

**BEAGLE BAY AND DJARINDJIN VOLUNTEER FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES UNITS**

*Statement by Minister for Emergency Services*

**MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Emergency Services)** [2.05 pm]: I would like to take a moment to inform the house of the official opening of the Beagle Bay and Djarindjin Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services units last week. I was honoured to officially open the units on the Dampier Peninsula, which join Bidyadanga as the only three Aboriginal communities with their own VFES units. This is a fantastic achievement for Beagle Bay and Djarindjin and will make a significant difference to safety in their communities and the surrounding areas.

The Beagle Bay and Djarindjin VFES units provide a local emergency response across the Dampier Peninsula from protecting their communities from bushfires as well as assisting with road crashes and other hazards. The VFES volunteers come from the local major Aboriginal communities of Djarindjin, Lombadina and Ardyaloon and the volunteers include the Nyul Nyul and Bardi Jawi Rangers.

While the VFES Units were officially opened last week, the Toyota Light Tankers have been based at both Beagle Bay and Djarindjin since 2018 and the new units have already been put to the test. The appliances have responded to six fires that have threatened the communities during the 2020 northern fire season, and supported police at a vehicle accident. The vehicles are also used extensively to assist with community and homeland planned burning activities. The planned burns have continued to take place during COVID restrictions.

It is not an easy undertaking to start one of these units from scratch. It has taken many years and a lot of work to make these VFES units a reality, and I congratulate the local Aboriginal communities, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and everyone else who has been involved. This work has included the installation of an extensive communications system, which consists of a 20-metre swing pole at Beagle Bay, and the installation of a repeater on an existing Telstra tower just south of Djarindjin to upgrade communications.

I have no doubt that the VFES units will continue to empower local residents to improve community safety and take charge of their emergency services. I wish to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of the Beagle Bay and Djarindjin VFES units, which are working together to ensure a safer community.