

## 9.6 - Notice of Motion – Community Debrief for the Keysbrook Fire Incident (SJ4376)

<b>Elected Member</b>	Councillor Byas
<b>Disclosure of Officers Interest:</b>	No Officer involved in the preparation of this report has an interest to declare in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> .

### Notice of Motion

A Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Byas on Sunday, 12 May 2024.

The Notice of Motion is “*That Council:*

- 1. REQUESTS that the Chief Executive Officer organise and conduct a community debrief session on the December 2023 Keysbrook fire (Hopeland Road fire - 22 December 2023), with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including the local emergency services, the Shire’s Bushfire Awareness Team, and affected community members.*
- 2. REQUESTS that this debrief session addresses specific concerns raised by the community regarding access control during the incident and gathers comprehensive feedback on the emergency response efforts.*
- 3. ENSURES that the debriefing session is completed by the end of July 2024 and that findings and lessons learned are documented and presented in a report to Council at the August 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting.”*

### Relevant Previous Decisions of Council

Nil.

### Officer Comment

A fire was reported in Keysbrook at 11:36 on 22 December 2023, declared Level 2 at 13:15 and subsequently downgraded to Level 1 at 18:00 23 December 2023. This was Incident Number 652329 – Keysbrook Bushfire.

The fire ran through open paddocks used for agriculture, and scrub, with high rates of spread and was stationary by the evening of 22 December 2023. The total area burnt was 832 hectares, within the area bounded by Elliott Rd to the North, Hopeland Rd to the West, Atkins Rd to the East and Readheads Rd to the South. The fire burnt predominantly through the Shire of Murray, as contained in the map at **attachment 1**.

Key impacts were as follows:

- Fencing damage requiring replacement, coordinated through landowner insurances.
- Loss of 2x structures and other production assets within a mining lease area, requiring replacement through landowner insurances.
- Western Power reported six HV poles and eight LV poles were destroyed by fire. Work commenced 23 December 2023, and continued 24 December 2023 to replace impacted poles

### Contact Us

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#### In Person

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Open Monday to Friday 8.30am-5pm (closed public holidays)



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and restore power to affected customers. The Western Power website indicates power was restored to all affected customers effective 20:31, 23 December 2023.

The emergency affected both Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale residents and Shire of Murray residents. Debrief activities were recommended to occur collaboratively between the two local government areas, noting the following:

- Due to the operational tempo of the preceding week, volunteer resources were limited based on fatigue.
- The incident required a continued presence through Christmas Day and Boxing Day to maintain containment. Due to the holiday period, volunteer and other resources had limited availability immediately following the incident.
- The damage and impacts did not identify a need to activate significant formal recovery activities.

Based on the above, internal debrief activities for the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale were held by Officers on 11 January 2024 and 12 February 2024. These meetings identified the following community debrief opportunities for Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale residents:

- Attendance by relevant Shire Officers at the monthly Keysbrook Community catch up (2 February 2024). Being a pre-established community meeting, it afforded the timeliest option to meet with affected residents within the Shire and hear feedback.
- Community Recovery Event proposed for April 2024, to be led by the Shire of Murray with support and input from the Shire.

This approach was recommended given the number of SJ residents impacted was significantly lower than the number of Murray residents impacted, with affected Serpentine Jarrahdale residents pastoralists and farmers, and Murray’s residential land owners.

Shire Officers were subsequently contacted by the Shire of Murray on 3 April 2024 indicating that their priority was to conduct community engagement with the southern portion of their Shire as a result of the recent Bushfires in the Waroona area, with no further proposal for an event relevant to the Keysbrook Bushfire.

*Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale - Community Debrief Feedback*

At the Keysbrook community meeting on 2 February, feedback on the following matters were provided to Shire Officers:

Feedback	Officers Response / Actions Implemented
Incident road closures limited the ability for farm response vehicles and land owners to actively combat the fire.	Road closures are implemented as a critical safety measure for fire services and residents. It was recognised that police manning roadblocks on the day of the incident are not always aware of the Response Vehicle Identifier scheme. Shire Officers have developed a Western Australian Traffic Management Aide Memoire to support incident management and police at future emergency incidents, as at <b>attachment 2</b> .



Feedback	Officers Response / Actions Implemented
Farm units that responded to the fire were not supported by the fire services managing the fire.	<p>Shire Emergency Services have engaged with farm responders through local Fire Control Officers since the Keysbrook incident, resulting in the issue of approximately 12 additional Fire Response Vehicle Identifiers.</p> <p>Farm responders have also been issued with reference material and instructions, including how to engage with Incident Management at incidents such as the Keysbrook incident.</p>
Why was there damage to pasture and other assets during the mop up?	<p>To ensure bushfires remain contained and controlled, effective mop up must be completed. The minimum standards for mop up include (from DFES Standard Operating Procedure 3.5.1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire perimeter blacked out.</li> <li>• All burning trees extinguished or removed within 100m of perimeter.</li> <li>• Mineral earth break constructed around the perimeter.</li> </ul> <p>Mineral earth breaks were constructed along the fires edge in pasture at the Keysbrook fire to contain the fire and restrict the possibility of the fire breaking out, which would lead to further loss of pasture and other assets.</p>
The evacuation centre was difficult to access due to road closures.	<p>Noted. The evacuation centre was opened in response to DFES emergency warning advice that an Evacuation Centre located at the SJ Community Recreation Centre in Byford would be available.</p> <p>In subsequent debrief activities it has been noted an Evacuation Centre to the South of the incident may have been more effective or better utilised.</p> <p>Evacuees were able to get to the Evacuation Centre, however the travel distance was further than southern locations.</p> <p>Consultation between Shire Evacuation Centre Officers, Department of Communities and the Incident Control Group occurs for every incident to identify the most appropriate Evacuation Centre location.</p>

All actions identified in response to feedback provided by Keysbrook residents have been actioned by Officers. However, a Community Debrief would provide the opportunity for the Shire to report back to the community on the feedback received and actions taken.

Additional actions identified by Officers through the debrief activities were noted at the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) meeting held on 12 March 2024, and the minutes of the meeting are contained at **attachment 3**. The LEMC minutes are scheduled for presentation to Council at the June OCM.



The additional actions identified by Officers are as follows:

- Develop a communication process with the Rangers team for future emergencies.
- Explore the feasibility of restricted access permits for emergency situations, both in hard copy and electronic formats.
- Consider conducting a training exercise.
- Investigate options for emergency resource storage and potential grants.
- Establish a streamlined process for the distribution of the master key for the Recreation Centre during the activation of the Emergency Evacuation Centre.

No further comment or suggestions were received from LEMC members. Each of the above actions are either complete or in progress.

**Attachments (available under separate cover)**

- **9.6 - attachment 1** - Keysbrook Bushfire Map (E24/6577)
- **9.6 - attachment 2** - Western Australian Traffic Management Aide Memoire (E24/6578)
- **9.6 - attachment 3** - Local Emergency Management Committee Meeting Minutes - 12 March 2024 (E24/3998)

**Voting Requirements:** Simple Majority

**Elected Member Recommendation**

**That Council:**

- 1. REQUESTS that the Chief Executive Officer organise and conduct a community debrief session on the December 2023 Keysbrook fire (Hopeland Road fire - 22 December 2023), with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including the local emergency services, the Shire's Bushfire Awareness Team, and affected community members.**
- 2. REQUESTS that this debrief session addresses specific concerns raised by the community regarding access control during the incident and gathers comprehensive feedback on the emergency response efforts.**
- 3. ENSURES that the debriefing session is completed by the end of July 2024 and that findings and lessons learned are documented and presented in a report to Council at the August 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting.**



### **Alternate Officer Recommendation**

#### **That Council:**

- 1. NOTES the community engagement activities and internal debrief meetings and actions that have occurred following the December 2023 Keysbrook fire (Incident Number 652329 – Keysbrook Bushfire) as contained in the comment section of this report.**
- 2. REQUESTS that the Chief Executive Officer organise and conduct a community debrief session on the December 2023 Keysbrook fire (Hopeland Road fire - 22 December 2023), with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including the local emergency services, the Shire’s Bushfire Awareness Team, and affected community members.**
- 3. REQUESTS that this debrief session:**
  - i. addresses specific concerns raised by the community regarding access control during the incident and gathers comprehensive feedback on the emergency response efforts.**
  - ii. Provides an opportunity for the Shire to report back actions completed and lessons learnt.**
- 4. ENSURES that the debriefing session is completed by the end of July 2024 and that findings and lessons learned are documented and presented in a report to Council at the August 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting.**