

**EMERGENCY SERVICES — FIRES — ESPERANCE**

2068. Hon Colin de Grussa to the minister representing the Minister for Emergency Services:

- (1) I refer to the recent fires which burnt around 400,000 hectares north and east of Esperance in late February and early March and I ask, what was the total cost of firefighting appliances, aircraft, earthmoving machinery, or other equipment utilised in fighting the fire, and please provide a breakdown of each?
- (2) How many Department of Fire and Emergency Services staff worked on this fire:
  - (a) of this number, how many staff undertook active firefighting duties and what was the total cost of financial remuneration for these staff during the fires;
  - (b) of this number, how many staff undertook administration and support duties and what was the total cost of financial remuneration for these staff during the fires;
  - (c) of this number, how many staff were based in Perth and what was the total cost of financial remuneration for these staff during the fires; and
  - (d) of this number, how many staff were based in Esperance over the duration of the fire and what was the total cost of financial remuneration for these staff during the fires?

**Hon Stephen Dawson replied:**

- (1) DFES does not perform activity based costing to enable the formulation of direct costs attributable per incident however, additional costs incurred above DFES' base budget for major incidents are recorded based on hazard type such as wildfire, with further analysis required to calculate incident costs. Given this, readily identifiable costs *at this time* for the items specified for the Esperance Complex Bushfires, over and above DFES' base budget are provided below:

Item	\$
Firefighting appliances and vehicles	\$12,679
Aircraft	\$736,757
Earthmoving machinery	\$840,634
Other equipment	\$10,889
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,600,959<sup>1</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> These dollar amounts represent the additional costs to DFES only and do not include costs incurred by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attraction or Local Government, including Local Government managed volunteer bushfire brigades. In addition, incidental costs such as meals, accommodation, travel etc. totalling \$131,165.45 were incurred as part of this incident.

- (2) 230 DFES staff worked on what is referred to as the Esperance Complex Bushfires. Given the duration of this incident, this included individual staff working shifts in multiple locations<sup>2</sup>. The nature of emergency services necessitates that funds are allocated to ensure a 'ready state' of response capability. Therefore, in addition to ordinary earnings, the overtime generated for this period is provided below:

	Number of Personnel	Approximate overtime incurred during this period
(a)	73	\$227,000
(b)	84	\$170,000 – additional overtime may be incurred however costs are not directly attributed per incident and personnel were supporting multiple incidents occurring simultaneously across the State.
(c)	115	115 employees were assisting in the metropolitan area in the State Operations Centre and Metropolitan Operations Centre during these incidents. These personnel were also assisting with other incidents taking place across the state concurrently to those surrounding Esperance. Ordinary earnings are calculated at approximately \$165,000 per week during the Esperance fires.
(d)	99	\$322,000

<sup>2</sup> This figure is the total staff involved in the Esperance Complex Fires. It must be noted that a number of staff were working in the State Operations Centre or the Metropolitan Operations Centre in Perth and

were also subsequently deployed to Esperance or Albany. The Esperance Complex was a protracted incident that occurred over a few weeks. Hence the figures of staff working in each subsection (a)–(d) will not balance to 230.

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