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22 November 2024

Shire of Jerramungup Bushfire Risk Management Plan (BRMP) and the Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) Summary with Submissions.

The Shire of Jerramungup engaged Bio Diverse Solutions in April 2024 to assist with the review and updating of the Shire of Jerramungup Bushfire Risk Management Plan (BRMP) that had expired in 2022 and to assist and facilitate the Stakeholder communication and consultation process which included an consultation information session as part of the planning process.

The BRM Plan assists a local government to identify, assess, prioritise, treat and monitor bushfire risk throughout its local government area. The BRM Plan is a document that provides contextual information about the local government area to inform the subsequent risk assessment. This can also help inform the treatment strategies.

The new Shire of Jerramungup BRM Plan was required to comply with the new “Guidelines for Preparing a Bushfire Risk Management Plan (2023)” that were developed by the Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM).

Planning Process and the Community Stakeholder Consultative Committee (SWG):

“The Stakeholder Working Group involvement with the Shire of Jerramungup BRMP Review is to ensure that bushfire risk management is informed by the best available information, considers stakeholders attitudes and perspectives, and that the community and other stakeholders have an appropriate level of engagement and input into understanding the process. It is the representative’s obligation, as a member of the SWG to present the Businesses / Committee position to the Stakeholder Working Group as well as to report back to their Business or Committee.”

“Written submissions can be made by any member of the group to Bio Diverse Solutions. Submissions must be based on available evidence or data and relate directly to the context, treatment areas or strategies proposed for the plan. The position of each member on the final BRM plan will be noted within the final report to be put to Council for their consideration prior to endorsement”.

The SWG community groups and businesses were invited via email and telephone calls (if required) to nominate a representative or proxy that could attend the information evening. The confirmed representatives were then sent the Stakeholder Working Group Terms of Reference (TOR), a BRMP Submission Form and an invitation to the first Meeting and Information Presentation that was held:

Date: Wednesday 7th August 2024

Time: 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Venue: Bremer Bay Community Resource Centre
7 Mary Street
Bremer Bay

SWG Community Group or Business Name:	Representative or Proxy's Name:	Meeting attendance.	All Meeting documentation emailed to SWG on 16/08/2024.	SWG Submissions received.
Groups and Departments:				
Bremer Bay Progress Association	Katrina Wellstead.	Yes	Yes	Yes - Submission received.
Bushfire Heritage Australia	Heather Barnes.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.
Bushfire Heritage Australia	Lewis Marr.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.
FBG – Fitzgerald Biosphere Group	Damon Cusack Executive Officer.	Yes	Yes	Yes - combined submission with FBG/Wellstead Estuary (Bremer Projects).
Fitzgerald Biosphere Community Collective (FBCC)	Annie Leitch.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.
Point Henry Bush Fire Ready Group	Jeni Dawson.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.
Wellstead Estuary Group and Bremer Bay Regional Trails	Leonie McMahon.	Yes	Yes	Yes - combined submission with FBG/Wellstead Estuary (Bremer Projects).
Aboriginal Corporation:				
Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar Aboriginal Corporation. (WKSNA)	Justin McAllister Land Manager.	Yes – via Teams link.	Yes	No Submission received.

SWG Community Group or Business Name:	Representative or Proxy's Name:	Meeting Attendance.	All Meeting documentation emailed to SWG on 16/08/2024.	SWG Submissions received.
Businesses:				
Bremer Bay Caravan Park	Rex Parsons. Tom McAneney.	Yes – via Teams link for Rex. Nil Attendance	Yes	No Submission received.
Bremer Bay Beaches Resort Tourist Park	Dave Harder.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.
Water Corporation	Katrina Burton Great Southern Region.	Yes – via Teams link.	Yes	No Submission received.
Western Power	Paul Casey Team Leader Operations Maintenance.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.
Sports Clubs:				
Boxwood Combined Sports Club	Matt Bowen.	Yes - via Teams link.	Yes	No Submission received.
Bremer Bay Sports Club	Brian Penner (Proxy) for Darcy Roberts.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.
Jerramungup Sports Club	Trent Parsons.	Yes – via Teams link	Yes	No Submission received.
Schools:				
Bremer Bay Primary School	Janice Fox.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.
Volunteer Fire Brigades:				
Bremer Bay VFES	Stacey Francis.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.
Jerramungup VFES	Jeremy Wisewould and Siwel Solomon	Yes – via Teams link.	Yes	No Submission received.
DFES – CESM and CBFCO				
Department of Fire and Rescue Services (DFES)	Steve Petersen District Officer (DO).	Yes - via Teams link.	Yes	No Submission received.
Department of Fire and Rescue Services (DFES)	Mel Haymont Community Preparedness Advisor.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.

SWG Community Group or Business Name:	Representative or Proxy's Name:	Meeting Attendance.	All Meeting documentation emailed on 16/08/2024.	SWG Submissions received.
DBCA:				
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)	Vince Hilder District Fire Coordinator.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)	Nathan Ramage Fire Operations Officer.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)	Mark Blythman Land Use Planning Officer.	Apologies were received.	Yes	No Submission received.
Shire of Jerramungup:				
Shire of Jerramungup	Cr. Joanne Iffla Shire President.	Apologies were received.	Yes	N/A.
Shire of Jerramungup	Cr. Julie Leenhouders Deputy Shire President.	Yes	Yes	N/A.
Shire of Jerramungup	Cr. Gavin Mair.	Yes – Via Teams Link.	Yes	N/A.
Shire of Jerramungup	Cr. Paul Barrett.	Yes – Via Teams Link	Yes	N/A.
Shire of Jerramungup	Charmaine Solomon Deputy CEO.	Apologies were received.	Yes	N/A.
Shire of Jerramungup	Noel Meyers Acting CEO and Manager of Development.	Yes	Yes	N/A.
Shire of Jerramungup	Dan Biddulph Bushfire Risk Mitigation Coordinator.	Yes	Yes	N/A.
CESM – Community Emergency Services Manager	Russell Palmer CESM.	Yes	Yes	No Submission received.
CBFCO – Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Alex Jones CBFCO.	Yes	Yes	Yes – Submission received.

Documentation was emailed to the attendees after the meeting held at Bremer Bay, the emails with the below information was sent on 16/08/2024:

- The Presentation Slides (without the maps).
- A PDF Map Package (for easier viewing, instead of being on the Presentation Slides).
- A copy of the meeting minutes.
- A Submission Form.

Submissions:

The submissions for the Shire of Jerramungup BRMP Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) closed on 7th September 2024.

Three submissions were received for Councils consideration for the Shire of Jerramungup BRMP.

- 1. FBG/Wellstead Estuary (Bremer Projects).**
Combined submission sent in by Leonie Mahon. (Attached).
- 2. Bremer Bay Progress Association.**
Sent in by Katrina Wellstead. (Attached).
- 3. Alex Jones – Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO).**
Sent in by Alex Jones. (Attached).

Shire of Jerramungup Bushfire Risk Mitigation Plan Review

Stakeholder Working Group

Submission form

Submitter identification

Name: Leonie McMahon

Representative Group: FBG/Wellstead Estuary (Bremer Projects)

Contact: 0438 678 492

Postal address: 8197 Bremer Bay Rd, Bremer Bay WA 6338

Email: bremerprojects@fbg.org.au

Background: FBG Bremer Projects work

The FBG has worked with the community and the Shire of Jerramungup in Bremer Bay since 2006 to:

- Deliver the Wellstead Estuary Management Plan
- Source funding for and manage a range of projects that encourage sustainable use and protection of natural assets.
- Implement programs for environmental weed management, shorebird protection, protection of fragile environments and critical habitat (including threatened ecological communities – Kwonghan heath and coastal samphire).
- Run community engagement and awareness raising activities
- Support subgroups including the Bremer Bay Regional Trails Committee and the Weed Action Group.

COMMENTS

Over the years I have spoken to a range of community members, local fire brigade members, the SOJ Environment Officer, ecologists and others about the difficult and divisive topic of fire mitigation.

No matter which side of the divide people find themselves on, everyone, wants the same thing: to protect people, livestock, private property, community assets and businesses, now and in the future.

Many believe this can be achieved whilst also protecting the environment, including places of high biodiversity values (for which the area is renowned), critical habitat, threatened ecological communities and endangered species.

I think an objective of the updated Bushfire Management Plan, and the Shire of Jerramungup, that would provide the best long-term results would be to dissolve the 'us and them' mentality that has arisen in recent years and find a way to work together collaboratively and in genuine good faith. I understand the nature of wildfire is increasingly complex and changing as the climate changes, nobody has all the answers, there are many competing views and a lot is at stake.

I think we have an opportunity to use an adaptive management approach in which we trial ways of mitigating against wildfire using all of the different expertise and skills within the shire, and the local, FESA, scientific and Noongar communities. The Shire of Jerramungup has lead ground-breaking

environmental initiatives in the past and such an approach embodies the ethos of living in a biosphere (and the Fitz is the only one in WA and the oldest in Australia).

During the recent presentation at the Steering Committee meeting it was unclear to me how the above-mentioned environmental values were identified, surveyed and mapped across the shire and particularly within the fire mitigation hotspots – around the townsites of Bremer Bay and Jerramungup.

Having dealt with broad-scale distribution maps in the past, I know that local knowledge is key to ground-truthing the distribution and value of fauna and flora communities. We are fortunate to have two people from the local community who have expertise that is critical to understanding the local environment: the environment officer for the Shire of Jerramungup, Steve Elson, and landscape ecologist Nathan McQuoid. Nathan also has in-depth knowledge of the local plant communities and their responses to fire.

I think working with these people and others with relevant scientific knowledge is one of the most important things we can do to achieve all the outcomes being sought through the plan.

Some of the concerns raised with using prescription burning exclusively and extensively are:

Some plant species respond to fire better than others, outcompete them and create a greater fire risk in the future. We have an historical case study on Point Henry Peninsula. Peppermint, *Agonis flexuosa*, used to be much more sparsely distributed until the Wellstead family settled in the area in the 1860s and practiced regular burning that favoured the peppermints. Over time this enabled the dense thickets we have today – recognised by all as a significant fire hazard. Employing other mitigation methods that prevent this outcome would result in reduced fuel load in the future.

A local weed, Coastal (Victorian tea tree) also seems to respond well to fire, crowds out endemic plant communities and builds up in thickets so alternatives to fire could be investigated here too. The FBG, the Shire and local contractors and volunteers have collaborated over many years and dedicated much time and resources to managing this weed. It would be in all of our best interests to continue to collaborate on the best ways to prevent its spread, particularly with regard to fire.

Prescription burns seem too often to result in collateral damage – usually environmental– hotter or more widespread than anticipated or in a direction that was meant to be protected but wasn't.

In recent years Bremer Bay has become a highly popular holiday destination, especially for 4WDers who expect to drive off-road without limits. Fire mitigation activities, especially prescription burns, inadvertently open up large areas, enabling weed encroachment, fragmentation, increased erosion and the introduction of Dieback into sensitive areas. I imagine multiple new informal access points are a safety risk in the event of a fire ie people may find themselves in isolated areas where their exit route is closed off by fire. I understand there will always be competing issues and it is difficult to juggle them all but between us we may come up with unique solutions to these unintended consequences.

Subsequent to the recent Stakeholder Working Group meeting I met with Dan Biddulph and as a result I appreciate that the plan allows for a range of mitigation techniques, including mechanical and chemical control as well as proscribed burns. We (myself, the Trails Committee, the Weed Action Group and Bremer community members) have worked closely with Shire staff to discuss management options and support mutually beneficial projects in the past and we look forward to continuing to do so in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



Shire of Jerramungup Bushfire Risk Mitigation Plan (BRMP) Review

Stakeholder Working Group (SWG)

SUBMISSION FORM

Submitter Identification	
Name	KATRINA WELLSTEAD
Representative Group or Business Name	BREMER BAY PROGRESS ASSOCIATION
Contact Phone	0427 432365
Postal Address	4- Bremer Bay Post office
Email	bbpa.secretary@outlook.com

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Object

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Do not object

Comments
We do not object to the SoJ BRMP but have a few concerns.
1. Map accuracy? - There are fires that have been burned that I believe were part of controlled burning that do not show on the maps
• Fire at the very end of Cuneo Dve at the Cairn site (very hot. the bush has not recovered)
• Fire between Progress Drive down the hill towards the Caravan Park
• Fire near the Bremer Bay Primary School
These fires do not even show in Fire History.

2. We're concerned about the planned burn between Seadragon Ave and John Street in 2026. There are many significant plants in that area. I also believe there is a group in town planning walkways (raised) in that area. The group is called ~~Fracts~~ Bremer Bay Regional Trails.

3. The recent clearing under the Yandell trees on Wellstead Road (just before Beaches Caravan Park). This clearing will help those significant trees survive a fire. Are there provisions for those trees being replenished in the future? Will saplings be protected from slashing, poisoning or burning so that new replacement trees may eventually grow. If not, we will eventually lose that unique grove of trees. A considerable loss to the flora of Bremer Bay.

All written submission forms are to be received at Bio Diverse Solutions by 4pm on 7th September 2024.

Email to: leanne@biodiversesolutions.com.au or enquiry@biodiversesolutions.com.au

Postal: Bio Diverse Solutions
29 Hercules Crescent
Albany, 6330



Shire of Jerramungup Bushfire Risk Mitigation Plan (BRMP) Review

Stakeholder Working Group (SWG)

SUBMISSION FORM

Submitter Identification	
Name	Alex Jones
Representative Group or Business Name	CBFCO
Contact Phone	0429 361034
Postal Address	
Email	akunjones@gmail.com

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Object

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Do not object

Comments
Agree with the review.
Would like to add my concerns of the Bremer Estu River Reserve and Cairdner River Reserve UCL areas. (upper reaches) These areas fall into "no mans land" when considering mitigation work. Low priority for DBCA. Low priority for mitigation is not many people nearby but they have areas unburnt for up to 70 years. They can be the source of a wildfire eg lightning strikes. With no resources allocated - I can only see that the local brigade burn these areas in sections in early winter with suitable conditions.