



BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday 20th of June 2024 – Annual General Meeting – 5.30pm

Derek Fletcher Training Room, Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade / State Emergency Service,
20 Raymond Road, Walliston

1. OPENING OF MEETING

Chairperson – Cr. John Giardina welcomed attendees,

2. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Attending Members:

- Cr. John Giardina – City of Kalamunda, Councillor – South-East Ward
- Cr. Geoff Stallard – City of Kalamunda, Councillor –South-East Ward
- Mike Ward – Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, City of Kalamunda
- Sean Winter – Captain, Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
- Tony Moiler AFSM – Captain, Kalamunda Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service
- Paul Postma – DO South-East, Department of Fire and Emergency Services
- John Idland – Fire Control Officer, Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

City Staff:

- Tim Parry – Acting Manager Community Health & Safety, City of Kalamunda
- Michael Hall – Senior Fire Mitigation Officer, City of Kalamunda

Ex- Officio Members:

- Stuart Buckett – Kalamunda VFRS,

Visitors: Nil

Apologies:

- Freya Ayliffe – Acting City of Kalamunda, Director Community Engagement
- Steve Lake – Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
- Natalie Smailes – First Lieutenant, Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
- Michael Pasotti – DBCA – District Fire Coordinator
- Warwick Martindale – Local Manager State Emergency Service

Minutes:

- Andrew Haselden – Fire Control Officer, Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade,

3. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Moved: John Idland
Seconded: Tony Moyler

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4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

4.1. Kalamunda VBFB Sale of Mazda Support Vehicle. – No updates provided at this meeting.

4.2. Presumptive Cancer Claims

Mike Hall advised that 12 cancers are covered by the presumptive cancer legislation and that a previous brigade member has made a claim with LGIS (Through the City). This volunteer has had to prove all the incidents that he attended that may have been of a hazardous nature. This meant going back through old brigade attendance records to provide evidence.

June 24 Update – Sean Winter advises that he and Mike Ward have met with a private investigator, working for the City's insurance agent, to provide detailed evidence of the members service and exposure to hazardous incidents. Sean Winter asserts that it is a ridiculous expectation that volunteers need to go through this process. Sean Winter advises that he has personally committed over sixty hours of his own time to this process so far which has taken valuable capacity away from the Brigade's operations and his role as the Brigade's Captain.

CR. Giardina asks what can be done by the City to assist with the process in the future. Sean Winter suggests that the City should look at the insurance providers and their processes. CR. Giardina will arrange for the person within the City responsible for workers compensation insurance to attend the next meeting,

Sean Winter asks P Postma whether the presumptive legislation is the same as with DFES brigades. Paul Postma notes that this is not the case due to the presumptive nature of hazardous fires attended by Fire and Rescue fire fighters which differs from bush fires. Paul Postma proposes that the City's Insurance and OSH teams need to speak through WALGA regarding the local government response to these incidents. Paul Postma notes that the City's volunteers are classified as City employees from a workers compensation perspective.

Mike Ward agrees that the process is labour intensive, however in his opinion the insurers are only doing their due diligence as part of the claim process. CR. Giardina asks how this can be progressed and whether there are preordained cases that would progress this. Tony Moiler advises that the Local Government volunteers must provide more evidence of their exposure to hazardous incidents to access compensation, with the legislation being the sticking point for claims.

Sean Winter advises that for KVFBF their records are robust although most Brigades would not have this much evidence to support a claim. Tony Moiler agrees.

Sean Winter would like to see a position where the Brigade would be able provide its members with assure that if they get a cancer nominated within the legislation throughout or post their

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volunteerism, that they are covered. Mike Ward notes that to progress this there needs to be a legislative change.

John Idland notes that the City should have an employee to manage claims processes, it was further noted that the records should be held by both DFES and the City. Sean Winter advises that the current records that are being reviewed are the Brigade's copies of DFES documentation completed by the Brigade, that are held on station.

Mike Hall advises that DFES records system does not adequately represent the hazardous nature of several fires attended. As an example, the Parkerville fire was recorded as "Bushfire" where there were 57 houses and many other structures and vehicles lost by fire.

Tony Moiler further notes that the workers compensation system should also cover post-traumatic stress disorder, which is not currently covered under the legislation for volunteers.

4.3. Pickering Brook Volunteer Station Committee update,

John Idland provides an update, noting that the Pickering Brook working group has visited four local fire stations and have had multiple meetings to plan the proposed Pickering Brook station's layout and required facilities. This planning process has been conducted on a realistic basis. The Brigade has recruited 12 new members over the past 12 months who live within the Pickering Brook operational area. Two vehicles have been rebranded as Pickering Brook vehicles and are being turned out to incidents within the area. John Idland notes that the City are still working on the proposal and while the project may be delayed, the brigade will be ready to progress the project.

John Giardina notes that there is money allocated to progress the detailed design and planning within the budget and while not yet approved the project is proceeding.

Paul Postma notes that Mike Ward has been working hard in the background working with the region and with DFES to progress this project. Sean Winter notes that over fifty percent of the fires this season have been within the Pickering Brook catchment.

Tony Moiler asks whether the working group is looking at clean/dirty area separation in the facility. John Idland advises that this is one of the design criteria being looked at in the planning of the station to ensure hygiene standards.

CR. Stallard asks whether the Brigades of the new stations visited, were happy with the results. John Idland notes that the standard for the Roleystone-Karragullen station was the pinnacle of the designs however notes that this level of construction is not realistic within the City with a cost of around 5.5 million dollars. CR. Stallard asks whether the planning allows for future expansion such as allowing for

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an oversized engine bay for future vehicles. It was noted that the current station proposal is designed to accommodate up to four vehicles. Cr. Giardina advises that \$200,000 has been put forward as part of the City's 24/25 budget for the detailed design and development for the station, project planning etc. CR. Stallard notes that State level funding will likely come from advocacy around and post the next State elections.

5. CORRESPONDENCE IN/OUT

5.1. Nil.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1. City Volunteer Awards Dinner,

Sean Winter asks whether the city will reinstate the biannual City awards dinner where the SES, KVFRS and KVFBF are hosted by the City. Question taken on notice. Cr. Giardina to discuss with the Council.

6.2. Annual Update Kalamunda Bush Fire Brigade,

Sean Winter advises that the Brigades elections were just completed. All officers retained their positions except for one Lieutenant who stood down and has been replaced.

It has been a long summer with approximately 130 shifts conducted for around 70 incidents. This was significantly busier than last year. There has been no autumn burns season this year due to drought and then heavy rain. Approximately nineteen members have left the brigade eighteen new members have been recruited in this season.

Tony Moiler advises that with regarding the Kalamunda VFRS, their older members have been the ones who turn out regularly, and their younger members haven't lasted.

6.3. Mobile Coverage,

CR. Stallard, asks through the Chair, how the Brigades are finding telecommunications system coverage throughout the City?. Tony Moiler notes that mobile communications are still terrible throughout Gooseberry Hill. The consensus of the meeting was that mobile communications are generally hit and miss throughout the hills.

Sean Winter notes that the Kalamunda VBFB have put measures in place on the vehicles such as mobile signal boosters to assist with reception deficiencies at incidents.

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7. AGENCY UPDATE

7.1. Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Paul Postma

Paul Postma passes on DFES’s thanks to City of Kalamunda for support across the Extended Fire Season of 2023/24. In particular to the releasing of key staff in Mike Ward and Mike Hall to fill important positions in the DFES Southeast regional office.

Overall, normal fire risk conditions are expected for all WA during the Winter Spring period. Large areas of southern WA are experiencing rainfall deficiencies that have compounded since spring 2023. This April, the average rainfall across the state’s south was the lowest since 1994 contributing to the lowest soil moisture levels on record for the western and southern fringes of the southwest of WA. These conditions have restricted planned burning activities, are impacting agricultural production rates, and have caused moisture stress mortality in forest and woodland vegetation.

A warmer than average autumn and ongoing rainfall deficiencies have resulted in a longer than usual southern bushfire season led many local government areas in extending their summer-autumn Prohibited Burning Period.

Winter, although forecast to be warmer than average, is coupled with an increased chance of above median rainfall for most of southern WA which reduces the fire risk and may alleviate some soil moisture deficiencies. This will likely mean limited opportunities for early planned burning for southern WA.

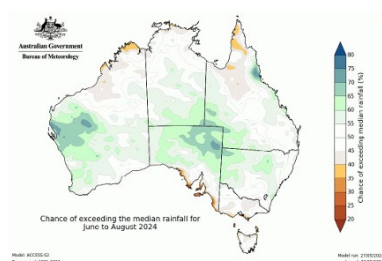


Figure 4 June to August 2024 chance of above median rainfall.

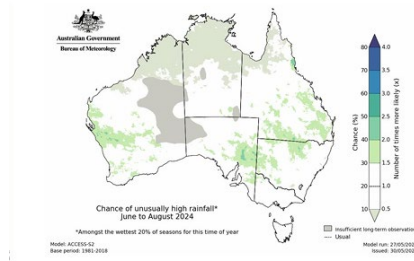


Figure 5 June to August 2024 chance of unusually high rainfall.

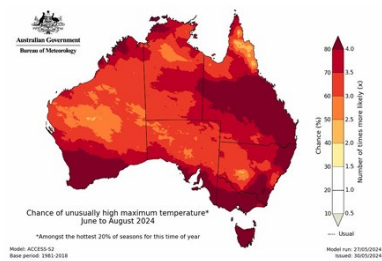


Figure 6 June to August 2024 chance of unusually high maximum temperatures.

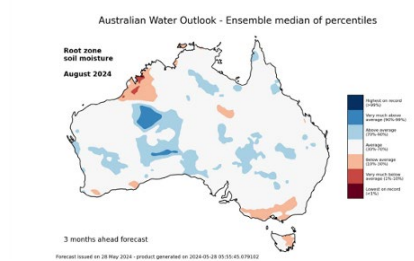


Figure 7 August 2024 chance of above normal soil moisture.

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7.2. Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions – Michael Pasotti

Nothing tabled – Mike Ward to follow up DPAW regarding their attendance at the next meetings.

7.3. City of Kalamunda Community Emergency Manager – Mike Ward

2023-24 bush fire season was the one tested our resolve as it started with the Pickering Brook Fire on 4 November, a 134ha incident and concluded end of May with response to buns that had been reported or that got away.

Hectares lost to Bushfires within the City of Kalamunda

Size of fires is not always available; fires less than 1 hectare are not included.

Hectares Lost	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
All Bushfires	36	6	107	13	620

Over Summer multiple crews were committed to just about every main bushfire incident in the metro area and some beyond.

The Pickering Brook working group has been working tirelessly and toured numerous other fire station and meet on a regular basis whose diligent works will see a fit for purpose station build for the Pickering Brook Brigade in the future.

Mike Ward commended the great work and dedication of the Bush Fire Ready Group for work that goes to making this program work. The many hours require to plan and deliver multiple Street Meets, Burn Smart, Property walk-throughs and other community engagement activities.

Mike Ward acknowledged Steve Lake who has designed and implemented an appliance maintenance system and a PPC Register that has made life easier for all and the envy of other brigades and City workshop staff.

Thanks, were also passed on to Mike Hall who acted in the role of CESM/Chief while Mike Ward was acting District Officer for five months over the fire season. Mike Ward also welcomes Paul Postma, the new DFES District Officer Southeast.

Sean Winter echoes the sentiment and appreciation of the Kalamunda Bush Fire Brigade for Mike Hall's efforts through the season.

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8. NEXT MEETING

8.1. Next meeting, Thursday the 17th of October 2024 (GM), 1730hrs, Derek Fletcher Training Room, Kalamunda Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade / State Emergency Service, 20 Raymond Road, Walliston.

Future Meetings for 2024 – TBA.

9. CLOSURE

9.1. Meeting closed at 1825 hrs.

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