

# Chittering Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, 10 March 2026

To be held at Council Chambers, 6177 Great Northern Highway, Bindoon  
Commencement: 7:00PM      Closure: 8:12PM

## MEMBERSHIP

Members	Proxy
<b>Shire of Chittering Councillor</b> Cr David Dewar	<b>Shire of Chittering Councillor</b> Cr Rebecca Foulkes-Taylor
<b>Chief Executive Officer</b> Melinda Prinsloo	Nil
<b>Chief Bush Fire Control Officer</b> Nathan Manning	Nil
<b>Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer</b> Graham Furlong	
<b>Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Northern Region</b> Kim Haeusler	Nil
<b>Bindoon Brigade representative</b> Neil Harvey	<b>Bindoon Brigade representative</b> Dennis Badcock
<b>Lower Chittering Brigade representative</b> Daniel Bates	<b>Lower Chittering Brigade representative</b>
<b>Muchea Brigade representative</b> Shelly Pannell	<b>Muchea Brigade representative</b> James Marotta
<b>Upper Chittering Brigade representative</b> Aaron Cover	<b>Upper Chittering Brigade representative</b> Will Lee
<b>Wannamal Brigade representative</b> Clayton Smith	<b>Wannamal Brigade representative</b> Daniel Smith
<b>Chittering Incident Support Brigade representative</b> Paul Groves	<b>Chittering Incident Support Brigade representative</b> Ian Wright

### Objectives

To make recommendations and advise Council on all matters relating to the Bush Fires Act 1954, Section 67(1).

To liaise with other emergency organisations and relevant bodies with regard to Fire and Emergency Management within the Shire of Chittering. The Committee will advise the local government all matters relating to:

- (a) Preventing, controlling and extinguishing of bush fires
- (b) The planning of the layout of firebreaks in the district
- (c) Prosecutions for breaches of the Bush Fire Act 1954
- (d) The formation of bush fire brigades and the grouping thereof under group brigade officers
- (e) The ensuring of co-operation and co-ordination of bush fire brigades in their efforts and activities
- (f) Any other matter relating to bush fire control whether of the same kind, as, or a different kind from, those specified.

### Tenure of Membership

Shall be in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995, Section 5.11*.

### Attendance by Government Agencies

The following are invited (non-voting) to attend meetings of the CBFAC:

- (a) DFES District Officer – North East Metropolitan
- (b) Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions / Parks and Wildlife Service

### Authority

Nil

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**Preface**

When the Chief Executive Officer approves these Minutes for distribution they are in essence “*Unconfirmed*” until the following Ordinary Meeting of Council, where the minutes will be confirmed subject to any amendments.

The “*Confirmed*” Minutes are then signed off by the Presiding Member.

Attachments that formed part of the agenda, in addition to those tabled at the Ordinary Meeting of Council are put together as an addendum to these Minutes.

**Unconfirmed Minutes**

These minutes were approved for distribution on 13 March 2026.



**Confirmed Minutes**

These minutes were confirmed at a meeting held on 14 July 2026.

Signed .....

*Note: The Presiding Member at the meeting at which the minutes were confirmed is the person who signs above.*

## 1. DECLARATION OF OPENING OF MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS OF VISITORS

The Chairperson declared the meeting open at 7:00PM.

*Good evening ladies and gentlemen, we wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land within the Shire of Chittering, the Yued and Whadjuk peoples. We would like to pay respect to the Elders of the Nyoongar nation, past and present, who have walked and cared for the land, we acknowledge and respect their continuing culture, and the contributions made to this region.*

## 2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES / APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

### 2.1 Attendance

The following members have confirmed their attendance (Quorum – 6 Members):

Members:	Cr David Dewar	Council Member (Chairperson)
	Melinda Prinsloo	Chief Executive Officer
	Aaron Cover	Upper Chittering Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
	Shelly Pannell	Muchea Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
	Paul Groves	Chittering Incident Support Brigade
	James Marotta	Muchea Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
	Dennis Badcock	Bindoon Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
	Kim Haeusler	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer – North
	Daniel Smith	Wannamal Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
	Neil Harvey	Bindoon Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
	Graham Furlong	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
	Don Jamieson	Lower Chittering Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
	Will Lee	Upper Chittering Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

Observers:	Jesse Greenwood	Parks & Wildlife - Swan Coastal District
	Bruce White	Bindoon Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

Minute Secretary:

Jodie Connell

### 2.2 Apologies

Cr Rebecca Foulkes-Taylor	Councillor
Nathan Manning	Community Emergency Services Chief Bushfire Control Officer
Shaun Champ	DFES District Officer – North East Metropolitan

### 2.3 Approved leave of absence

Nil

### 3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Nil

### 4. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

#### 4.1 Chittering Bushfire Advisory Committee meeting: 9 October 2025

##### 4.1 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Moved Shelly Pannell / Seconded Aaron Cover

That the minutes of the Chittering Bushfire Advisory Committee meeting held on Thursday, 9 October 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### 5. REPORTS

#### 5.1 Community Emergency Services Manager / Chief Bushfire Control Officer

In Nathan Mannings's absence, a copy of his email and attachments were circulated in hard copy to the Committee.

Melinda Prinsloo referred to the first point on Nathan's report regarding the extension of the Prohibited Burning Time for an additional 14 days. Melinda requested that the members present consider this matter and to send feedback to Nathan by the end of the week, Friday 13 March 2026.

#### 5.2 DFES District Officer – North East Metropolitan

Shaun Champ's report will be circulated to the Committee when received.

#### 5.3 Chief Executive Officer

Melinda Prinsloo spoke to the following:

- Thanks were given to the brigades and members for efforts over the previous bushfire season.
- The Shire has been working on reviewing the Local Emergency Management Arrangements. The new documents that have been developed were passed at the Committee meeting on 4 March and will be considered by Council at next week's Ordinary Council Meeting. Melinda gave thanks to Jodie on her work for this project.

Dennis Badcock enquired about the changes in the new documents. Melinda provided an overview of the Local Emergency Management documentation and invited members present to view the documents presented to Council next week.

#### 5.4 Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions / Parks and Wildlife Service

Jesse Greenwood spoke to the following:

##### **Prescribed Burning**

- In spring 2025 Parks & Wildlife completed two burns in the Shire SWC\_104, SWC\_122 and commenced SWC\_105 RAAF totalling 2,846.3 ha.
- Parks & Wildlife are currently finalising prescriptions for the District's Autumn Burn program.
- In the Shire of Chittering, for autumn, Parks & Wildlife have one burn planned, which is to complete the southern cell of SWC\_105 RAAF, located northwest of Muchea townsite, on behalf of the Department of Defence, totalling 1571.8 ha.
- The Swan Coastal District is continuing to build low fuel buffers through prescribed burning in DBCA tenure around the Muchea townsite.

##### **Bushfires**

- The Swan Coastal District has currently had 96 fires for the season, which includes one 13 ha fire within the Shire, northeast of Pinjar, early in the season. District resources have been busy, dispatched to a multitude of bushfires across the state, including various metropolitan area incidents, Nanutarra, Kalbarri, Fitzgerald National Park, Collie and many others.

##### **Capacity**

- Swan Coastal District remains at full capacity with 13 x 3.4s, 15x L/Us, 2x Dozer, 3xFEL, 1xICV and 1x30,000l water tanker.
- Swan Coastal District's fire roster will be maintained until mid-May 2026.

Dennis Badcock enquired about the percentage complete, Jesse confirmed 97% with more to be done in the Autumn Burn Plan.

Daniel Smith enquired about the fleet listed during Jesse's report and whether it was just allocated to DBCA Swan Coastal. Jesse described the allocation of the fleet. Daniel thanked Parks and Wildlife for their assistance over the season.

Graham Furlong gave thanks to Jesse for his attendance to the meeting and stated it would be good to ensure ongoing networking with the Department in future. Graham enquired about boundaries of the Swan Coastal district. Jesse confirmed the boundaries for the district.

## 6. PERMITS TO BURN - PROPOSED CONDITIONS FOR NEW LANDOWNERS

Dennis Badcock addressed the Committee and stated that it had been his observation that an increase of fire outbreaks had occurred over the previous years. These outbreaks were related to burns that had been conducted by residents who had been issued a Permit to Burn. Dennis suggested to the Committee about possibly making it mandatory for resident who wish to apply for a Permit to Burn, to complete online mandatory training prior to receiving one. Dennis stated that it would be a program developed by the Chittering Fire Services and would need to be completed by applicants during the off-season periods. Dennis described the potential format, requirements for the program and considerations to be made.

Cr David Dewar asked the Committee to consider Dennis' suggestion. Dennis detailed the changes in the population in the Shire and why he believes this may be a solution. Shelly Pannell stated that making anything mandatory would most likely be met with resistance. Shelly suggested that a better avenue was the brigades organising events in each of their respective localities to educate new residents. Dennis agreed that educational events could be a solution. Don Jamieson suggested inviting residents to small hazard reduction burns and educating them there. Shelly stated that it was important to spend more time with new residents when they applied for permits. Aaron Cover described his experience with mandatory training in a professional capacity and how it is not effective. Aaron added his experience with issuing permits one on one with residents and that he found this method much more effective.

The Committee discussed different scenarios with residents and when a Fire Control Officer should consider issuing a permit and when they should not. Shelly suggested that Dennis should visit residents when issuing a Permit to Burn. Dennis stated that it was far too time consuming. The Committee discussed different solutions. Melinda Prinsloo suggested about putting a process in place to filter the requests that are to be declined, and invite those applicants to a burn/training session before reconsidering their applications. Dennis stated he would refer the matter to Nathan to consider. Paul Groves stated that in some cases it is people who have been denied a permit who then go on to light fires. Paul asked about what enforcement has been completed by the Shire in relation to these matters. Graham detailed the Shire's process and some recent examples. The Committee discussed previous scenarios where illegal burning had occurred. Jesse Greenwood suggested about promoting other forms of mitigation that aren't burning. Graham Furlong concurred with Jesse and detailed the risk versus reward. Graham stated there were many cases where residents wish to conduct burning which is a high-risk activity for very little value, mitigation wise.

## 7. VEHICLE ACCESS ON TONKIN HIGHWAY

Dennis Badcock addressed the Committee stating that the vehicle access on Tonkin Highway for emergency services vehicles was dangerous and limited. Dennis read his email regarding the matter aloud to the Committee. Dennis requested the Committee to consider what solution could be put in place to allow better access to both directions on the Tonkin Highway. Shelly Pannell stated that this had been discussed at a recent Captains meeting and provided information from that meeting. Shelly stated that it had not been recognised as an issue and that there were work arounds that could be put in place to mitigate the issue. Dennis and Shelly discussed the median crossings. Bruce White was invited to describe a previous incident. Bruce provided information on what had occurred and how access on the highway was approached. The Committee discussed the best approach when navigating the highway during an incident. Daniel Smith added that he had spoken to a Main Roads Contractor representative about the median crossings and that they had been designed for a vehicle to reverse. It was agreed by the Committee to not use them in this manner as they pose a high risk to crews. Shelly reiterated that the brigades are there to fight bushfires and the main objective is to stop fire spreading in the bush.

## 8. GENERAL BUSINESS

### 8.1 Bushfire Brigade Volunteer Recognition Night

Melinda Prinsloo addressed the Committee and stated that the Shire will be unable to resource the Bushfire Brigade Volunteer Recognition Night this year due to staffing. Melinda asked if the brigades would prefer to receive money per individual brigade or for the Shire to source another group to still hold the event. Dennis Badcock stated that he enjoyed the previous joint events held by the Shire. Aaron concurred with Dennis stating that he preferred the joint one held by the Shire and that it was good for meeting other members. Melinda asked for the members present to take it to their brigades for feedback. Melinda asked that the feedback be emailed to her. Paul Groves concurred that he preferred the combined event.

### 8.2 Muchea South Road fuel load surrounding Arc infrastructure

Shelly Pannell addressed the Committee regarding a fire on Muchea South Road and described the circumstances of the fire. Shelly highlighted the risk the fuel load along the railway line posed and asked Melinda to speak with Arc Infrastructure and DBCA about the mitigation required in this area. Graham Furlong outlined the Mitigation Activity Funding arrangements and confirmed that the proposed mitigation works are not eligible under that program. He further advised that Arc had been contacted at the time and had indicated plans to undertake mitigation works; however, no works have been carried out in the two years since. Jesse Greenwood advised that he liaise with Nathan Manning on the matter. Graham Furlong confirmed he would provide further information to Jesse and continue discussions. Graham also provided additional information regarding Mitigation Activity Funding. The Committee discussed potential contacts and the constraints associated with obtaining approval to burn the land. Jesse outlined alternative options for progressing the burn.

### 8.3 Permitted activities during TFB and HVMB

Aaron Cover raised concerns about a perceived trend in community misunderstanding of permitted activities during Total Fire Bans and Harvest Vehicle Movement Bans. Graham Furlong provided compliance-related insights drawn from the Shire's experience during a recent Total Fire Ban. The Committee discussed potential solutions and education pathways.

#### **MOTION**

Moved Aaron Cover / Seconded Graham Furlong

That the Committee considers, before the next Firebreak & Bushfire Hazard Reduction Notice, all education avenues for residents and ratepayers, to be better informed about the activities permitted or not permitted during Total Fire Bans and Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### 8.4 DFES Fleet vehicle support

Aaron addressed the Committee to raise a recent issue relating to vehicle allocation. He advised that a Shire vehicle had been removed from a brigade and replaced with another Shire vehicle, rather than a DFES-sourced vehicle. Aaron stated that this arrangement caused operational issues for the brigade and reduced the capacity of Chittering Fire Services to respond effectively to incidents.

The Committee discussed the matter and agreed that it would have been preferable for a replacement vehicle to have been sourced through DFES. Shelly Pannell confirmed that DFES Fleet had been contacted to replace the vehicle but were unable to do so. Aaron noted that Shire resources should be maintained at all times and that any gaps should be addressed through external support, such as DFES Fleet.

#### **MOTION**

Moved Aaron Cover / Seconded Daniel Smith

That Council instructs the Chief Executive Officer to advocate to DFES that replacement vehicles are allocated to the Shire from DFES Fleet instead of other Shire vehicles to ensure that the fire-fighting capacity in the shire is not adversely impacted.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## 9. NEXT MEETING

That the next meeting of the Chittering Bush Fire Advisory Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, 14 July 2026 commencing at 7pm.

## 10. CLOSURE

The Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 8:12PM.