

BUSHFIRES — SOUTH WEST

**785. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Environment:**

I refer to the May and June 2019 fires in the Shires of Nannup, Donnybrook–Balingup and Bridgetown–Greenbushes—incident numbers 423437 and 085-087—identified as being caused by plantation harvesting equipment.

- (1) Are the losses sustained from fires caused in this manner covered by the insurances of the contractors or the relevant agency?
- (2) Would the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Good Neighbour policy, as listed on the DBCA website, apply under this circumstance?
- (3) What is the status of this policy?
- (4) What actions is the minister taking to assist those who have incurred losses due to fires started in similar circumstances to these situations?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

The fires of June 2019—BWD 085-087 in the Shires of Nannup, Donnybrook–Balingup and Bridgetown–Greenbushes—were escapes from pine heap debris burning and not the result of plantation harvesting equipment. This incident is commonly known as the Jarrahwood bushfire. The pine heap debris burning in Jarrahwood plantation was undertaken by DBCA, on behalf of the Forest Products Commission, as part of its annual burn program.

Incident 423437 refers to the Lewana bushfire, which occurred in February 2019 and is considered to be the result of a Forest Products Commission contractor's plantation harvesting equipment.

- (1) I am advised that DBCA insurances are not applicable in the instance of the BWD 085-087 pine heap debris bushfire. The issue of contractor liability is unclear in relation to incident 423437.
- (2)–(3) DBCA's Good Neighbour policy still applies; however, it does not supersede statutory requirements.
- (4) I am advised that DBCA will liaise with the two affected landholders about the option of undertaking some minor repairs to a standard similar to what was in place prior to the fire impact. This is consistent with its Good Neighbour approach, acting in good faith, and in accordance with statutory obligations.