

ATTACHMENT**9.16.2 Unconfirmed Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) Meeting held 22 March 2023**

PROPONENT	Shire of Manjimup
OWNER	Shire of Manjimup
LOCATION / ADDRESS:	Whole of shire
WARD:	All
ZONE:	All
DIRECTORATE:	Development and Regulation
FILE REFERENCE:	F170451
LEGISLATION:	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Bush Fires Act 1954</i>
AUTHOR:	Nicole Favero
DATE OF REPORT:	6 April 2023
DECLARATION OF INTEREST:	Nil

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee is to represent Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades within the Shire and to make recommendations to Council on various matters relating to bushfire, including, but not limited to budgets, management of the Bushfire organisations and implementation of Council's Fire Protection Strategy.

At its latest meeting the Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) passed several recommendations relating to the amalgamation of four Bush Fire Brigades and the *Shire of Manjimup Bush Fire Brigade Local Laws 2023*.

The purpose of this report is to present the unconfirmed minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) meeting held on 22 March 2023, as attached, for Council consideration.

ATTACHMENT: 9.16.2 (1)

Council is requested to consider those motions passed by the Committee, as detailed in the comment section below.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN:

The proposed amalgamations of the subject brigades were advertised in the Manjimup Bridgetown Times for public comment in 8 February 2023, allowing residents in all effected Brigade areas to comment by the 1 March 2023. No comments were received from members of the public.

All Brigades involved have met on several occasions over the past 12 months and all are in favour of the amalgamations as reflected in their AGMs.

COMMENT (Includes Options):

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee resolved to support five recommendations, three requiring a formal decision of Council, with one of these presented in a

separate agenda item at Council meeting on 13 April 2023. The resolutions passed at the meeting are reflected within Table 1 and detailed below:

Table 1.	
Bush Fire Advisory Committee Resolutions	Officers Comments
That the unconfirmed minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held Wednesday, 7 December 2022 be confirmed as a true and correct record.	The BFAC resolution is noted.
That Council approve the amalgamation of Linfarne and Ringbarkers Bush Fire Brigades and name that brigade Ringbarkers.	The BFAC resolution is supported. Refer to comment section below.
That Council approve the amalgamation of all remaining Northcliffe Bush Fire Brigades and name that brigade Northcliffe.	The BFAC resolution is supported. Refer to comment section below.
That Council accept the <i>Shire of Manjimup Bush Fire Brigade Local Laws 2023</i> and proceed with the legal requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> in implementation.	The BFAC resolution is supported. A separate agenda item has been prepared and was presented at Council 13 April 2023 meeting.
That the Community Emergency Services Manager inspect all the Brigade/Shire owned Slip-on units on the Shire of Manjimup asset list and place a full report to BFAC in July.	The BFAC resolution is supported. No action required. Administration to inspect Brigade/Shire owned slip-on units and report to BFAC in July.

Amalgamation of all remaining Northcliffe Bush Fire Brigades

In 2022 the BFAC administration approached the Northcliffe Bush Fire Brigade over the potential amalgamation with the remaining non operational Northcliffe brigades. As these brigades have no members/committees or structure and are no longer operational, this is purely for administration purposes to clarify the brigade boundaries and simplify the name of all to Northcliffe Bush Fire Brigade. This was voted on at the 2022 AGM to support this.

The Northcliffe Bush Fire Brigade has been performing as the primary responders for the remaining Northcliffe brigade areas. It has also for many years supplied a Fire Control Officer for permit writing and on ground leadership in the event that a fire response is required in these areas.

As documented within Table 1, BFAC has resolved to request that Council approve the merger of all remaining brigades within the Northcliffe

boundaries, with the amalgamated brigades to be named Northcliffe Bush Fire Brigade.

Given the inactive nature of the remaining Brigades, the proposed amalgamation is supported.

Amalgamation of Linfarne and Ringbarkers Bush Fire Brigades

In 2022 Linfarne and Ringbarkers Bush Fire Brigades approached the Bush Fire Advisory Committee with a formal request to commence the process of amalgamating the two Brigades. This followed after discussion and formal approval by both the Linfarne Bush Fire Brigade at their 2021 AGM and then the Ringbarkers Bush Fire Brigade at their 2022 AGM.

The Linfarne Bush Fire Brigade has relied upon Ringbarkers for suppression activities. Whilst Ringbarkers has a strong membership and leadership group, Linfarne has limited numbers to respond to an incident within the Brigade area. Linfarne has a long standing Fire Control Officer, however as stated above, a very small active Brigade membership.

As documented within Table 1, BFAC has resolved to request Council approve of the amalgamation of Linfarne and Ringbarkers Bush Fire Brigades, with the new brigade to be known as Ringbarkers Bush Fire Brigade.

Given the issues associated with the Linfarne Bush Fire Brigade having limited numbers of volunteers for many years, it is recommended that the amalgamation be supported.

Shire of Manjimup Bush Fire Brigade Local Laws 2023

As reflected above in Table 1, the *Shire of Manjimup Bush Fire Brigade Local Laws 2023* was presented to Council in a separate Agenda item on 13 April 2023.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT:

Local Governments are responsible for the formation, maintenance and administration of Bush Fire Brigades in accordance with the *Bush Fires Act 1954*. The Bush Fire Advisory Committee is established in accordance with Section 67 of the *Bush Fires Act 1954* and provisions of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

POLICY / STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:

The brigade amalgamations as proposed reflect the desires of each of the Bush Fire Brigades involved and is consistent with the following Community Goals and Strategies as contained within Shire of Manjimup Strategic Community Plan 2021 – 2031.

Community Goals

3.5 *Our whole community participates in strategies to ensure we are minimising risk in regards to bushfire and other natural emergencies.*

Strategies

C2 *Support volunteer community groups, encourage participation (particularly in the areas of emergency management) and acknowledge contributions to the community.*

C14 Plan for emergency and natural disaster response, management, evacuation and recovery.

ORGANISATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT:

The proposed brigade amalgamations pose no risk to the organisation or the community. The newly amalgamated Brigades will operate pursuant to “Normal Brigade Activities” as stated in the *Bush Fires Act 1954* and in accordance with the *Shire of Manjimup Bush Fire Brigade Operational Procedures 2022 – 2027*.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The administration cost associated with maintaining Bush Fire Brigades should experience a minor decrease as the number of Brigades will reduce from twenty (20) to eighteen (18).

SUSTAINABILITY:

Environmental: Fire has the potential to decimate the natural and built environment if preventative and operational bushfire strategies are not adequate. A well organised, structured and resourced Bush Fire Brigade will have the ability to respond to wildfire incidents in a timely manner, reducing the impact on the local environment and community.

Economic: The economic consequence of fire can be devastating. Ensuring community preparedness and responding to wildfires in a timely manner will reduce the economic cost associated with response, recovery and damage created by large wildfires.

Social: The social consequence of fire can also be devastating to individuals and the community.

VOTING REQUIREMENTS: SIMPLE MAJORITY

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 1. Receive and note the unconfirmed minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting held on the 22 March 2023 as contained in ATTACHMENT: 9.16.2:(1)**
- 2. Approve the amalgamation of Linfarne and Ringbarkers Bush Fire Brigades and name that brigade Ringbarkers Bush Fire Brigade; and**
- 3. Approve the amalgamation of all remaining Northcliffe Bush Fire Brigades and name that brigade Northcliffe Bush Fire Brigade.**

ATTACHMENTS

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Ordinary Meeting

COUNCIL RESOLUTION:

MOVED: Dawson Vidovich, S SECONDED: Jenkins, D

29125

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ADOPTED BY EN BLOC RESOLUTION: 10/0