

BUSHFIRES — KATANNING AND SOUTH WEST

**342. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Emergency Services:**

I refer to the minister's failure to secure grants from the federal government's \$2 billion bushfire recovery fund, despite over 1 million hectares being burnt in Western Australia over the summer.

- (1) With last week's announcement of \$149.7 million towards the bushfire recovery for species and landscapes program, will the minister finally stand up for fire-affected communities and get WA on the grants list?
- (2) Considering there is a complex recovery phase for 40 000 hectares burnt in the Stirling Range National Park, will the minister support the local community and help it access federal funding?

**Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for his question. It is the second question from the member on this very subject. No matter how many times I say it to him, it literally goes in one ear and out the other. I do not know why.

The member asked me why I do not stand up for Western Australia for those people affected by the summer bushfires and get our hands on the money that was allocated particularly for the bushfires in the eastern states, primarily, as the member knows, by the Prime Minister. I have written twice to the federal minister for emergency services, David Littleproud, who is in the same political party as the member. I have written twice to him, once for the Shire of Dundas, because of the impact of the fire on its highway, and once over the fire in Katanning, in the member's electorate, as well. I have told the member this in Parliament.

**Mr P.J. Rundle:** Every other state has managed to get on the list.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** There is a big difference.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** There is a very, very big difference between the fires that affected Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, and the fire in the Stirling Range National Park. There is a significant difference. There were not 2 000 homes lost. Please, if the member wants to say this sort of crazy stuff, he should go out there and publicly say it and call on his parliamentary colleagues in the National Party federally. He should do that comparison and see what response he gets—see what the response is from David Littleproud! But I have taken up the issues for the town of Katanning, for the people around Katanning who were affected by that fire, and for the member. I got an answer the other day from David Littleproud in his letter of 22 April. I will read this out so that the member clearly understands what the rules are. I cannot pull that money out of David Littleproud's pocket unless he agrees. Here are the rules. The letter states —

The Australian Government only provides support for bushfire events which have been notified under the jointly funded Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). Under the DRFA, a state may notify the Australian Government of an eligible disaster if:

1. a coordinated multi-agency response was required, and
2. state expenditure on eligible measures exceeds the small disaster criterion of \$240,000.

It did not reach \$240 000. The fire was in a park that belongs to the state government —

**Mr P.J. Rundle** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Roe!

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** — and the state government has put back all the infrastructure that was affected by that fire. Up in Norseman, as I explained to both the president and the CEO of Norseman, no matter how much we tried to help that shire in trying to get to that category level of \$240 000, we were not able to do it. It is the same in the member's electorate as well. I have asked the federal government to consider waiving that type of criteria. That is the answer. The answer is no.

David Littleproud is a colleague of the member's political party. I would urge the member, if he wants it changed, to take it up with him.