4.5 Brigade Equipment Officer

4.6 Brigade Training Officer

4.7 Secretary

4.8 Treasurer

4.5 - 4.8 - Nominee(s): Shire of Dowerin

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Moved: Peter Richards

Seconded: Robert Trepp

1075 There being no further nominations, BFAC recommend to Council that:

The Shire of Dowerin, be elected unopposed as Brigade Equipment Officer, Brigade Training Officer, Secretary and Treasurer for the Dowerin Bush Fire Brigade, Minnivale Bush Fire Brigade, and Dowerin Farmer Response Brigade.

CARRIED

4.9 Fire Control Officers:

Fire Weather Officers

Bush Fire Control Officers

Minnivale

Cadoux-Manmanning

Ejanding

Ucarty

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Absolute Majority

Moved: Phil Pickering

Seconded: Paul Millstead

1076 BFAC recommend to Council that the following officers be appointed:

Position	Name	Phone
Fire Weather Officer:	Phil Pickering	0429 311 250
Bush Fire Control Officers:	Paul Millstead Phil Pickering Manisha Barthakur Ranger (Samantha Di Candilo)	0427 311 721 0429 311 250 0499 659 168 0474 779 374
FCO - Minnivale:	Graham Ralph Shane Melvin (subject to FCO course completion)	0427 313 014 0428 290 855
FCO - Cadoux-Manmanning:	Alan Bear Shayne Booth Simon Emmott	0499 156 500 0427 732 013 0428 955 940
FCO - Ejanding:	Paul Millstead Peter Richards (subject to FCO course completion)	0427 311 721 0428 311 772
FCO - Ucarty:	Gavin Hagboom Shane Melvin (subject to FCO course completion)	0427 341 026 0428 290 855

CARRIED

4.10 Dual Fire Control Officers:

Shire of Cunderdin

Shire of Goomalling

Shire of Koorda

Shire of Wongan-Ballidu

Shire of Wyalkatchem

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Absolute Majority

Moved: Shane Melvin

Seconded: Gavin Hagboom

1077 BFAC recommend to Council that the following persons be appointed as Dual Fire Control Officers:

Position	Name
Shire of Cunderdin	Gavin Hagboom
Shire of Goomalling	Gavin Hagboom Phil Pickering
Shire of Koorda	Alan Bear
Shire of Wongan-Ballidu	Simon Emmott Paul Millstead
Shire of Wyalkatchem	Graham Ralph

CARRIED

5. General Business

5.1 DFES Budget Actuals 2023/2024 and Year to Date 2024/2025

The actual expenditure for the 2023/2024 financial year, along with the year-to-date report for the LGGS grant, has been compiled and is provided as Attachment 5.1A.

This report offers a detailed overview of how LGGS funding was utilised in the previous financial year and provides insight into the current financial position for 2024/2025. It includes key expenditure areas, trends in spending, and any variances from the budgeted allocations

5.2 DFES Operation and Capital Grant 2025/2026

The draft 2025/2026 LGGS grant application, included as **Attachment 5.2A**, outlines the estimated operational costs for the next financial year.

For this funding cycle, the Shire has opted not to apply for a capital grant, instead prioritising brigade capability. The focus will be on providing comprehensive training for new brigade members and ensuring all personnel are equipped with a full set of personal protective equipment (PPE), enhancing safety and preparedness across all brigades.

To plan for future capital needs, management has scheduled a review in September 2025 to assess the requirements of the three brigades and identify potential projects, with priority given to urgent needs.

5.3

Fire Brigade Unit Reports

Dowerin Bush Fire Brigade

Phil Pickering reported general truck issues, with two batteries failing in the past month and an alternator problem with the new Minnivale Truck (now fixed). The Dowerin shed itself is not adequately equipped for operations. One of Dowerin's trucks have had the pump upgraded; however, the truck's driveshaft needs attention.

It has been a quiet season overall, with incidents mostly involving pole-top fires, lightning strikes, and power lines being taken out by a chaser bin. There are growing concerns about machinery becoming too tall and posing risks. Some issues have also been noted with the BART system.

The TV in the Dowerin shed still needs to be linked to BART.

Minnivale Bush Fire Brigade

Nil attendance

Dowerin Farmer Response Brigade

The brigade responded wherever needed. Chad Hagboom created a WhatsApp group for the southern area was highly effective, saving time. One key incident involved a power line coming down on Maisey Road which luckily didn't cause a large fire.

There have been ongoing issues with 3G reception affecting connectivity to systems throughout the year. DFES is currently trialling Starlink to address these challenges.

DFES

Gary Rowles confirmed that the DFES Starlink trials has been going well with reports of full coverage along the Ayre Highway and in remote areas.

SoDowerin

Kahli Rose advised that a post-season debrief will be scheduled for the end of April, including an information session on the BART system with in-person demonstrations.

5.4

DFES Monthly Report

The latest DFES Monthly Report is provided as [Attachment 5.4A](#)

5.5 Fire Restriction Periods and Fire Break Order

2025 - 2026 Fire Break Order is provided as [Attachment 5.5A](#). Please note contact details for the CBFCO and DCBFCO will be updated post AGM.

Phil Pickering confirmed that 14 April has been the set date for lifting restrictions, with a flexible two-week window on either side depending on weather conditions. This allows the CBFCO to either bring the unrestricted period forward to 1 April or extend the restricted period until 30 April.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Absolute Majority

Recommendation - 5.5


Moved: Phil Pickering

Seconded: Adam Metcalf

1078 That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommend to Council that:

The firebreak order for 2025 - 2026 be accepted and distributed to the community with fees and charges for the next financial year.

CARRIED

5.6 Gazettal of Restricted and Prohibited Burning Periods	
<h2 style="color: red;">Governance and Compliance</h2>	
 SHIRE OF DOWERIN TIN DOG TERRITORY	
Date:	9 March 2025
Location:	Not Applicable
Responsible Officer:	Manisha Barthakur, Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Kahli Rose, Manager of Governance and Community Services
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995.</i> <i>Bush Fires Act 1954</i>
SharePoint Reference:	
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 5.6A - 2016 Gazettal

Purpose of Report

Executive Decision

Legislative Requirement

Summary

To seek Council approval to request the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) Commissioner to amend Dowerin's gazetted Restricted and Prohibited Burning Periods to align with the current fire restriction periods outlined in the Shire's Firebreak Order.

Background

The Shire of Dowerin's current gazetted burning periods were last updated on 14 October 2016. These periods differ from those published on the Shire's website and in the most recent Firebreak Order, which is based on seasonal conditions and community needs.

The current gazetted burning periods are:

- **Restricted Burning Period (RBT):** 20 October – 14 April
- **Prohibited Burning Period (PBT):** 5 November – 14 February

The 2025/26 Firebreak Order outlines different dates, which more accurately reflect the Shire's fire risk profile:

- **Restricted Burning Period (Spring):** 1 October – 31 October
- **Prohibited Burning Period:** 1 November – 14 February
- **Restricted Burning Period (Autumn):** 15 February – 14 April
- **Unrestricted Burning Period:** 15 April – 30 September

Currently, amendments to gazetted fire restriction periods require annual applications to DFES, which adds administrative burden and creates potential misalignment between official gazetted and practical fire management measures

Comment

Aligning the gazetted dates with the Firebreak Order would:

- Provide consistency between official fire restriction periods and the Shire's Firebreak Order.
- Reduce the need for annual applications to DFES for gazettal changes.
- Offer certainty to landowners, fire control officers, and stakeholders regarding burning restrictions each year.
- Enhance fire preparedness by ensuring the restricted and prohibited periods are fixed and not subject to annual variation.

Council's approval is sought to formally request the DFES Commissioner to amend the gazetted Restricted and Prohibited Burning Periods for Dowerin to:

- **Restricted Burning Period (Spring):** 1 October - 31 October
- **Prohibited Burning Period:** 1 November - 14 February
- **Restricted Burning Period (Autumn):** 15 February - 14 April

Consultation

Manisha Barthakur, Chief Executive Officer

Kahli Rose, Manager of Governance and Community Services

Paul Millsteed, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Department of Fire and Emergency Services

Policy Implications

Nil

Strategic Implications

Strategic Community Plan

Community Priority: Our Organisation

Objective: *We are recognised as a transparent, well governed, and effectively managed Local Government*

Outcome: 5.3

Reference: 5.3.2

Asset Management Plan

Nil

Long Term Financial Plan

Nil

Statutory Implications

- Bush Fires Act 1954 - Section 18 (Restricted Burning Times) and Section 17 (Prohibited Burning Times)
- Local Government Act 1995

Risk Implications

Risk Profiling Theme	Failure to fulfil statutory regulations or compliance requirements
Risk Category	Compliance
Risk Description	No noticeable regulatory or statutory impact
Consequence Rating	Insignificant (1)
Likelihood Rating	Rare (1)
Risk Matrix Rating	Low (1)
Key Controls (in place)	Governance Calendar,
Action (Treatment)	Nil
Risk Rating (after treatment)	Adequate

Financial Implications

Nil

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation/Resolution - 5.6

Moved: Phil Pickering

Seconded: Adam Metcalf

1079

That the Bush Fire Advisory Committee recommend Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to write to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner requesting that Dowerin's gazetted Restricted and Prohibited Burning Periods be amended to align with the Shire's Firebreak Order as follows:

- Restricted Burning Period (Spring): 1 October - 31 October
- Prohibited Burning Period: 1 November - 14 February
- Restricted Burning Period (Autumn): 15 February - 14 April

CARRIED

5.7 General Business (Raised by Members)

Gavin Hagboom raised concerns regarding insurance coverage for farmer response units attending fires in neighbouring shires such as Goomalling and Meckering. Clarification is needed on who is responsible for insurance in these situations.

DFES advised that as long as the Fire Control Officer (FCO) is aware of attendance and the responders are fully trained, DFES insurance will provide coverage. Civilians without RFA course training have been asked to stay away from fire sites.

Paul Millsteed provided updates from the District Operations Advisory Committee (DOAC). There have been errors with system load ratings for bushfire classifications, and fuel loadings are not being adjusted without photo evidence. DOAC is preparing a letter to the Commissioner requesting that if a moderate fire danger rating is forecast for the following day, landowners should be permitted to begin burning from 6:00 PM the evening before.

August will be a key training month, with a range of courses on offer. Damien Pumphreys noted that funding allocations are delayed due to the election, but Dowerin, Goomalling, and Wyalkatchem Shires have been allocated a Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM).

Gavin Hagboom also raised concerns about CBH workers not receiving training on harvest bans. He suggested that the Shire of Dowerin contact CBH to request that their staff complete a general knowledge awareness course before working in regional areas. There was also discussion about the broader public's awareness of harvest bans.

Peter Richards proposed splitting the Shire into separate areas for harvest bans, such as north and south of town. Paul pointed out that this would be difficult due to the Shire's size and shape, and Phil Pickering added that the idea had been considered previously but was deemed impractical for Dowerin.

Adam Metcalf reported difficulties in securing water tanks, as ESL grants do not fund them. While other grants are available for firefighting water storage, they are not part of the Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGS). Goomalling's CESM has been successful in obtaining funding through other avenues. Fire loadings remain high due to the declining number of sheep, increasing the need for additional water resources.

DFES provided an update on the regional training calendar, with August being a key focus month for local government training, including a communications course. DFES state logistics will also be using the Dowerin Bush Fire Brigade shed during the Field Days.

6. Date of Next Meeting

March 2026

7. Closure

There being no further business, the Chief Executive Officer declared the meeting closed at 5:48pm.