

## DISTRICT OPERATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

# GREAT EASTERN MINUTES **DRAFT**

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023

The meeting opened at 9.35hrs by Chairperson – John Flockart

John acknowledged the traditional owners of the land, welcomed DFES staff, presenters, Local Government representatives, Chiefs, Deputies and volunteers.

### 1 **RECORD OF ATTENDANCE**

| <b>NAME</b>      | <b>SHIRE</b>      |
|------------------|-------------------|
| John Flockart    | Merredin          |
| Phil Hay         | DFES              |
| Jenny Blanchett  | DFES              |
| Damien Pumphrey  | DFES              |
| Siobhan Bishop   | DFES              |
| Gavin Eva        | DFES              |
| Jeremy Willis    | DFES              |
| Andrae Moore     | DFES              |
| Ben Davies       | CESM              |
| Simon Tighe      | Kellerberrin      |
| Alan O'Toole     | Bruce Rock        |
| Tony Crooks      | Bruce Rock        |
| Sheree Low       | Merredin          |
| Stephen Crook    | Merredin          |
| Lorraine Webster | Bushfire Org      |
| Andrew Sprigg    | Mukinbudin        |
| Damien Tomas     | Mt Marshall CBFCO |
| Murray Dixon     | Narembeen         |
| Paul Cosson      | Nungarin          |
| Kelly Watts      | Yilgarn           |
| Ron Burro        | Yilgarn           |
| Leanne Parola    | Trayning          |
| Peter Barnes     | Trayning          |

### **APOLOGIES**

| <b>NAME</b>     | <b>SHIRE</b>   |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Leonard Long    | Nungarin       |
| Bill Price      | Westonia       |
| Graeme Keals    | DBCA           |
| Paul Sheedy     | Narembeen      |
| Dirk Sellenger  | Mukinbuddin    |
| Jordon Bairstow | Mt Marshall    |
| Dave Gossage    | BF Association |

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### 2 Confirmation of previous minutes

That the minutes of the meeting held on Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

**Moved:** Murray Dixon  
**Seconded:** Ron Burro  
**All approved**

### 3 Business Arising

NIL

### 4 Action List

| Action | ACTION ITEM  | BY WHOM / WHEN  |
|--------|--|---|
| 1      | <p>-Contact Ron Burro to get Historical Weather readings.<br/>-Contact BOM about the FDR readings. Ref 7.2</p> <p>After consultation with Gavin Stevens from DFES the trigger threshold it was agreed the equal figure was 40 and is close to 32 in the old format – Gavin Eva discussed the reasoning behind this.<br/>Harvest Ban Calculator App – Reception is an issue with it. Phil Hay to go through this after meeting.<br/>John Flockart stated the previous DOAC it was agreed to change to 37.</p> | <p>Phil Hay</p> <p>13/9/21 - Carry Forward</p> <p>COMPLETED</p>         |
| 2      | <p>Miners Settlement and Mt Hamptons Appliances are getting beyond it now – Still waiting for word on new ones. Ref 10 – Shire of Yilgarn</p>  | <p>Antony Sadler</p> <p>14/3/2022 – Still waiting.</p> <p>COMPLETED</p> |

#### Action Item 1

Ron Burro after consultation with Gavin Stevens Dfes the trigger threshold was deemed equal to 40 based on the Harvest Ban Calculator App. John Flockart stated the previous DOAC it was agreed the figure should be 37. Discussions evolved and decided to refer to general business. Phil Hay mentioned that the LG set the individual parameters and to go back and discuss the DOAC recommendation.

#### Action Item 2

Appliance is to be delivered next 3-4 weeks. It was decided to take this off the Action list.

### 5 Correspondence

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John Flockart contacted Damien supporting the consensus at last DOAC for forward planning of Air Support as required. It was noted that any LG who would like to can send a letter of support to DFES for this to continue and support it for next season.

### 6 Matters arising from Correspondence

Nil

### 7 Submitted Agenda Items

- a. **7.1** Increase of Harvest Ban penalty and change to wording from Harvest Movement to Machinery Movement – **Damian Tomas** – Shire of Mt Marshall  
Harvest is too restrictive, and people still use different machinery. Change the wording to Harvest and Machinery Movement ban. More fires due to crunchers and spreaders than harvesters. Discussions regarding what you can use during a TFB.

**Phill Hay** - You can still work as its necessary agriculture practice to get your crop in. You are required to have your firefighting unit in your paddock. Should the Chiefs decide if they deem it's a risk, they can stop the work practice. You must manage that risk in your area.

**Damien Pumphrey** – If you all in consensus now is the time to write to as the DOAC to the CES Act review team you should get together to make the change to it's a simple change to make.

**John Flockart** – Noted that some of the message's SMS the wording has become very lax and needs to be written in the correct format to stop people getting the wrong message or the message being open to interpretation.

**Damien Pumphrey** - Change to a more recognisable name the content of the ACT describes the actual items you can't do. Make it recognisable.

**Murray Dixon** stated that he would be the one to write that letter and discuss with others to get the wording correct.

New wording changes - Harvest Vehicle Movement Ban to be changed to Machinery & Movement Ban

**Moved:** DamianTomas – Shire of Mt Marshall

**Seconded:** Andrew Sprigg – Shire of Mukinbudin

**John Flockart** asked what the QTY of water in machines in a paddock.

**Ron Burro** – Shire of Yilgarn want to ban trailers as a farmer had three harvesters and one water trailer, but no work vehicle hooked up to trailer. Item has gone to council still waiting to hear back.

**Damian Tighe** – Shire of Mt Marshall is banning all trailers over a 3-year plan.

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When boggy trailers were getting stuck, and people were standing on draw bars and it's an OHS problem.

**Discussions were made to make an agenda item for the next meeting to discuss the banning of trailers in paddocks. Locate suggestion from DOAC minutes regarding recommendation as to the requirements to use in the paddock.**

**From 13 September 2021 Minutes from Action item 5 "Take recommendation to the Local Government for Consideration. The Great Eastern DOAC recommends to all shires, that all chaser bins are fitted with a minimum 300L firefighting unit as soon as practical and 600L capacity equivalent on static firefighting units, 30m of hose and a UHF Handheld radio per harvester be standard."**

**Aaron Sprigg** - Shire of Mukinbudin questioned what happens to the older trucks that DFES dispose of as many farmers could use these. It was noted from Phil Hay due to State Government Procurement and financial policy they won't allow this as we have tried, the Commissioner has tried as have the other DOAC and the Department of Treasury have not agreed. They must go to public auction.

- b. 7.1** regarding the penalty issue the consensus was that the figure is too low as farmers will rather pay the fine than stop working. Murray Dixon bought this up at BOC meeting, and it is very hard to change this due to the Act so advised to call the police. If it's with the Police, they may stop then. Discussions evolved as to increasing the figure to say from \$5000.00 to \$150,000 and possibly on a means testing.

**Phil Hay** suggested to try getting the legislation to change is probably the best way as money talks and it's the right time to be doing this. Discussed the 2010 Badgingarra fire started by a harvester during a HVMB. Process following 2011 meeting PGA, Farmers Federation, DFES legal, Department Premier & Cabinet it was proposed to change the fine from \$250.00 to \$15000.00

**Damien Pumphrey** – Keen to have a chat after the meeting to see if there is something we can do outside the Legislation on a Regional perspective with the conglomerate, and the larger property owners is an issue further out we go. Seek CBH and other partners to see what we can do.

**Gavin Eva** – Mentioned it was bought up at the Mid-Western DOAC last week same sort of issues across numerous local governments and the fine does not have much deterrent of the industry. Discussed putting an argument across as a DOAC along with other DOACs to make it a more significant deterrent.

**John Flockart** mentioned to some larger conglomerates what happens if you start a fire? The answer was sending the workers back to sit in office and wait as they have no training to fight the fire. It appears to be getting worse and becomes a competition.

**Phil Hay** - Go back to all your Chiefs, FCO & CEO and raise as an agenda item for the next meeting should you have the support.

**John Flockart** – Please think about what potentially can work and if Damien Pumphrey could guide the DOAC on what we can do.

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**Murray Dixon** - Updating the ACT it would we need a localised idea of what the ACT says we can then see what we can write up under consultation. Hoping for it to happen by the end of the year. If anyone could help with the letter or information to be placed in the letter feel free to come forward. I am unable to bring anything back to you as to what happens at the BOC but I can work on that further.

**Damien Pumphrey** - Penalties for conglomerate farmers in breach of BF Act and HVMB. How do we enforce on larger entities? As a region how do we engage CBH/WAPF/RFD and other partners in this issue. Role of corporations and conglomerates in firefighting and provision of resources. Don't prescribe the answer but put it forward as an issue.

**John Flockart** – Propose Murray Dixon to take the two issues to BOC noting he can't report back but can put the ideas forward. Agenda the items to bring up next meetings. Instruction to raise the issue of noncompliance with HVMB and the wording thereof and the penalties associated with noncompliance with directives of HVMB.

**Phil Hay** – Discussions over the TFB Phil suggested to split your shires into districts to make it easier and talk to all the other CBFCA when you put a ban on as they may come and help you to. This is something you can take to a BFAC meeting to discuss further to create a fire weather district. Agenda this item for the next meeting.

### **8 Rural Fire Division Report – Gavin Eva**

- a. Please see appendix 1
- b. Gavin Eva to send through the BCoE Training update see appendix 1a
- c. Phil went through the total of TFB See Appendix 1b
- d. Questions? Nil

### **9 Association Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades – Lorraine Webster**

- a. Please see Appendix 2
- b. Questions? PPE and ESL some local governments are not going through Dfes to get the PPE. Not sure where they are getting them from.
- c. Damien Pumphrey stated from the Commissioner if there is an issue with PPE funding see me or AO/DO if you are not getting them, they will sort them from the ESL. It is not an issue. The local government will get the funds back from Dfes.
- d. Discussions about wearing the same PPE when on deployment or out for a few days they are allowed to have a second set of PPE. Washing instructions are to be sent from Phil Hay but advised to use soap free detergent. Wash PPE every time after use. Use washing machine at the stations.
- e. Washing machine is funded through the LG under the LGGS local funding grant for under \$2000.

### **10 DBCA Reports – Laurent Marcel**

- a. Please see Appendix 3, 4
- b. Questions? Nil

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5-minute break

### 11 Local Government Reports

#### a. Shire of Kellerberrin – Simon Tighe

- Very few fires and sent trucks to neighbours.
- New shed is mostly complete now looking to fit out inside.
- Held training day BF awareness course well attended.
- Local issue is local events, and they seem to have worked out ways to get around the TFB.

#### b. Shire of Bruce Rock – Tony Bruce

- 14 fires average size to very small.
- Dry lightning & machinery fires.
- New truck is going well.
- Discussed AFDRS review.
- Changed Prohibited burning times. Restricted until 31 March 2023.

#### c. Shire of Merredin – Sheree Lowe

- Standard fire season exception of 20 Feb due to lightning strike.
- Writing new fire policy and procedures this year and to give staff protection.
- Looking forward to more training this year.

#### d. Shire of Mukinbudin – Andrew Sprigg

- We have had 6 trucks deployed this season and we have been helping with the boundaries I am north of the Shire and Damian is South.
- Mainly dry lightning we had 1 vehicle fire and still waiting for our new rescue truck.

#### e. Shire of Mt Marshall – Damian Tomas

- Unable to say how many fires we have been to, but we clocked up 240 hrs in fires, training and helping Mukinbudin and Koorda normal people off on deployment and we have all had enough of the fire season this year.
- Purchased new signs for the fire ground so people know there is a fire, and it has the channel number on it as comms is a big problem.
- Now in restricted and 1 person getting letter from the Shire today that if they don't obey the rules, they will not get any further permits to burn or will get infringements. Last Friday they lit up and it went into the bush and one went away for the weekend and one went to bowls. Restricting the max ground of 400 hectares at a time or on a flat burn 300 hectares as we don't have huge numbers.
- Why the fire units have a 2.5-inch cam lock fitting as you go to the hardware for replacements, and they only have the standard sizes of 3 or 5 inch. They are too hard to find and not vertical so we must have a longer fitting to either expand or reduce the size. Having multiple adapters and then it sucks air, and the pumps don't work correctly.
- Get the adapters from Frontline and they will send them.
- Action item Phil Hay speaks to fleet wanting a standard of 3-inch fittings and adapters to go with them.

#### f. Shire of Narembeen – Murray Dixon

- Quiet season, lightning strikes.



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- Operationally waiting on a 4.4 to go out to Mount Walker next month.
- g. Shire of Nungarin – Paul Cosson**
  - Busy fire season ignitions in Trayning and Mukinbudin.
- h. Shire of Trayning – Peter Barnes**
  - 2 dry lightning strikes and we had the north Kununoppin fire got way. Went to other fires.
  - New fire shed opens this month.
- i. Shire of Yilgarn – Ron Burro**
  - Highest fuel loads but a mild summer and late harvest.
  - Busy harvest due to dry lightning. 4 x vehicles being 2 x harvester and 2 x vehicle fires, 10 lightning strikes of which 5 were on one day.
  - Assisted Westonia at Mt Korabbin.
  - Arsonist who has been caught and no fires since.
  - Fire break compliancy within the Shire has improved. Visits by myself and letters from CEO to corporates and they are realising they must be maintained.
  - Questioned about the fine if they don't do this, reply was "don't mention it to anyone as I would pay that from my back pocket" This is what they think of the fines.
  - Trailed new weather App and very happy. No reception and no App.
  - PPE wearing is slowly improving.
  - Merredin had fire on Dellar road when called the shire and did not get a good response on this. Clarity was the possible the reason. Will discuss with the staff member.
  - Extended prohibited burning time until the end of March. All depends on the wind speed.
- j. Shire of Tammin – Ben Davies**
  - Tamin has had 3 fires Thanks to Kellerberrin, rely heavily on the other shires.
  - Preform task force was a great help and the Heli tax were great. Some had never seen them before.
  - We are having a BFAC we are doing a run through on comms and what to look out for.
- k. DFES – DO Avon Phil Hay**
  - See Appendix 5
- l. Superintendent Damien Pumphrey**
  - See Appendix 6
- m. DFES – AO Central Wheatbelt – Jeremy Willis**
  - Not much to report except Cunderdin BFAC have some issues.

### 12 BOC Update – Murray Dixon

- 3/22 meeting discussion of Standard water supply fittings.
- Ben Floza discussed the 4.4 Broad acre truck not fit for purpose. 4 x 4 Training required.
- Telstra towers and generators @ a trial in Dongara – Recommendation of the Woorooloo Fire
- LG Insurance from Walga are Volunteers still covered – Spontaneous. Not covered and not a volunteer or FCO and are one of the first people to attend a fire.
- Woorooloo fires after action review update 900 observations and submissions
- Bushfire volunteer protection website.
- Western Power is having a lot more poll top fires
- Telephone warning system for the season

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- Low numbers in the DOAC
- Indigenous training in southwest and cultural burns.
- Large air tanker is operating out of Busselton
- Grain harvest strategy will be operating for 7 weeks.
- Chief Bushfire Forum Mid July to be held at the bushfire centre of excellence
- Need leadership and motivated speakers are required for this

### Topics –

- Future of BFB under LG and management of expectations
- Chief bushfire control training
- BFAC Development and how to get the most from meetings
- Remote Indigenous in heritage areas
- CAULD communities
- BFCoE program
- Emergency Bushfire Management
- Volunteer hub
- Fire behaviour
- Arora
- Grant funding
- Using LGGs
- Lessons Learnt
- Lottery west
- Major incident review
- Previous incidents

Any further input would be welcome

## 13 General Business

### Phil Hay – AFDRS viewer

- Training is advised as you won't get access. <https://www.afac.com.au/initiative/afdrs>
- You can upload your own data and change what you are seeing and upload photo WITH LAT AND LONG on. Only needs to be done about 3-4 times a year. This will give a more accurate detail. Phil will validate. 3 farmers from each LG. Will have live fuel data. We are happy to come and train you.
- Carbon offsets showed maps of carbon sites.

### Andrew Sprigg – Campfires

- Received email about campfires and if campers can along the Wheatbelt Way. Not until after 31/3/2023.

### John Flockart – Discussion on fire tanks, mapping fittings and having standardised fittings.

- Training required for Ground controllers Machinery Supervision.
- Some shires don't have Waern radios. Discussed they are out of stock we can't get them. Phil suggested to do an audit on any previous staff may have one. Still use the UHF radio.
- Do pre-emptive plans for bad weather coming your way.
- Thank you Dfes for how you have run the season.
- The Merredin VFRS site is getting smaller discussion were to see if we can get bigger premises. TBA





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Jenny Blanchett – Details of Chiefs

- Do a list up of all the Chiefs with emails and phone numbers and share

**14 Meeting concluded 1.54pm**

**15 Next meeting 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023 – At Merredin VFRS unless notified otherwise.**

### New Action List

| <b>ACTION</b> | <b>ACTION ITEM</b>                                     | <b>BY WHOM / WHEN</b> |
|---------------|--|-----------------------|
| 1             | Confirm FDR Rating                                     | Phil Hay              |
| 2             | Send out the care and maintenance instructions for PPE | Phil Hay              |
| 3             | Send Contacts directory and TFB lists to DOAC          | Phil Hay              |
| 4             | Confirm Hines Hill new Light Tanker                    | Jeremy Willis         |
| 5             | Send out legislation for probation Section 46          | Phil Hay              |
| 6             | Make list of Chiefs with email and phone numbers       | Jenny Blanchett       |
| 7             |  |                       |