



# MINUTES

Bush Fire Advisory Committee

27 March 2025

## SHIRE OF BROOMEHILL-TAMBELLUP

### Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held at the Broomehill Recreational Complex on 27 March 2025 at 6.30pm.



Karen Callaghan  
Chief Executive Officer

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Broomehill Recreational Complex on 27 March 2025.**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>OPENING</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES</b>	<b>1</b>
3.1	CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 10 SEPTEMBER 2024	1
<b>4.</b>	<b>BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>REPORTS</b>	<b>2</b>
5.1	CHIEF BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER REPORT	2
5.2	BRIGADE REPORTS	2
5.3	COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES MANAGER REPORT	3
5.4	DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES REPORT	4
5.5	RANGER REPORT	4
<b>6.</b>	<b>MATTERS FOR DECISION</b>	<b>5</b>
6.1	ENDORSEMENT OF FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS AND FIRE WEATHER OFFICERS FOR THE 2025/2026 BUSH FIRE SEASON	5
6.2	FIRE BREAK ORDER REVIEW – 2025/2026	7
<b>7.</b>	<b>MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION</b>	<b>11</b>
7.1	HARVEST VEHICLE MOVEMENT BAN NOTICE TIMES (TAMBELLUP WEST)	11
7.2	PROPOSED INSPECTION OF SMALL HOBBY FARMS (TAMELLUP WEST)	11
7.3	FOLLOW UP ON REQUEST FOR TWO HANDHELD RADIOS (TAMBELLUP EAST)	11
7.4	UPDATE ON SPENCER ROAD FIRE REQUESTED (BROOMEHILL WEST)	11
7.5	USE OF SHIRE EQUIPMENT AT A FIRE (BROOMEHILL EAST)	11
<b>8.</b>	<b>GENERAL BUSINESS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>NEXT MEETING AND CLOSE</b>	<b>12</b>

**Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held at the  
Broomehill Recreational Complex on 27 March 2025.**

**1. OPENING**

The Chair declared the meeting open at 6.30pm.

**2. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES**

**Attendance:**

Cr Michael White	Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup (Chair)
Michael Altus	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Rhys Brown	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Jonathan Webster	Fire Control Officer (FCO) – Broomehill Central
Jedd Herbert	FCO – Tambellup West
Chris Rumble	FCO – Tambellup East
Nick Bowman	FCO – Broomehill East
Rohan Thorn	FCO – Broomehill West
Craig Beacham	Captain – Tambellup Volunteer Fire & Emergency Service (VFES) – from 6.54pm.

**Observers:**

Cindy Pearce	Community Emergency Services Manager
Roy Parsons	Department of Fire & Emergency Services
Kay Squibb	Acting Chief Executive Officer
Pam Hull	Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup (Minutes)

**Apologies:**

Stephanie Swain	Ranger
Karen Callaghan	Chief Executive Officer
Mandy Plant	FCO - Tambellup VFES
Josh Holmes	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

**3. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

**3.1 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

Moved Rhys Brown, seconded Michael Altus

That the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting of 10 September 2024 be accepted as a true and correct record.

**CARRIED**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Nil.

## 5. REPORTS

### 5.1 CHIEF BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER REPORT

#### **CBFCO Report Summer 2024/2025**

The season started off with 2 header fires that were contained quickly and only needed to be attended by close neighbouring units. Late November onwards we started to get busy with 2 fires on hobby blocks started by lawn mowers on quite warm and windy days.

The worst fire of the season was the Broomehill fire that burnt approximately 140ha and threatened the townsite. Thankfully crews from our shire, assisted from neighbouring shires were able to contain the fire before it impacted the townsite. The decision was made early to evacuate the school, have an emergency warning out for the town and call in the water bombers. It was a very big team effort by the local, neighbouring communities as well as DFES on the day that achieved a fairly good result considering the conditions. The week afterward the fire ground was monitored and mopped up by volunteers on a roster system that was also well supported from the community.

Since Christmas we have had another fire start on a hobby farm, this time from a welder. The land holder had not obeyed the fire break order and had not taken any steps to try and prevent a fire from starting – a good example of this being a watering can as a firefighting unit. The landholder was also quite aggressive in his approach to volunteers being on his land and putting out his fire. The Shire is investigating the situation further and I look forward to hearing the updates.

We have also had 6x pole top fires that have been reported and attended by local crews. With an additional 2 pole top fires that were not reported.

Thanks to all that have attended training courses and a big thankyou to everyone for your support and attendance at fires throughout the season, particularly Cindy, Rhys and Josh for your help. I look forward to working with you all over the next twelve months.

CBFCO  
Michael Altus

### 5.2 BRIGADE REPORTS

#### **Broomehill Central (Jonathan Webster)**

The Brigade has had a good season, with increased membership and good attendances at fires and other events.

#### **Tambellup West (Jedd Herbert)**

The Brigade has had a good season with a minimal number of fires reported. The fast fill trailer has been well maintained and used.

Matters raised at the Brigade meeting included:

- Follow up on last years request for a handheld radio (CESM: provided to Jedd at the BFAC meeting)
- Members requested more notice when Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans (HVMB) are to be imposed.
- There are some changes to radio holders for the coming season
- Martin Deely will be taking on the Captain/FCO role.
- Members have been proactive in response to inclement conditions that may result in pole top fires.

#### **Tambellup East (Chris Rumble)**

The brigade experienced a quiet season, with only one or two small header fires, and a handful of pole top fires, all of which were well responded to. Carl Letter is taking on the Captain/FCO role for the coming season.

#### **Broomehill East (Nick Bowman)**

The brigade experienced a quiet season with just one pole top fire reported at Woodyarrup. Members also responded to the Sunnyside fire and the fire at Garlick's. Members have requested clarification on the ability and process to request the use of Shire equipment at fires.

The request for funding for a fast fill trailer was knocked back this year. The brigade is considering using its own funds to maintain the trailer.

Nick will remain in the Captain/FCO role for the coming season.

#### **Broomehill West (Rohan Thorn)**

The fire at Sunnyside was well managed, and a great job all round. The monitoring and mop up during the following week took up a lot of time, but no flare ups were reported, so well done to all.

The brigade responded to a small fire on Etna Rd, where the landowner was mowing breaks in December, and a fire which was the result of a lightning strike at Woithes.

Members are concerned about hobby blocks and compliance with the Fire Break Order. Rohan will remain in the Captain/FCO role for the coming season.

Members have queried the availability of face masks (CESM: available on PPE order each year) and thermal imaging cameras (CESM to investigate these).

### **5.3 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES MANAGER REPORT**

#### **CESM Report to the BFAC 27 March 2025**

Firstly, I would like to say thanks to Michael for his great work guiding the brigades through some difficult weather and fires. A job well done to Michael and the FCOs.

#### **Training**

There will be several Rural Fire Awareness training courses run during the off season for those that still require this training within your brigades.

A letter drop with the Induction Form and a spiel regarding the need to complete training will be circulated out to all rural landowners over the next month. This information and forms will be available on the Shire webpage. Please circulate this information through your brigades.

There are other courses available during the year if you wish to attend, e.g. Crew Leader. First Aid.

#### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

There is PPE in stock for those who require it. Please note - PPE will not be supplied to non-members or those that have not completed the Induction and the basic Rural Fire Awareness Training.

#### **Local Government Grant Scheme**

We have again submitted an application for a Fast Fill Trailer for BH East. Hopefully this time it is successful.

#### **First Aid Kits**

A request went out last year for the First Aid Kits to be dropped at the shire office so the contents could be updated. To date none have been dropped off.

Discussion: FCOs stated there are no First Aid Kits on the Fast Fill Trailers. The CESM will organise for First Aid Kits to be ordered and placed on the trailers during the off season. Eight kits are required.

### **5.4 DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES REPORT**

Roy Parsons introduced himself to the meeting and provided an overview of his career and experience. He clarified his role is to work with the CESM to assist the local government and brigades.

Mitigation works are planned around the Broomehill Primary School and Javelin St, more information will be provided in due course.

Roy thanked everyone for their commitment to keeping the community safe.

### **5.5 RANGER REPORT**

Nil

## 6. MATTERS FOR DECISION

### 6.1 ENDORSEMENT OF FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS AND FIRE WEATHER OFFICERS FOR THE 2025/2026 BUSH FIRE SEASON

The Committee is required to endorse the nomination of the Brigade Fire Control Officers (FCOs) and Fire Weather Officers (FWOs) for the 2025/2026 bush fire season.

FCOs are appointed on an annual basis, in accordance with s.38 of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*. Nominations for these positions are received from brigade meetings and require the endorsement of the Council prior to gazettal.

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services has requested that the Community Emergency Services Manager be appointed as an FCO to assist brigades with on ground operations, administration and compliance.

The Shire's Ranger is also appointed as an FCO to assist with compliance with the Shire's Fire Break Order.

Council Policy 1.3.2 'Bushfire Control Officers and Volunteers' sets out the requirements for a person to be appointed as FCO.

FWOs are also appointed annually in accordance with s.38 of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*. FWOs are able to authorise the use of a permit at a Fire Danger Rating of 'High' and above (i.e. a Fire Burning Index of 24 or more) during the restricted burning period. The Committee has previously determined through its Standard Operating Procedures that these decisions will be made in consultation with the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer. FWOs can only authorise permits under these conditions for a designated area (i.e. brigade area).

In 2022, the BFAC determined that the all brigade FCOs should be nominated as FWOs.

The Council's endorsement of all nominations is required.



**COMMITTEE DECISION**

Moved Chris Rumble, seconded Jedd Herbert

That it be recommended to the Council that the following nominations be endorsed for the 2025/2026 fire season:

**Fire Control Officers:**

Broomehill East Brigade:	Nick Bowman
Broomehill West Brigade:	Rohan Thorn
Broomehill Central Brigade:	Jonathan Webster
Tambellup East Brigade:	Carl Letter
Tambellup West Brigade:	Martin Deely
Tambellup Volunteer Fire & Emergency Service:	Mandy Plant
Community Emergency Services Manager	Cindy Pearce
Ranger	Stephanie Swain

**Fire Weather Officers:**

Broomehill East Brigade:	Nick Bowman
Broomehill West Brigade:	Rohan Thorn
Broomehill Central Brigade:	Jonathan Webster
Tambellup East Brigade:	Carl Letter
Tambellup West Brigade:	Martin Deely
Tambellup Volunteer Fire & Emergency Service:	Mandy Plant

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

## 6.2 FIRE BREAK ORDER REVIEW – 2025/2026

The Shire has undertaken a full review of the Fire Break Order (FBO) to ensure compliance with the *Bush Fires Act 1954* (Act).

The following summarises recommended changes to the document:

- **Urban and Rural fire hazard reduction requirements** – Previously the FBO stated the following:

*“LAND ZONED RESIDENTIAL, TOWN CENTRE & INDUSTRIAL (Townsite land)  
During the period from 31 October 2024 to 15 April 2025 inclusive you shall have fire breaks in the following positions:*

*1.0 Land less than 4,000 square metres*

*On land which is 4,000 square metres (approx. one acre) or less in area, all flammable material shall be removed from the whole of the land, except live standing trees.*

*1.1 Land which exceeds 4,000 square metres*

*On land which is 4,000 square metres (approximately one acre) or more in area, clear firebreaks not less than two metres completely surrounding and not more than twenty metres from the perimeter of all buildings, haystacks and fuel storage areas are to be situated on the land. The height of all grass on the land is to be less than 150mm in height.”*

The Shire is now proposing the following:

*“All urban land, regardless of size or how the land is zoned*

*An Asset Protection Zone (APZ) of 20 metres surrounding all buildings must be established. An APZ is a reduced fuel load zone; and requires the removal of flammable material by means of ploughing, cultivating, scarifying, burning or otherwise clearing. Living standing trees, remnant vegetation, maintained gardens and lawns are exempt from an APZ.*

*All urban land 4,000m<sup>2</sup> or less*

*All flammable material is to be reduced to a height of less than 50mm by means of ploughing, cultivating, scarifying, burning or otherwise clearing.*

*All urban land exceeding 4,000m<sup>2</sup>*

*Clear a 2.5 m wide firebreak by means of ploughing, cultivating, scarifying, burning or otherwise clearing immediately inside all external boundaries of the land.*

*Maintain all remaining flammable material on the land to a height of less than 150mm.”*

The most notable changes are the implementation of an Asset Protection Zone (APZ) for all townsite properties, regardless of zoning or size; a height restriction on flammable material on properties less than 4,000sqm being 50mm and the installation of 2.5 metre wide boundary firebreak on properties larger than 4,000sqm.

Changes were also made to the Rural zoning component. The following was previously stated in the FBO:

*“Homesteads, Buildings, Fuel Installation & Hay Stacks*

*Completely surrounding the perimeter of any homesteads, building (excluding isolated non-flammable buildings), fuel installation (including drums), hay stacks (but only haystacks within 100 metres of any building) or group of such structures or installations, you shall have firebreaks at least five metres wide (if provided by burning, cultivating or chemical spraying), or ten metres wide (if provided by being closely grazed or mowed). These breaks are to be to the satisfaction of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer. Wherever the ten metre wide alternative is chosen, the outer three metres of the ten metre area must be totally free of any flammable material, and where mowing is the method used, all residue of the mowing process must be removed from the area.”*

This has been simplified for ease of reading and consistency with the previously mentioned APZ to the following:

*“An Asset Protection Zone (APZ) of 20 metres surrounding all Homesteads, Buildings, Sheds, Haystacks, Standalone Power Stations and flammable fuel storage must be established. An APZ is a reduced fuel load zone; and requires the removal of flammable material by means of ploughing, cultivating, scarifying, burning or otherwise clearing. Living standing trees, remnant vegetation, maintained gardens and lawns are exempt from an APZ.”*

These changes ensure that the correct terminology (more notably the phrasing “ploughing, cultivating, scarifying, burning or otherwise clearing”) are used and dimensions and positions are also explained. Both Plantation and Wind Turbine requirements remain the same.

- **Removal of blanket statements, non-enforceable guidelines and operational/industry specific information** – The previous FBO contained a bulk of information that was not pertinent to the FBO, such as dog registration information, firefighting guidelines/recommendations and advice that is deemed more appropriate as a separate publication for those who specifically require it.

The following has been removed:

- General Shire information – Page 2
- Shire Staff – Page 2 (key contacts list created in proposal)
- Council Elections – Page 2
- Building Services – Page 2
- Health Services – Page 3
- Animal Control – Page 3
- Private Works – Page 4
- Emergency Management – Page 4
- Standpipe Access – Page 4
- Table of Contents – Page 5
- 3.2 – Crops – Page 8
- 3.3 – Boundary Firebreaks – Page 8

- 3.4 – Fuel Loading – Page 8 (Has been reworded into ‘Special work orders in proposed order)
- 4.0 – Land Greater than 40 Hectares – Page 8
- 6.4 – Fire Equipment Standards – Page 9
- 7.0 – Harvesting, Swathing and baling of stubble – Page 10
- 8.0 – Harvest and Machinery Movement Bans – Page 10 and 11 (this is simplified in the proposed order) – The HVMB Hotline (9825 1042) has also been redacted as the Shire moves away from this notification process.
- Page 14 – Information on key dates remain in the proposed order, however burning permit information has been summarised and on a separate page to key dates.
- 7 – Protective burning – Page 15
- 8 – Burning to collect clover – Page 15
- 9 – Noxious Weeds – Page 15
- 10 – Operation of tractors and self-propelled headers – Page 15 and 16
- 11 – Fire unit on site – Page 16
- 12 – If a permit fire escapes – Page 16
- 13 – Swathers and Balers – Page 16
- 14 – Oxyacetylene, Arc welders, angle grinders and other power equipment – Page 16
- Fire attendance – Page 20
- Bush and Grass on any land – Page 20 (summarised in proposed order in Important dates)
- Fire Danger – Page 20
- When and How to burn Garden Refuse – Page 21
- Hints for burning – Page 21
- Advice from your local Brigade – Page 21
- Barbeques and Incinerators – Page 21
- Application for Registration as an Authorised Loading and Off Loading Site for Grain during Fire Danger Days

All removed information is noted to be vital educational material for our community, and the Shire is considering various options to capture this information.

The revised FBO transforms complex regulations into a user-friendly format that enhances readability and engagement. Clearer formatting, structured layouts and concise wording will make it easier for landowners to understand their responsibilities. Alongside design improvements, updates to our fire safety measures ensures stronger compliance, better risk mitigation and increased community awareness, ultimately improving preparedness for the fire seasons in future.

For discussion and endorsement if appropriate

#### OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That it be recommended to the Council that the 2025/2026 Fire Break Order as presented be endorsed.

## COMMITTEE DECISION

Moved Rhys Brown, seconded Nick Bowman

That it be recommended to the Council that the draft 2025/2026 Fire Break Order, amended to include the following information from the 2024/2025 Fire Break Order:

- Standpipe Access
- 3.2 – Crops – Page 8
- 3.3 – Boundary Firebreaks – Page 8
- 3.4 – Fuel Loading – Page 8 (Has been reworded into 'Special work orders in proposed order)
- 4.0 – Land Greater than 40 Hectares – Page 8
- 6.4 – Fire Equipment Standards – Page 9
- 7.0 – Harvesting, Swathing and baling of stubble – Page 10
- 7 – Protective burning – Page 15
- 8 – Burning to collect clover – Page 15
- 9 – Noxious Weeds – Page 15
- 10 – Operation of tractors and self-propelled headers – Page 15 and 16
- 11 – Fire unit on site – Page 16
- 12 – If a permit fire escapes – Page 16
- 14 – Oxyacetylene, Arc welders, angle grinders and other power equipment – Page 16
- 15. Harvest Ban Zones
- Fire attendance – Page 20
- When and How to Burn Garden Refuse – Page 21
- Hints for burning – Page 21
- Advice from your local Brigade – Page 21
- Barbeques and Incinerators – Page 21
- Application for Registration as an Authorised Loading and Off Loading Site for Grain during Fire Danger Days
- Brigade map

be endorsed.

CARRIED

### Reason for change to recommendation:

Members discussed the items that were to be removed from the FBO and determined it was relevant information to all landowners and residents, and that one document containing all required information was preferred.

Attachment 6.2.1 - Shire of Broomehill Tambellup Fire Break Order PROPOSED

Attachment 6.2.2 - Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup 2024/2025 Fire Break Order

## **7. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION**

### **7.1 HARVEST VEHICLE MOVEMENT BAN NOTICE TIMES (TAMBELLUP WEST)**

*Members are concerned about the short notice of the Harvest and Vehicle Movement bans. Suggesting a 30-minute notice minimum.*

The meeting determined, after discussion, that the current buffer of 15 minutes was adequate and should be continued.

### **7.2 PROPOSED INSPECTION OF SMALL HOBBY FARMS (TAMELLUP WEST)**

*Members request that due to issues with fires on hobby blocks, that inspections be conducted in September annually, with blocks to be compliant no later than 31 October annually.*

The draft FBO states 'All Fire Hazard Reduction measures outlined in this notice are to be completed by 31 October 2025 and maintained until 15 April 2026'. The CESM clarified the process for inspections and noted non-compliant landowners from the previous year are contacted early to ensure they are aware of their obligations.

### **7.3 FOLLOW UP ON REQUEST FOR TWO HANDHELD RADIOS (TAMBELLUP EAST)**

*An update is requested on provision of two handheld radios requested last year.*

The CESM advised that this was in progress.

### **7.4 UPDATE ON SPENCER ROAD FIRE REQUESTED (BROOMEHILL WEST)**

*Members have requested an update on the Spencer Road fire.*

Volunteers are concerned at the perceived lack of action in relation to this incident and the non-compliance with the FBO. Queried if there were set requirements for fire units to be in attendance during hot works.

Roy Parsons advised there are no specific requirements, however all landowners and occupiers are required to comply with the provisions of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, in that the landowner or occupier has an obligation to extinguish any fires occurring on their land.

The Acting CEO advised the Shire's process for compliance has been followed, and the CEO and Ranger are working on any subsequent actions arising from the incident.

The CBFCO requested that he be provided with an update in due course.

### **7.5 USE OF SHIRE EQUIPMENT AT A FIRE (BROOMEHILL EAST)**

*Members have requested clarification on how and when the use of Shire equipment at a fire ground can be requested.*

Broomehill East brigade responded to a pole top fire on a property within the brigade area. The pole was located in an area of bush, with a pile of hay and timber pushed up in the vicinity. The pile lit up and machinery was required to spread the pile out and extinguish the fire.

Resources on the fireground were minimal so a call was put through to get the Shire's loader on site. The loader was not working in close proximity and it took an extended period to get it to the fire ground.

Clarification of the process to get Shire equipment at a fire was requested. CEO approval is required for use of Shire equipment – this is achieved by contacting the CESM who will contact the CEO and determine where the machines are located. If the machines are in the vicinity and approved, the Manager of Works will coordinate attendance.

Approval is required so the CEO is aware of where machines and Shire personnel are working.

Roy Parsons confirmed DFES will support requests for equipment to attend large fires when made through the correct channels, however the landowner/occupier has an obligation to extinguish any fires occurring on their land. The Shire's insurance covers instances of damage to a landowners/occupiers equipment incurred during response to a fire incident.

## 8. GENERAL BUSINESS

**Chris Rumble:** The Shire is currently split into two zones (east and west) for management of HVMBs. Can this be changed to provide four zones, for the following reasons:

- To address significant variations in HVMB conditions across the Shire;
- Following an incident, to allow other brigade areas not involved in mop up to continue working; and
- For issue of permits, in particular after rainfall where this has varied significantly across the shire.

Members discussed the matter and determined that the current east/west split is appropriate and easily managed and can be used if required.

**Michael Altus:** With the varying rainfall received recently, were any changes to permit conditions required?

Members discussed the matter and determined that permit conditions should be left to the FCO's judgement on the day.

## 9. NEXT MEETING AND CLOSE

The next meeting is scheduled for September 2025, with the date to be confirmed.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 8.00pm.