

BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT

964. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Emergency Services:

Before I ask my question to the Minister for Emergency Services, I want to thank him for his service to the emergency services, and in particular to the emergency services in Murray–Wellington.

The SPEAKER: That is a preamble. Get to the question. We do not want to pump him up too much!

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts in keeping WA safe and strong. Can the minister update the house on this government's record investment in bushfire mitigation across Western Australia and its unprecedented reforms to rural bush fire fighting across the state?

Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:

Thank you.

Mr W.J. Johnston: That is a good question.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It is a very good question, because the bushfire season is nearly upon us. Can I acknowledge the member for Murray–Wellington's relationship with all the bushfire volunteers in her seat, and what a fantastic relationship she has with them, having visited virtually most of them with her over the last couple of years.

If members remember back to March or April 2017 and what the incoming McGowan government was left with in the area of emergency services, we were left with the Ferguson report and all the recommendations from the Ferguson report, none of which had been addressed by the previous government. It was left to the McGowan Labor government to sort those out, and we did. April 2017 marked the beginning of the new bushfire management reform, with record mitigation; the commitment to, and now the completion of, Australia's first Bushfire Centre of Excellence; better funding and support for local governments; and improved relationships with, and training for, all volunteers in Western Australia.

Members will remember that I had to kick it all off. I held the inaugural bushfire mitigation summit in Mandurah back on 23 June 2017, and that set the direction and the objectives for the reform program going forward. Over the last nearly four years, the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner and I have travelled over 100 000 kilometres in Western Australia, and we have met thousands of volunteers. We have established a ministerial volunteer advisory forum with the bodies that represent all the volunteers in Western Australia, and we have met four times. We have established volunteer liaison officers in the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner's office. We have created 11 volunteer management officer positions in the regions to assist the volunteers with their increasing administrative duties. We have expanded the State Bushfire Advisory Council, and that has since met three times, and we are currently working on the state bushfire policy for emergency services going forward. We have transformed the approach to rural fire management in Western Australia, and no more than in the area of bushfire mitigation. We have put a record \$50 million into keeping our state safe from the threat of bushfire. We have done more here than any other state in Australia has done.

The Treasurer referred earlier to Labor being the friend and being the party of rural people, and we are. We are the party of rural Western Australia. Think about the amount of money that we have put into rural Western Australia for meaningful projects to improve the lives and safety of country people. In the area of mitigation, just in the member for Moore's electorate, between 2017 and this year we will have put \$3.93 million into the areas of Toodyay, Carnamah, Chittering, Gingin, Irwin and Northampton. That has never been done by previous governments, and particularly previous Liberal–National Party governments. In the member for Roe's electorate, over that period of time we will have invested \$2.83 million in Woodanilling, Cuballing, Narrogin, Wagin, Ravensthorpe, West Arthur, Williams and York. National MPs have never done that before in those areas.

In the area of the member for Warren–Blackwood—who has disappeared—in Nannup, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown, Greenbushes, Denmark and Manjimup, we have invested \$4 million in bushfire mitigation, working with local governments, to make those towns safer and to make those people feel that the threat of bushfire will not consume them. We have done things that the National Party, which supposedly represents people in country Western Australia, did not even dream about. It has only been Labor that has protected the people of country Western Australia and reformed the approach to bushfire management in Western Australia.