Shire of Jerramungup
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MINUTES

BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

GENERAL MEETING

Held at

Council Chambers, Jerramungup
Monday, 26 October 2026
Commencing at 6:00pm

Discover Diversity

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Table of Contents

General Meeting of Bush Fire Advisory Committee | Monday 28 October 2026

1.0 DECLARATION OF OPENING, ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS 4

2.1 ATTENDANCE 4

2.2 APOLOGIES 5

3.0 CONFIRMTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS 5

4.0 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES 5

5.0 CORRESPONDENCE 5

6.0 REPORTS 5

7.0 AGENDA ITEMS 6

7.1 DRAFT FIRE CONTROL POLICY NO. 7 – COOKING AND CAMPING FIRES 6

8.0 GENERAL BUSINESS 8

8.1 SHAREPOINT SPREADSHEET FOR PERMIT REGISTER 8

8.2 UPDATE ON OPEN GRANT APPLICATIONS 8

8.3 PRE-SEASON INFORMATION 9

8.4 TRAINING CALENDAR 9

9.0 ROUND TABLE 10

10.0 CLOSURE 11

10.1 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING 11

10.2 CLOSURE OF MEETING 11

ATTACHMENTS 12

A1 TABLE OF CORRESPONDANCE 13

A2 CHIEF BUSHFIRE CONTROL OFFICER REPORT 14

A3 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES MANANAGER REPORT 15

A4 DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES REPORT 16

A5 AFAC SEASONAL OUTLOOK SPRING 17

A6 LETTER OF CORRESPONDENCE – BREMER BAY VFES 18

BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

1.0 DECLARATION OF OPENING, ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

The meeting was opened at 6.05pm by the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.

2.0 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

2.1 ATTENDANCE

Alex Jones	Chief Bushfire Control Officer / Gairdner BFB
Martin Cuthbert	Chief Executive Officer
Charmaine Wisewould	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Janna Cheshire	Community Emergency Services Manager
Dan Biddulph	Bushfire Risk Mitigation Coordinator
Anthony Thomas	Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer / Boxwood BFB
Wade Brown	Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer / Needilup BFB
Brad Shelton	Gairdner BFB
Craig Hall	Gairdner BFB (via TEAMS)
Pete Buckenara	Bremer Bay VFES
Stacey Francis	Bremer Bay VFES
Siwel Solomon-Maere	Jerramungup VFES
Matt Foster	Jerramungup VFES
Paul Hislop	Jerramungup VFES
Stuart Hocking	Boxwood BFB
Michael Lester	Jacup BFB
Brad Bailey	Jacup BFB
Jye Duggan	Needilup BFB
Ali Benson	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
Cindy Miller	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

2.2 APOLOGIES

Neil Foreman	Councillor Shire of Jerramungup
Stephen Petersen	DO Esperance Urban DFES

3.0 CONFIRMTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

That the minutes of the General Meeting of the Shire of Jerramungup's Bushfire Advisory Committee held in the Council Chamber, Jerramungup, on Monday 20 July 2026 be CONFIRMED.

MOVED: Wade Brown **SECONDED: Matt Foster**

That the minutes of the General Meeting of the Shire of Jerramungup's Bushfire Advisory Committee held in the Council Chamber, Jerramungup, on Monday 20 July 2026 be CONFIRMED.

Carried

4.0 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Nil.

5.0 CORRESPONDENCE

As per attachment.

6.0 REPORTS

6.1 Chief Bushfire Control Officer – report attached
In addition to the report, provided an update on South East Fire Working Group: Not a combined meeting with Ravensthorpe and Esperance anymore but individual meeting, more Shire specific and focused. Working on a combined UCL, UMR, National Park and Shire managed lands mitigation approach.

6.2 Community Emergency Services Manager – report attached

6.3 Bushfire Risk Mitigation Coordinator

- The three-year grant program is nearing completion of its first year, with mechanical, chemical and prescribed burning works progressing well.
- 14 prescribed burns were completed across the Shire, including significant treatments around Bremer Bay and a 40-hectare burn on the Water Corporation block, undertaken with support from Water Corporation and VFES volunteers.

- Mechanical mitigation works have included extensive burn preparation, mulching, debris removal and vegetation treatments across Bremer Bay, Jerramungup and surrounding strategic areas. Some works near the Bremer Bay Resort were jointly funded through DFES.
- Chemical treatments have commenced across the Point Henry road network and will continue through summer as conditions permit.
- The Department of Health has completed vegetation mitigation works on its Jerramungup property, improving protection along Kokoda Road.
- Upcoming priorities include completing grant acquittal and evidence requirements, together with further slashing, mulching, crown lifting and vegetation management across Bremer Bay, Point Henry and John Street Reserve before conditions become too hot and dry.
- Thanks to all brigades for supporting mitigation activities, it is really appreciated.

6.4 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – report attached

6.5 Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

- Cindy Miller was introduced as the new Fire Operations Officer, replacing Nathan Ramage who has moved to DFES. Cindy has extensive departmental experience and will support incidents, prescribed burns and strategic access programs across the region.
- Preparations for the coming fire season are underway, including water bomber refiller training across the South Coast and the return of serviced refilling equipment to Bremer Bay, Jerramungup and Ravensthorpe.
- Joel Malcolm has taken up the ranger position in the Gairdner area and is expected to return from leave shortly.
- The Reynolds Hill repeater was inspected and confirmed to be in readiness for the coming fire season.
- The Fitzgerald River Fire Working Group meeting will not be held this year due to significant overlap with other recent stakeholder meetings. The meeting is expected to recommence next year.

6.6 Other - nil

7.0 AGENDA ITEMS

7.1 DRAFT FIRE CONTROL POLICY NO. 7 – COOKING AND CAMPING FIRES

The Committee considered proposed amendments to the Camping and Cooking Fire Control Policy following an external review and previous Committee discussions. Amendments were required to align the policy with the current Australian Fire Danger Rating System and clarify requirements for registered fire pits.

Key proposed changes included:

- approved fire pits to be limited to brick and mortar construction or purpose-built steel containers, with sand fire pits no longer permitted;

- maintenance of a 5 metre cleared area around approved fire pits;
- provision for up to three approved fire pit locations on an eligible property to account for prevailing wind conditions;
- eligibility to include owner-occupied properties and properties occupied by long-term tenants, while short-term rental accommodation remains ineligible;
- approvals to remain valid for up to three years but lapse upon a change of property ownership; and
- required firefighting equipment and supervision requirements to remain in place.

Considerable discussion was held regarding proposed hours of use and the requirement for fires to be extinguished by 11:59 pm. Members discussed the relationship between operating times, the following day's Fire Danger Rating and Total Fire Bans, as well as the practicalities of extinguishing fires overnight.

The Committee agreed the condition should require a fire pit to be fully extinguished with water by 11:59 pm where the Fire Danger Rating for the following day is High or above.

It was noted that, following adoption of the revised policy, existing registered fire pits would be reinspected and approvals reissued. Shire staff would undertake the reinspection process, rather than Fire Control Officers.

The Committee also identified the need for clear information to be provided to approved applicants on how to check Fire Danger Ratings and understand the conditions applying to their approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:

That the Jerramungup Bushfire Advisory Committee:

1. **Endorses the proposed amendments to Fire Control Policy No. 7 – Camping and Cooking Fires as presented; and**
2. **Recommends that Council adopt the revised Fire Control Policy No. 7 – Camping and Cooking Fires.**

MOVED: Paul Hislop **SECONDED: Jye Duggan**
That the Jerramungup Bushfire Advisory Committee:
1. Endorses the proposed amendments to Fire Control Policy No. 7 – Camping and Cooking Fires with the following changes: **"3. Conditions of approval** **ii Fire pits must be fully extinguished, with water, by 23:59 if the Fire Danger Rating for the following day is "high", "extreme" or "catastrophic";" and**

2. **Recommends that Council adopt the revised Fire Control Policy No. 7 – Camping and Cooking Fires.**

Carried

8.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

8.1 SHAREPOINT SPREADSHEET FOR PERMIT REGISTER

Previous discussions with FCOs noted ongoing access and version-control issues with the current Dropbox-based Permit to Burn register.

It was proposed that the existing Excel register be transitioned to SharePoint, allowing FCOs to access and update a single live spreadsheet simultaneously and eliminating duplicate versions.

FCOs will be provided access using their nominated email address and the new system will be trialled over the coming weeks.

Subject to the trial operating successfully, the SharePoint register will replace the existing Dropbox system. The old system will remain in place until all FCOs have successfully accessed the new spreadsheet. Options for notifications when the register is updated will also be investigated.

Action: CESM to procure all FCO email addresses and provide link to new spreadsheet via email.

8.2 UPDATE ON OPEN GRANT APPLICATIONS

Awaiting announcements on two pending grant application:

- Western Power Bushfire Volunteers Grants Program-

  On behalf of the four bushfire brigade captains, the Shire has applied for Starlink mini hardware and accessories required for vehicle installation through the Western Power Bushfire Volunteers Grants Program. Successful applicants will be announced after 26 October 2026. So far, nothing was heard.

- National Emergency Management Authority (NEMS) Disaster Resilience Funding Round 4-

  In early July the Shire applied for funding through the NEMA DRF Round 4 grants scheme for funding to create digital content fit for a TV commercial, to educate the public on the local impacts of bushfires in the Shire of Jerramungup and raise awareness around preventative measures. Successful applicants will be announced from late October. So far, nothing was heard.

8.3 PRE-SEASON INFORMATION

- The AFAC seasonal outlook was noted, with ongoing soil moisture deficits, particularly across the Western Mallee and Fitzgerald areas, and warmer and drier than average spring conditions contributing to an increased bushfire risk later in spring.
- Updated FCO and call sign lists were made available, along with replacement permit books and incident diaries as required.
- Pre-season water bomber reloader training is scheduled for 1 November in Bremer Bay (11:00) and Jerramungup (14:00). DBCA confirmed the training is mandatory annually for existing reloaders and is also open to new participants, including non-brigade members.
- Seasonal worker bushfire and harvest safety training will be held on Wednesday 28 October from 07:30 at Jacup, with approximately 35 participants expected.
- Pre-season servicing and maintenance activities were reported as substantially complete, with preparations for the coming bushfire season well advanced.

8.4 TRAINING CALENDAR

- Updated DFES guidance on minimum training and ongoing skills maintenance for rural bushfire brigades was discussed. The Chief Bushfire Control Officer advised that he would like each brigade to undertake a minimum of two training sessions per year, with at least one session to include a burnover drill/refresher. This will be incorporated into future brigade training planning.
- Introductory firefighter training will continue for new members, with courses proposed for late March and September, distributed between Bremer Bay and Jerramungup where practicable.
- Driving training options, including on-road, off-road and emergency driving, will be investigated.
- Other training suggestions identified included:
    - Pump operations – some interest shown
    - Advanced Bushfire Fighting – no interest shown
    - External Structural Firefighting – clear interest shown
    - Ground Controller training – some interest shown
- The Committee acknowledged Dan Biddulph as the addition of a newly qualified trainer and assessor, providing increased local capacity to assist with training delivery.

9.0 ROUND TABLE

Stacey Francis – Bremer Bay VFES

- Stacey Francis, on behalf of Bremer Bay Fire and Emergency Services, presented correspondence raising concerns regarding locked strategic firebreaks on the Point Henry Peninsula and the potential impact on emergency access and egress. The correspondence requested that locks be removed from strategic emergency access ways. A copy of the correspondence is attached to the minutes.
- The Committee discussed the operational concerns raised, while noting that a number of strategic firebreaks traverse private property and are subject to existing agreements between the Shire and affected landowners.
- It was noted that the matter had previously been considered by BFAC and that further review of the existing strategic firebreak agreements and associated legal considerations was required before a position could be determined.
- The Committee agreed to defer further consideration to the next BFAC meeting to allow the Shire to review the existing agreements, investigate the matter further and undertake appropriate consultation with affected landowners.

  Action: Shire Administration to review the Point Henry strategic firebreak agreements and access arrangements, including the concerns raised by Bremer Bay Fire and Emergency Services, and report back to the next BFAC meeting.

Brad Bailey – Jacup BFB

- Brad brought to the committee's attention the need for a more convenient fuel supply for the Jacup bushfire appliance, reducing the need to travel into town for refuelling, particularly during periods of frequent appliance use.
- It was noted that Shire-provided fuel storage would need to meet relevant storage and compliance requirements and may involve additional infrastructure and cost.
- Alternative arrangements were discussed, including potentially accessing fuel from a nearby privately owned farm fuel supply, with fuel usage recorded and reimbursed by the Shire.
- The Shire will investigate suitable fuel storage/supply options, including updating previous quotations and considering any budget implications for the next financial year.

  Action: Shire Administration to investigate options for a local fuel supply for the Jacup bushfire appliance, including compliant fuel storage and/or an arrangement with a nearby landowner, and report back to the Committee.

Michael Lester – Jacup BFB

- Michael Lester provided positive feedback regarding the recent servicing of the bushfire appliance, noting that the service had been thorough and had addressed items that may have been overlooked during previous services.

Peter Buckenara – Bremer Bay VFES

- Peter Buckenara advised that the Bremer Bay Community Resource Centre receives regular enquiries regarding whether fires are permitted on local beaches and suggested clearer public information be provided, particularly over the summer period.
- It was noted that providing a single statement covering all beaches is complicated by the different land tenures and management authorities across the coastline.
- Providing the Community Resource Centre with clearer guidance, potentially including a map or relevant land manager contact information, was suggested to assist with public enquiries.

  Action: Shire Administration to investigate suitable public information regarding fires on local beaches, including guidance for the Bremer Bay Community Resource Centre on relevant land management responsibilities and contacts.
- Peter provided positive feedback on the revised presentation of the Fire Control Notice, noting that the burning period dates were clearer in the current format.
- Minor improvements were suggested to the presentation of the burning period information reference on the rear page.
- The ongoing relevance of plantation requirements within the Notice was also discussed, with members confirming that plantation areas remain within the Shire.

10.0 CLOSURE

10.1 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Bushfire Advisory Committee is to be confirmed in early 2027.

10.2 CLOSURE OF MEETING

The Chief Bushfire Control Officer closed the meeting at 07:38pm.

Attachment 1 - Table of Correspondence

Correspondence in

Date	From	To	Subject
19/08/2026	AFAC	CESM	Seasonal Bushfire Outlook- Spring
20/08/2026	CBFCO	CESM	Fwd: FW: Bushfire Volunteers (AVBFB) AGM and Proxy Form
6/10/2026	CBFCO	CESM	Re: Shire of Jerramungup BFAC meeting
7/10/2026	Ali Benson	CESM	Fw: 2026 Water Bomber Reloader Training dates
15/10/2026	Derek Jones	DCEO, CESM	Re: Fire Control Policy #7 - Camping and Cooking Fires
20/10/2026	Michael Lester	DCEO, CESM, CBFCO, DCBFCO, FCOS	Re: Review of Shires Fire Control Policy #7 - Camping and Cooking Fires
20/10/2026	CBFCO	DCEO	Re: Review of Shires Fire Control Policy #7 - Camping and Cooking Fires
22/10/2026	Derek Jones	DCEO	Re: Fire Control Policy #7 - Camping and Cooking Fires
23/10/2026	Stephen Petersen	CESM	Report for BFAC
25/10/2026	CBFCO	CESM	BFAC report
26/10/2026	CEO	CESM	Fw: VOLUNTEER COMMUNICATIONS: 2026-2027 Volunteer Fuel Cards

Correspondence out

Date	From	To	Subject
10/09/2026	CESM	BFB Captains, Secretaries	Circulars
30/09/2026	CESM	BFAC members	BFAC meeting invite
19/10/2026	DCEO	CESM, CBFCO, DCBFCO, FCOS	Review of Shires Fire Control Policy #7 - Camping and Cooking Fires
22/10/2026	DCEO	Derek Jones	Re: Fire Control Policy #7 - Camping and Cooking Fires
22/10/2026	DCEO	CESM, CBFCO, DCBFCO, FCOS, Council representative	Jerramungup Bushfire Advisory Committee Meeting - Monday 26 October 2026 commencing at 6pm

Attachment 2

CBFCO Report to BFAC October 26th, 2026

Welcome everyone thanks for making the effort especially the volunteers who are harvesting- it's certainly an early start to harvest.

Since April 20th, a quiet winter has been experienced in our shire. We had several 000 calls about stubble fires that were all under permit and all ok. There were two minor structure fires and one stubble fire in August on Monkey rock road allowing the Jerramungup crew to use their new truck the day after it was delivered.

I would like to thank the crews and individuals that attended our farm on Devils Creek Road on July 3rd for a ceiling fire in Brianna and Sam's house. Brad and Jayden in the Gairdner truck, Craig Hall Arran Marni, The Bremer truck with Pete and Rowie then Janna with the heat camera. Janna requested Albany and Ravensthorpe Fire and Rescue who we could stand down soon after. It was a very quick response; there were no injuries and minimal damage. I can't thank everyone enough.

In July we met to endorse the new section 33 which is our shire bushfire notice. It is now clearer, modernised and up to date.

I attended the WAFES conference from September 3-5. The highlight for me was going inside the 000-call centre in Cockburn to see live calls coming in and crews being tasked with call outs. The SOC (State Operations Centre) was very interesting. It was good to see the Ravensthorpe Shire recognised for their efforts during a challenging summer.

During the year I nominated for the LGGS committee. The Local Government Grants Scheme prioritises state funding for shire projects.

DEFES held a State exercise in Bremer which was well attended. Janna has continued with training opportunities in the shire, amongst many other tasks, and Dan has been busy with mitigation work. For some years, we have had a Southeast Fire Working Group which used to combine three shires-Esperance Ravensthorpe and ourselves. I felt we were not gaining enough from that arrangement and we as a Shire asked to have the meetings on an individual basis, and we have now had two meetings with DPAW and with Dan's research we have been able to prioritise mitigation work. I hope this will result in our shire being better protected from fires in UCL, UMR, and National Parks. I have reservations about how much will be achieved unless we as shire brigades get in and do some of these burns ourselves.

So, thank you to the Shire for your involvement over winter, thanks Janna and Dan. All captains and FCO positions are adequate. I think we go into summer well prepared in training, trucks ready to go, radios checked, PPE distributed. From this summer onwards there is no excuse for anyone turning up at a fire without the correct PPE and

an adequate level of training. I need to know if there's a problem and I will do my best to sort it out.

Here's to a good, safe harvest and summer period. Thank you.

Alex Jones

CBFCO Shire Of Jerramungup

Attachment 3

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES MANAGER REPORT – BFAC OCTOBER 2026	
Date of Report: 26 October 2026	**Report by: Janna Cheshire**
Key Activities	

Hello all,

1. **Volunteer Training / Community Information Sessions**

   Since the previous report, the following volunteer training and community information activities have been undertaken:

- Introductory Courses:
  - 22 August – Bushfire Safety Awareness, Bremer Bay
  - 23 August – Firefighting Skills, Bremer Bay
  - 24 September – Bushfire Safety Awareness, Jerramungup
  - 25 September – Firefighting Skills, Jerramungup
- DFES Regional Exercise: Held in Bremer Bay on 27 August.
- Bremer Bay Primary School: One information session and one evacuation exercise were undertaken with the school.
- Emergency WA App: Three community information sessions were delivered, with one held in Bremer Bay and two in Jerramungup.
- Pre-season Brigade Training: Training was held with Gairdner Bush Fire Brigade on 29 September and Boxwood Hill Bush Fire Brigade on 15 October 2026. Sessions included a refresher on the FireMapper application and basic burnover procedures.
- Seasonal Workers Fire Awareness Training: The annual session is scheduled for 28 October 2026 at the Jacup Bush Fire Brigade shed, commencing at 7.30am.
- Statewide DFES Exercise: Shire Fire Control Officers and executive officers have been invited to participate in the statewide DFES bushfire exercise on 16 October 2026, with activities being undertaken in Perth and Albany.

A big thank you to all volunteers who have supported these training activities and continued to take up opportunities to build their skills and preparedness.

2. **Fuel Cards**

   The annual fuel card initiative is being provided to all brigades again this year. Fuel cards will be posted to brigade captains for allocation and distribution to their volunteers.

3. **SOSF (High Season Appliances)**

   At this stage, the Shire has been allocated one SOSF appliance, being a 2.4 tanker to be located at Boxwood Hill. Delivery is currently being arranged, with exact dates yet to be confirmed.

4. **CESM Long Service Leave**

   I'll be away on long service leave from 17 December 2026 to 27 January 2027. While the timing couldn't be worse, I am looking forward to visiting family overseas and celebrating my dad's 80th birthday with him.

   Thanks to the Shire's proactive approach, Derek Jones, former DO Rural DFES Great Southern, will be based in Bremer Bay and on call from 27 December to 10 January, so please make him feel welcome. Outside this period, DFES Great Southern will provide incident support through normal channels as required.

Thanks everyone for all you do. Have a great and safe harvest and summer season.

Cheers

Janna

Attachment 4

Jerramungup BFAC

Operational update | 2026–27 bushfire season

MEETING DATE Monday, 26 October 2026 **PREPARED BY** DFES District Officer

01 State bushfire exercise

Superintendent Kinsella would like to thank Martin Cuthbert for attending the State Bushfire Exercise, and for his feedback and support. His involvement is appreciated.

02 Aerial firefighting resources

Current planned availability for the upcoming season is outlined below. Timings remain subject to operational confirmation.

Esperance grain harvest water bombers	Commence 1 November.
Albany water bombers	Available from the commencement of the High Threat Period (HTP), currently advised as the first Thursday in December.
Line scanner	Available from the start of the HTP, operating 1000–2200 hrs.
Large Air Tanker (LAT)	Available from the start of the HTP.

Requesting water bombers Requests should be directed to the RDC with the following details:

- Ground Controller name
- Call sign
- Mobile number (if available)
- Reason for request (e.g. asset protection or slowing forward rate of spread)

Radio communications: Water bomber channel VHF 517. Press F4 to activate Talk Around.

03 Townsite mitigation

All funding requested for townsite mitigation within the Shire of Jerramungup has been received this year. Works are expected to be completed over approximately the next month.

04 SOSF fleet – appliance deliveries

Boxwood Hill's appliance is expected shortly, with Bremer Bay to follow. Deliveries have been slower than anticipated because appliances are still required in northern WA during the ongoing fire season.

05 Volunteer training and capability

I would like to thank volunteers for the strong attendance at training courses so far this year. DFES will continue supporting training opportunities, including higher-level incident management courses where there is interest and availability.

06 Fire reports

Some outstanding fire reports are generating follow-up requests, particularly from community members who need the reports to progress insurance claims. Completing the paper report and forwarding it to the CESM for electronic entry can make a real difference to local residents and farmers waiting on payments.

07 Bremer Bay regional bushfire exercise

The regional bushfire exercise at Point Henry, Bremer Bay has now been completed successfully. I would like to thank everyone who participated and supported the exercise. It was a valuable opportunity to test local response arrangements and interagency coordination.

Why Completing Fire Reports Matters

This is not just paperwork - it helps local people progress insurance claims and recover sooner

When a fire occurs, the IRS fire report is not just paperwork. For some locals, it may be the document their insurer needs before a claim can progress.

What is happening

- DFES Reports is receiving more requests for completed fire reports.
- Many requests are being driven by community members and insurance claims.
- Incomplete reports can delay people getting paid after a fire.

This is about helping the people we already turn out to protect.

Why it matters on farms

- A fire may involve a header, ute, shed, fence line, crop, hay, machinery or power infrastructure.
- Insurance delays can leave a local person carrying the financial hit.
- That person may be a neighbour, a brigade member, or someone your brigade sees every season.

What we need from FCOs and brigades

- Complete the paper IRS/fire report as soon as practicable after the incident.
- Forward the completed report to the CESM for electronic entry.
- Record enough detail to identify the incident, location, property affected and likely cause where known.

What this avoids

- Repeated follow-up calls weeks after the incident.
- Extra work trying to reconstruct old information.
- Delays for local people who are trying to finalise claims and recover.

It also reflects the professionalism of local volunteer brigades.

Bottom line: if your brigade attends a fire, please complete the report and send it through promptly. It helps locals when they need it most.

AERIAL FIRE SUPPRESSION REQUEST FORM

1. PHONE: State Operations Air Desk of Request - *Primary contact*	**(08) 9414 7970 (24hrs)**
Secondary contact	**(08) 9395 9651**
Tertiary contact	**0400 207 400**
2. FAX: Fire Bombing Request Form ADF01 to Or **EMAIL** Fire Bombing request Form ADF01 to	**(08) 9414 7859** stateoperationsairdesk@dfes.wa.gov.au StateFirebombingDesk@dpaw.wa.gov.au

DATE	23/12/2021	TIME	1152	
REQUESTING OFFICER / AGENCY	Click here to enter text.	☐ DFES	☐ DPaW	
CONTROLLING AGENCY	☒ LGA	☐ DFES	☐ DPaW	
FIRE NAME / INCIDENT NUMBER	Click here to enter text.			
AUTOMATIC / MANAGED RESPOND	☐ Zone 2/2A (Perth Hills Response)	☐ I/O Zone (Capes Response)	☐ SWZR (Bunbury Response)	
GROUND CONTROLLER /CALL SIGN	Click here to enter text.			
FIRE BOMBING RADIO CHANNEL	Click here to enter text.			
LOCATION OF FIRE –map reference	Click here to enter text.			
FLIGHT HAZARDS (if known)	Click here to enter text.			
MUST BE COMPLETED INDICATE REQUESTING ACTIVATION CRITERIA	☐ Public Safety at Risk ☐ Fire Crews in Imminent Danger ☐ Assets at Imminent Risk ☐ Known high fuel loads and likelihood of excessive ROS and/or extreme fire danger			
PREFERRED RESOURCE	☐ Fixed Wing ☐ Helitak ☐ Both			
SAR ARRANGEMENTS	Click here to enter text.			
OPERATIONAL BASE ESTABLISHED	Click here to enter text.			
SOAD USE ONLY				
Air Desk Officer	Time Received	Action Taken		
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.		

Attachment 6

To those that this concerns

It has recently come to our attention, the locking of some strategic fire breaks on Point Henry Peninsula in Bremer Bay.

We, the Bremer Bay Fire and Emergency Services would like to express our agitation at this decision.

First of all because Its not hard to imagine a situation where this action could put lives in danger and secondly, we find it incredible that we, a major stakeholder and some of the most affected by this decision, were not consulted prior to its implementation.

The purpose of this letter is to convince you to reconsider and rectify this issue.

The strategic breaks were not actually part of the original subdivision but rather, a response to the 2002 bushfires that ravaged the peninsula and ran into town. The idea of them is not so much a bare earth break, but a low fuel access during an emergency situation. The breaks were locked up initially to prevent unwanted access as most of them traverse private property. In a demonstration of the absurdity of the decision to lock emergency access ways, the fire chief at the time cut all the locks off. Discussions ensued and the logical conclusion settled on was; Yes, you may put up a chain and/or a private property sign if you wish but the chain must not be locked so as not to prevent first responders access and not to inhibit the potential escape route of those responders, emergency services personnel, local land owners and anyone else in an emergency.

Times have changed. There are more and more people visiting and residing on the point and there have been numerous complaints of people using these access with motorbikes, buggys and 4wds with little regard for the people it effects via noise and erosion including the owners of the private property and the neighbours adjoining these properties. Also, mismanagement of the surface can cause problems for emergency responders and/or for the contractors who maintain the breaks.

The shire it would seem, have seeked to rectify these qualms by locking numerous brakes adding to the couple recently locked by the landowners themselves.

From an emergency service perspective this action is senseless. A rare and expensive shire key in every fire truck and one with the ranger wont cut it. There are too many people affected by these locks. Are we to provide every affected landowner a key to their emergency escape route? And every emergency service personnel and therefore potential first responder a key? There are too many potential first responders and therefore the practice of locking emergency access is inherently dangerous. It has the very real potential to be a deadly decision.

The simple solution here would be to revert to the original idea and of course we are open to improvements. Put up a chain if you like. Label it with emergency access only where applicable, but leave them unlocked.

If some unauthorised person should trespass on this private property, then they had to physically remove the chain to do so and is therefore liable to prosecution where necessary.

In conclusion, this organisation would like to see the removal of all locks, both public and private, from all emergency access ways on the Point Henry peninsula in an effort to ensure our ability to (safely) rapidly inspect and suppress points of ignition and to prevent a possible tragedy.

Sincerely

Stacey Francis

Fire control Officer and Point Henry strategic break owner on behalf of the Bremer Bay Fire and Emergency Services