

1.1 Bushfire

Policy Owner	Administration
Person Responsible	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Date of Adoption	217 November 2005 – 181105
Date of Last Review	27 July 2022 – Resolution 060722
Date next due for Review	3 years / or earlier if required

OBJECTIVE

To promote the establishment and maintenance of a bush fire organisation in accordance with part IV of the *Bush Fires Act 1954* in order to provide adequate fire protection of those areas of Wongan-Ballidu Shire within the Bush Fire District and to carry out an ongoing program of hazard reduction having due regard at all times for the preservation of the natural environment.

POLICY

See appendix

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Executive Officer are responsible for the implementation of this Policy.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The policy of the Council of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu is to promote the establishment and maintenance of a bush fire organization in accordance with part IV of the *Bush Fires Act 1954* in order to provide adequate fire protection of those areas of Wongan-Ballidu Shire within the Bush Fire District and to carry out an ongoing program of hazard reduction having due regard at all times for the preservation of the natural environment.

This policy may be reviewed as required.

2. POLICY CONTENTS

2.1. INTERPRETATION

- 2.1.1. Chief Executive Officer – is the Chief Executive Officer of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu
- 2.1.2. DCEO/ Manager, Administration & Financial Services – is the DCEO/Manager, Administration & Financial Services of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu
- 2.1.3. Manager Works and Services – is the Manager of Work and Services of the Shire

2.2. WONGAN-BALLIDU BUSHFIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Council may form a Committee of Council in accordance with section 5.8 of the *Local Government Act 1995* to administer Council's Policies on matters relating to bush fire prevention, control and

extinguishment.

OR,

Council may form a Bushfire Advisory Committee to administer Council's Policies on matters relating to bush fire prevention, control and extinguishment, as provided by Section 67 of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*.

2.3. ADMINISTRATION

- a) The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu shall promote the requirement of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*.
- b) The Wongan-Ballidu Bushfire Advisory Committee will be responsible for administering the provisions of the *Bush Fires Act 1954* where applicable and the Shire Bush Fire Policy.
- c) The Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer or in his/her absence the DCEO/Manager, Administration & Financial Services or in his/her absence the Manager Works & Services upon request from the Officer-In-Charge of the Bush Fire to: -
 - Call out or authorise the use of Shire vehicles, plant and equipment other than that normally used exclusively for firefighting or control.
 - Hire or use, or authorise the hire or use of privately owned vehicles plant or equipment or expend monies from the Municipal Fund to a maximum cost that will from time to time be determined by Council.
- d) The Shire President may expend funds in an emergency in accordance with Section 6.8 (1) (c) *Local Government Act 1995*

Infringement Notices

Only persons authorised to do so by the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu may issue Infringement Notices for Offences under the *Bush Fires Act 1954* and that authority once given, shall remain in force until such time as it is revoked by the Shire.

Firebreak Orders

The Council will forward a copy of its Firebreak Order no later than August 31 each year to all owners and occupiers of land within its district.

After October 13 an Infringement Notice carrying a penalty as per section 33 of the Bush Fires Act 1954 may be served on owners or occupiers of land who have not complied with the Shire's firebreak requirements and compulsory firebreaks may be installed at the owners or occupiers' expense.

Fire Occurrence Statistics

The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer will submit fire reports on the forms provided by Council, to the Manager, Administration & Financial Services and to the Bush Fires Board District Liaison Officer as soon as possible.

2.4. BUSHFIRE CONTROL

2.4.1. Roadside Burning

Persons wishing to carry out roadside burning on roads under Council control must make application to the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu. Upon application an inspection will be carried out by the Manager Works & Services, the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or the area Bush Fire Control Officer and the applicant. A permit may then only be issued by the area Bush Fire Control Officer.

All roadside burns are to be the direct responsibility of the Bush Fire Brigade or Bush Fire Control Officer in the area.

Signs indicating "Roadside Burning Ahead" are to be erected at both ends of the controlled burn. Approval to burn on Main Roads controlled roads is to be given only after consultation between the Main Roads and the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu.

2.4.2. Prohibited and Restricted Burning Times

Restricted Burning Periods

The restricted burning periods within the Shire are normally:

October 13 to November 14

February 14 to March 31

Prohibited Burning Periods

The prohibited burning period within the Shire is normally:

November 15 to February 13

Variations to either prohibited or restricted burning times or conditions may be authorised by the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu. In addition to the statutory requirements of Sections 17 and 18 of the *Bush Fires Act 1954* the Chief Executive Officer shall notify the Bush Fire Control Officers of any such variations as well as advising the public through 6AM Northam and ABC Regional Radio.

2.4.3. Burning of Rubbish Tips

Council rubbish tips are located at;

1. Wongan Hills Reserve 41244 Wongan Hills Koorda Rd
2. Ballidu Reserve 28108 Ranger Rd
3. Cadoux Freehold Lot 1 of Location Number 3868

2.4.4. Fire Prevention at Tips

- a) A perimeter strip of 20 metres to be cleared around the areas of rubbish by spraying or other suitable method prior to the prohibited burning period each year.
- b) To minimise fire danger during summer, firing of the rubbish areas is to be carried out prior to the prohibited burning period each year.

2.4.5. Burning During Prohibited Burning Time

- a) Rubbish tips should not be burnt during this time except in cases of absolute necessity.
- b) On these occasions Ministerial exemption as required under Section 25D of the Bush Fires Act 1954 should be obtained.
- c) Fires started by accident, vandals or internal combustion should be extinguished and/or made safe as quickly as possible.

2.4.6. Burning at Other Times

Rubbish tips to be burnt only when conditions are suitable. Sufficient firefighting personnel, including a Bush Fire Control Officer to be on hand until the fire is under control.

2.4.7. Prosecutions and Fire Reports

Bush Fire Control Officers may recommend prosecution when submitting Fire Reports, in the knowledge that they will be called upon to give evidence.

2.4.8. Firebreaks

The Chief Executive Officer or the relevant Bush Fire Control Officer is authorised to approve or reject applications from landowners for reasonable extensions of time in which firebreaks are to be provided and to approve or reject requests for approval to provide firebreaks in alternative positions. The Chief Executive Officer is to be advised in writing of the approval to provide fire breaks in an alternative position.

Bush Fire Control Officers may notify the Chief Executive Officer or Chief Bush Fire Control Officer when it has been observed that fire breaks have not been constructed in accordance with Council's Firebreak Order.

2.4.9. Burning Off

Sunday Burning – Burning of bush is not permitted on any Sunday occurring during the Restricted or Prohibited Burning Times.

Public Holidays – Burning of Bush is not permitted to be carried out on any Public Holiday occurring during the Restricted or Prohibited Burning Times.

Permits to Burn Bush

- Bush Fire Control Officers to issue permits for their brigade areas.
- Permits to burn are for a maximum of twenty-one (21) days only.

2.4.10. Hazard Reduction Operations

All hazard reduction operations undertaken by a Bush Fire Brigade shall be authorised by the Shire.

2.4.11. Movement Bans

Movement bans to cover the whole Shire are to be imposed by the Manager, Administration & Financial Services or Chief Bush Fire Control Officer after phone calls or two-way radio contact with Bush Fire Control Officers to obtain consensus of opinion. The rural section of the ABC and 6AM Northam Radio are to be advised for broadcasting to the public.

Text messaging using Telstra Desktop messaging will be sent to all persons who have nominated to be on the harvest contact list.

Harvesting on Sundays and Public Holidays – Harvesting is permitted on all Sundays and Public Holidays other than Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day, except where a movement ban is imposed due to extreme weather conditions. This ban takes precedence at all times.

2.4.12. Fire Fighting Equipment

The Shire may provide and maintain firefighting appliances and equipment pursuant to the powers conferred under Section 36 of the Bush Fires Act 1954.

Maintenance and repair of all Shire owned appliance will be the responsibility of Council.

All replacement parts or equipment for Shire owned appliances will be purchased on an Official Council Order.

Any damage to Shire appliances or equipment shall be reported to Council as soon as practicable after the damage has occurred.

The Council will be responsible for maintaining Shire owned fire-fighting appliances in a roadworthy condition.

The Bush Fire Brigade is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the battery, tyres, water, oil and fuel of the Shire Fire Fighting appliance are checked regularly.
- Firefighting appliances allocated to Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades will be stationed at the Brigade Headquarters or other location nominated in writing by the Brigade and agreed to by the Chief Executive Officer.
- No Shire fire-fighting appliance shall be relocated from the Brigade Headquarters or other nominated location by any persons without the Brigade Captain or another Officer of the Brigade being advised in writing of the intended location of appliances.

The Brigade will at all times keep the Manager, Administration & Financial Services informed of any changes of the day-to-day location and operational status of the brigade appliances.

The driver of any Shire firefighting appliances will hold a current driver's license of the class appropriate for the appliance being driven and be either:

- a) A Council employee
- b) A registered member of the Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
- c) Any persons authorised by the Chief Executive Officer or Bush Fire Control Officer to do so.

The driver of a Shire firefighting appliance shall at all times observe the provisions of the Road Traffic Code, in particular those applying to emergency vehicles.

2.4.13. SAFETY CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

The Shire will seek to ensure that fire fighters wear protective clothing as recommended by the FESA Standard Operating Procedures.

2.4.14. COMMUNICATIONS

An efficient two-way radio network will be progressively established and maintained for firefighting communications as recommended by FESA.

2.4.15. INSURANCES

The Shire will obtain and keep a policy of insurance for fire fighters and equipment as provided pursuant to Section 37 of the Bush Fires Act 1954, which will cover personnel, equipment and vehicles whilst engaged on authorised activities.

2.4.16. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Standard Operating Procedures as prepared and amended from time to time by the FESA and as adopted by Council forms part of this Policy Document.

2.4.17. POLICY ON SAFETY AND HEALTH IN RELATION TO VOLUNTEER BUSH FIRE FIGHTERS

The Council of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu recognises the extremely valuable contribution to the community by the Bush Fire Volunteers.

It is the policy of Council to ensure that Bush Fire Volunteers are provided with safe working equipment, the safest work system practical, and to minimise the frequency of accidents and injury. Council recognises that both the Shire and Bush Fire Volunteers have a responsibility for safety and health.

3. COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

Through Council's Bushfire Advisory Committee all practical efforts will be made to:

- Instruct Bush Fire Volunteers in safe working practices.
- Ensure that Brigade owned equipment is in a safe working order.
- Require the use of a proper standard of protective clothing and equipment appropriate to the task.
- Ensure that volunteers have ready access to first aid facilities.
- Investigate accidents and possible safety and health risk and take appropriate remedial action.
- Provide a mechanism for joint Shire/FESA/Volunteer consultation on safety matters.
- Review the effectiveness of Bush Fire Volunteer training, safety and health policies as necessary.

4. VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To maintain a reasonable standard of physical fitness.
2. To acquaint themselves with safe working procedures.
3. To identify safety and health hazards and report these to senior officers.
4. To observe safe working procedures and avoid unnecessary risks and be responsible for their own safety.
5. To ensure that they dress appropriately for firefighting and make proper use of personal protective equipment whenever necessary and when required to do so.

Council acknowledges that the occupational risks inherent in firefighting and other emergency duties undertaken by Bush Fire Volunteers are significant and the possibility of serious injury is high. Strict adherence to safety guidelines and procedures in these circumstances is not always possible, however, it is the intention of Council to develop and implement safety and training policies to minimise the occurrence of injury to Bush Fire Volunteers, both on the fire ground and in the performance of all other duties.

5. RESPONSE TO HAZARDOUS MATERIAL FIRES

IT CANNOT BE STRESSED TOO STRONGLY THAT TO ACT WITHOUT SPECIALIST ADVICE IS DANGEROUS.

Priorities for Action:

1. Dial 000 – enact Fire and Rescue

2. To provide an initial report of the incident to the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu.
3. To extinguish bush fires that are associated with the incident if it is safe to do so.
4. To assist the Police where possible to render the situation safe.
5. To provide fire protection in the recovery phase. To provide a fire report on the incident at the conclusion.

Reports are important and must be furnished without delay so that specialist advice on how the incident must be handled with safety can be obtained.

Reports must contain information of the location of the fire, volume and direction of the smoke plume, suspected hazardous material involved and details of firefighting equipment available on site.

Reports must be made to the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu who will pass the information to the Police (who will assume control of the incident) to the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board and the Department of Environmental Protection (who will provide specialist advice) and to the Bush Fires Board Perth (who will arrange firefighting support as required).

EACH FIRE IS A SEPARATE EVENT TO BE JUDGED ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SURROUND IT. THEREFORE, EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL HELP SHOULD ALWAYS BE SOUGHT AT AN EARLY STAGE TO ENSURE A SAFE AND PROPER RESPONSE.

6. BRIGADE STRUCTURE

6.1. Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

A Chief Bush Fire Control Officer has the following specific functions:

- a) to ensure the Advisory Committee prepares and maintains an Incident Response Plan
- b) to ensure that in the event of a fire or emergency requiring a multi brigade response –
 - i. forward command in the field is established
 - ii. subject to the Act and the direction of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu, co-ordination and control of the operations of the Brigades is taking place
 - iii. persons who volunteer to assist in fighting the fire or dealing with the emergency are properly tasked
 - iv. liaison with other Chief Bush Fire Control Officers in adjacent areas and any other relevant Officer is occurring
- c) manage, control and co-ordinate all the operations, training and activities of the Brigades in accordance with the powers and duties of the Act, Standard Operations Procedures, this Constitution and directions, guidelines and policies of the Shire and Board.
- d) Act as official spokesperson for and on behalf of the Advisory Committee and Brigades.

6.2. Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

A Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer must assist the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer in the performance of his or her functions and in the absence of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer shall assume the functions and responsibilities of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.

6.3. Training Officer

A Training Officer manages the Brigades Training Programs and is responsible subject to the control and direction of the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer for the following specific functions:

- a) to prepare annual training plan for the Brigades and to organise regular training sessions and exercises, to test individual Brigade and combined brigades' performance and encourage co-operation with fire-fighters with other services and emergency operations.
- b) to ensure that members of the Brigades are:
 - i. trained in accordance with courses approved by the Fire & Emergency Services Authority;
 - ii. assessed to standards approved by the Fire & Emergency Services Authority.
- c) to encourage members of the Brigades to become qualified volunteer instructors.
- d) to represent the Shire at any meeting of training officers held on a regional basis.
- e) to undertake any function assigned by the Shire.

6.4. Administration Officer

A Group Administration Officer is the DCEO/Manager Administration & Financial Services or other nominated person and is responsible subject to the control and direction of the Chief Executive Officer for the following specific functions:

- a) to organise any meeting of the Advisory Committee
- b) to give notice of any meeting to the Advisory Committee members
- c) to prepare an agenda and take minutes for any meeting of the Advisory Committee
- d) to keep Advisory Committee records and to send and receive Advisory Committee correspondence.
- e) to disseminate information to Brigades.
- f) to manage the financial affairs of the Advisory Committee.
- g) to keep financial records in accordance with the ESL requirements.
- h) to liaise with the Administrative Officers of the Brigades in the Group.
- i) to undertake any other function assigned by the Chief Executive Officer.

6.5. Bush Fire Control Officer

The Bush Fire Control Officer is a person who has been nominated by their Brigade through the Advisory Committee and appointed by Council.

The appointment must be notified to the Fire & Emergency Services Authority for publication. The Shire will arrange publication in the Government Gazette and in a newspaper circulating in the Shire.

He / She has wide powers and is not liable for any damage, loss or injury caused as a result of the exercise of these powers, provided they are carried out in good faith.

He / She is a voluntary worker who gives his / her time in furthering the aims of fire prevention and control within the Shire.

The only reward is the satisfaction gained in performing a service of the greatest importance to

the individual and community.

His / her duties vary considerably from time to time, but the following is an outline of the duties he / she may be expected to carry out:

- a) to attend Advisory Committee meetings as necessary and participate in the formulation of Policies.
- b) to carry out inspections of firebreaks in his Brigade area and advise the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or Chief Executive Officer of any non-compliance with the Firebreak Order.
- c) to prevent bush fires and protect life and property in the case of an outbreak of a bush fire.
- d) to demand the name and address of any person committing an offence against the Act and to report such action to the Chief Executive Officer. Any persons refusing to give his name to a Bush Fire Control Officer may be arrested without warrant, under Section 56(2) of the Bush Fires Act 1954.
- e) to notify the Shire Office of the details of a permit to burn as soon as practical after issuing the permit.
- f) to undertake other Bush Fire Control related matters as directed by Council.
- g) issue permits in accordance with the Bush Fire Act 1954.

6.6. Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades

Bush Fire Brigades may be established and maintained in the various fire areas providing proper and adequate fire protection.

- a) the Shire will encourage members of the Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades to participate in training programmes offered by the Shire and the Fire & Emergency Services Authority.
- b) the Manager, Administration & Financial Services is authorised to approve and record applications for enrolments as Fire Fighting Members, without reference to the Group Fire Management Advisory Committee.

7. BRIGADE STRUCTURE

7.1. Bush Fire Brigade Officers

7.1.1. The Captain

- a) is in charge of all fire fighters and members of his or her Brigade.
- b) will obey all lawful directions of the Chief Fire Control Officer on a fire ground.
- c) is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of all personnel under his control when involved in any Bush Fires activities.
- d) is responsible for the co-ordination of Brigade Resources in fire related matters.
- e) needs to be aware of the Brigades area of responsibility, high-risk areas, firebreaks access, water supplies and major landowners.
- f) needs to be aware of the Brigade members skills and abilities and be able to co-ordinate these skills and abilities.
- g) Shall have the ability to liaise with adjoining Brigades and ensure best use of the Brigade and its resources.
- h) May be required to assume the duties and responsibilities of a Bush Fire Control Officer in the absence of the Bush Fire Control Officer.

7.2. Lieutenants

- a) Are responsible for the crew and fire equipment in their charge.

- b) Will assume the duties and responsibilities of the Captain in order of seniority in the Captain's absence.
- c) Will carry out instructions given by the Captain
- d) Will carry out instructions given by Bush Fire Control Officer in the absence of the Captain on a Fire Ground.
- e) Will ensure the crew act in a safe manner to minimise danger.

7.3. Fire Fighters

- a) Training for Brigade members engaged in fire suppression, hazard reduction or any authorised activity must be in accordance with Brigades constitution /objectives and Shire of Wongan-Ballidu Bush Fire Policy.
- b) Brigade members are to ensure that they are physically fit carry out the tasks allocated to them and their actions will not jeopardise the safety of fellow members.
- c) As far as possible Brigade members are to carry out any instructions given by the Captain, Lieutenants or on a fire ground a Bush Fire Brigade Officer
- d) Brigade members make a valuable contribution to the Brigade and the community and need to have a commitment to Local and District Fire Protection.
- e) Brigade members should acquaint themselves with Council's Bush Fire Policy and Protection Plans.

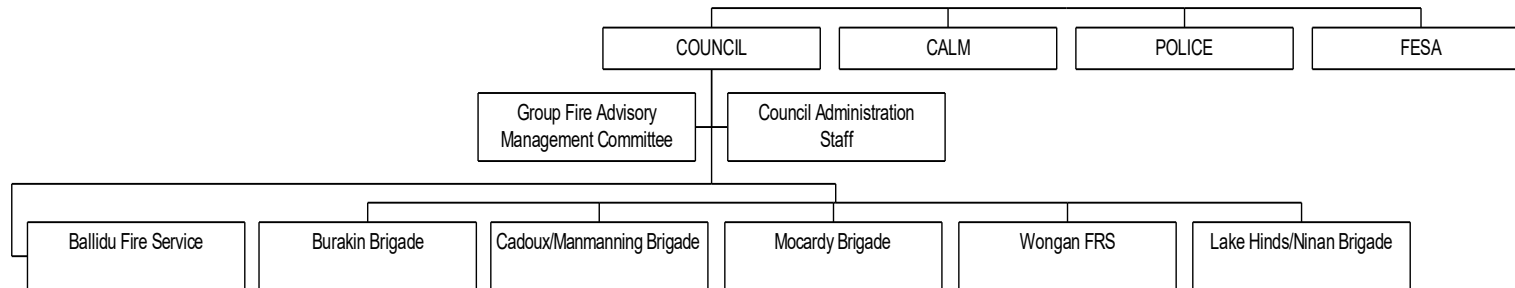
REVIEW

Reviews of this policy are to be undertaken every 3 years or earlier if required.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for implementing this policy.

OPERATION FLOW CHART – BUSH FIRE SERVICES IN THE SHIRE



ACTION CARD 1

SHIRE OF WONGAN-BALLIDU

ACTION PROCEDURES DURING WORKING HOURS

1. Shire Office is to be notified of the fire by a responsible Brigade or person.
2. Where possible at least two Brigade members are to proceed to the scene of the fire. The Senior Brigade Member is responsible for the safety of his crew.
3. Assess situation and report to Shire Office on:

Telephone:(08) 9671 1011

Facsimile: (08) 9671 1230

Bush Fire Radio: Channel 36

Manager Works & Services: 0439 469 014

4. If the size and potential of the fire requires more than one Brigade, the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (or his Deputy) has a procedure to follow. (See Action Card 4)
 - a. If an "extreme" or "very high" fire danger forecast has been issued for the district, then advise DFES Northam on:

Telephone: (08) 9690 2300

Facsimile: 1800 207 627 (toll free)

ACTION CARD 2

SHIRE OF WONGAN-BALLIDU

AFTER HOURS FIRE CALL OUT PROCEDURES

To be developed

ACTION CARD 3

SHIRE OF WONGAN-BALLIDU

FIRE CONTROL HEADQUARTERS (SHIRE OFFICE)

ACTION PROCEDURES

In a large fire situation, the Manager, Administration & Financial Services or the person nominated by the Manager Administration & Financial Services (in their absence) will activate fire control headquarters at the Shire Office or alternative suitable base and:

1. Inform the Brigades, implement call-out procedures.
2. Inform the Chief Executive Officer
3. Inform adjoining Local Authorities as necessary.
4. Inform WA Police, Wongan Hills as necessary.
5. Inform DFES Northam Duty Officer on
6. Telephone: 1800 207 627 24 hrs/day in fire season as necessary
7. Inform involved Government bodies as necessary.
8. Maintain his radio on Channel.

SUPPLY

1. Obtain list of requirements for mutual aid or reinforcements
2. Obtain and dispatch resources according to priorities.
3. Provide feeding and general welfare as required.
4. Contact by telephone:

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Maintain communications by best available means, e.g., Telephone or radio at fire face.

ACTION CARD 4

SHIRE OF WONGAN-BALLIDU

DEPUTIES OF CHIEF/DEPUTY BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER

ACTION PROCEDURES

1. CONTROL

- 1.1 Co-ordinate and control operations from base when necessary
- 1.2 Take charge of the fire situation if necessary
- 1.3 Establish a control and communication point at or near the fire, ensure establishment of assembly area for incoming assistance.
- 1.4 Arrange for reconnaissance to be carried out and access PRIORITIES and decide tactics.
- 1.5 Allocate sectors of responsibility, brief and allocate resources as required to sectors.
- 1.6 Forecast fire spread and assess the potential needs, request mutual aid.
- 1.7 Roster relief personnel