



Shire of Merredin Bush Fire Advisory Committee Pre-Season Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, 14 October 2026 at 3:00 pm
Council Chambers, Shire of Merredin Administration Building, Merredin

1.0 Attendance and Apologies

Delegates

Name	Organisation	Position
Glenn Crees	Collgar Brigade	Chief Bushfire Control Officer Chair
Paul Wanless	Muntadgin Brigade	Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer
Jeremy Dean	Burracoppin South Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Brendan Crees	Burracoppin South Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Kael Crees	Collgar Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Cam Gethin	Hines Hill Brigade	Captain/Fire Control Officer
Sam Hooper	Korbelka Brigade	Captain/Fire Control Officer
Darren Major	Muntadgin Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Neil Smith	Nukarni/Nokanning Brigade	Captain/Fire Control Officer
Mick Caughey	Nukarni/Nokanning Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Phil Gray	Nukarni/Nokanning Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Cr Phil Van Der Merwe	Shire of Merredin	Council Delegate
Alex Wilson	Department of Fire & Emergency Services	Community Emergency Services Manager (Merredin/Bruce Rock/Narembeen)

Officers

Name	Organisation	Position
Craig Watts	Shire of Merredin	Chief Executive Officer
Suzanne Doncon	Shire of Merredin	Acting Emergency Services Officer

Apologies

Name	Organisation	Position
Chris Barnett	Burracoppin Brigade	Captain/Fire Control Officer
Nigel Edgecomb	Burracoppin South Brigade	Captain
David Last	Collgar Brigade	Captain/Fire Control Officer
Luke Growden	Hines Hill Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Colin Miller	Hines Hill Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Leigh Dolton	Korbelka Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Craig Last	Korbelka Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Marshall Crook	Nukarni/Nokanning Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Dan Giles	Nukarni/Nokanning Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Stephen Crook	Collgar Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Michael Wanless	Muntadgin Brigade	Fire Control Officer
Sheree Lowe	Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service/ Shire of Merredin	Fire Control Officer

Paul Mason	Department of Fire & Emergency Services	Area Officer, Central Wheatbelt
Codi Brindley-Mullen	Shire of Merredin	Executive Manager Strategy and Community
Muso Mono	Shire of Merredin	Executive Manager Infrastructure Services

2.0 Official Opening

The Chair welcomed those in attendance and declared the meeting open at 3 04pm.

3.0 Confirmation of Minutes

Confirmation of Minutes of the BFAC Pre-Season meeting held on 16 October 2025

(Attachment 3.0A)

Recommendation: That the minutes of the Bushfire Advisory Committee Pre-season meeting held on 16 October 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

Moved: K Crees

Seconded: P Wanless

4.0 Business arising

Nil

5.0 General Business

5.1 Update from DOAC

Rural Urban Interface firefighting training changed its name to 'Interface Operations.'

New training courses are available at DFES' eAcademy:

- FCO refresher
- Remote Piloted Aircraft systems (RPAS) Awareness
- Tree hazard awareness
- Introduction to fire ecology
- Bushfire safety for workers (this course is designed for non-volunteers; it is encouraged for family members and workers)

An FCO Enhanced program is also now available

Lithium and electric vehicle fires are more prevalent and a safety issue. If fighting such a fire, stay out of the smoke as its highly toxic and watch for spot fires up to 200m from the batteries' location.

A pre-season briefing for the CEO's and CBFCO's is tomorrow (15th Oct), will forward on any important information.

5.2 Availability of air support

Air support will be available as from Bruce Rock as a Forward Operating Base and will have the equipment to operate as a reloading base. The Grain Harvest Program has the water bombers based at strategic locations around the state and Bruce Rock will not be one of those unless we call them in.

Reloader training is being provided in October and November, with the November training being in Bruce Rock.

Alex is putting together cheat sheets for Ground Control.

5.3 Public Information and alerts

Public information and alerts will be the same as last year, with Suzie and two other Shire staff members trained in WHISPIR, so one will always be available 24/7.

5.4 Vehicle servicing

Following discussion at the BFAC meeting in October 2025, the ESO trialled a new service provider for the heavy vehicle servicing. With an eye for supporting local, we've switched to Sayers Mechanical for both the mechanical and the pump and firefighting equipment servicing. Sayers Mechanical has been good from the ESO's perspective, how was it for the brigades?

Paul: Good Service, they really looked for potential problems and out the effort in to finding the right parts.

Collgar's Light tanker was serviced by Bartlett Mechanical.

5.5 LGIS induction

The Shire's LGIS (Local Government Insurance Scheme- they are the people who insure the Bushfire volunteers, appliances and private vehicles) representative has requested that volunteers be encouraged to complete the online WHS induction. ESO will circulate this to the Brigade Captains prior to the AGMs. All active members are requested to participate in or complete the induction.

5.6 Fire Control Officer

Nominated: Alex Wilson (CESM) for the Shire of Merredin

That Alex Wilson (CESM) be appointed as a Fire Control Officer of the Shire of Merredin for the 2026/27 fire season.

That Sheree Lowe be removed as a Fire Control Officer of the Shire of Merredin for the 2026/27 fire season from the 1st of December 2026.

Moved: P Wanless

Seconded: N Smith

5.7 Roadside verges / firebreaks

If there are any areas of concern in brigade areas with regard to hazard mitigation, please inform the ESO.

Cam enquired if the Hines Hill Shed is on the Shire's slasher list and also raised concern about Burracoppin and the Solar farm on Robartson Rd. The ESO shall pass this on to the EMIS and Ranger.

If any brigade have any concerns about people not doing firebreaks in their brigade areas, please advise the ESO.

5.8 Schedule of new appliances

The AO has provided 2 new radios for each brigade to be picked up either at this BFAC meeting or from the Shire by the Captain at a later date. These are for the FCO to use only. Once received, confirm that there are 2 radios, 4 batteries and 2 chargers; if anything is missing inform either the ESO or CESM.

Collgar is next on the list for a new fire truck however due to the financial cost of producing Tatra's, DFES is now requiring Local Governments to justify the allocation of a Tatra. The Shire has been pushing for the Tatra's due to their large water capacity and good in paddocks; however, if there are issues with the current Tatra's and other vehicles communicate with either Suzie or Alex. Alex is available to provide additional training in using the Tatra's if requested.

For the 26/27 LGGS funding, the Shire requested funding to build a Nukarni-Nokaning Shed but did not receive it. The Shire will continue to request funding for Sheds for all BFB.

5.9 General reminders

- A reminder to run through burn-over protection systems and blankets within your brigades.
- PPE – Speak to Suzie (ESO)
- DFES Com Cen 1800 198 140.
- Report arriving and departing from the fire ground
- Request additional support such as VFRS, Police, Ambulance, Western Power, Water Corp or ARC Infrastructure
- Northam Regional Duty Co-ordinator (RDC) 1800 966 077
- Request air support
- Request advice about managing your incident
- A reminder that the Shire has a dedicated emergency 24/7 number if you require Shire assistance or equipment at a fire – 6140 1234
- Incident reports – Suzie will help with these if needed.

5.10 Other general business/around the table

5.10.1 Phil G has requested that a review date be on all harvest, movement and fire bans that are sent out by the Shire. The Shire has agreed and will put a review time of 6pm on all messages.

5.10.2 To have people added to WHISPIR, to receive the harvest, movement and fire ban notices just contact the Shire Admin building or the ESO with the name and phone number of the relevant people, multiple phone numbers and emails can be added if desired.

5.10.3 As the season progresses when not using the truck, keep them in their sheds, however it is highly encouraged that you take them out for practice exercises. If the farmer who normally houses the fire truck is away, ensure the other members are aware and if necessary, move the fire truck to another location for easy access. Above all, communicate any fire truck movement to your brigade.

5.10.4 Starlink is not currently a permitted LGGS expense. To get Starlink into the BFB vehicles, the payment will need to be sourced elsewhere.

5.10.5 Green sticker permits are no longer issued.

5.10.6 If there is a fire on the road or highway Brigades are permitted to block the road until the Police arrive; however, are not permitted to re-direct traffic.

5.10.7 Sam inquired about whether Bruce Rock is getting a new BFB.

Alex: Bruce Rock is in the process of getting approval for a BFB to the north side of town. Currently waiting on Minister's Permission.

5.10.8 Paul inquired about the process for reporting abandoned/debilitated properties that are posing a fire risk.

Craig W: For abandoned or debilitated properties, report them to the Shire and we go through the process of enforcing the management of the properties. All the Shire needs is the address.

5.10.9 Councillor Van Der Merwe thanked all volunteers for their assistance at VFRS incidents on behalf of the VFRS and for their commitment from the Shire Council. Requests that everyone listens to the radios, especially when in contact with Air Control.

5.10.10 Craig W: Suzie Doncon has taken over for Sheree as the Emergency Services Officer (ESO), her contact info is the same as Sheree's. The Shire has had the Ranger preparing the Fire Break warnings in preparation for the firebreak deadline. Currently 198 warnings processed. If there are any properties that need to be checked, let the ESO or CESM know.

Craig thanked the volunteers on behalf of the Shire Administration.

5.10.11 Alex: Basic training for Fires can be accessed on DFES's eAcademy. We will provide the link to the WhatsApp groups, so everyone has access. Also producing a register of current members for all the brigades. This will be sent on to all brigades for you to identify any additional or retired members. Also requested that Alex's contact details be added to the BFB's WhatsApp Groups.

6.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting of the BFAC will be the AGM, taking place in March 2027 on a day to be confirmed.

7.0 Close

There being no further business, the Chief thanked those in attendance and declared the meeting closed at 3 59pm