

VOLUNTEER EMPLOYER RECOGNITION AWARDS

Statement by Minister for Emergency Services

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Emergency Services) [9.07 am]: I take this opportunity to inform the house of the 2019 Volunteer Employer Recognition Awards hosted by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. These awards celebrate employers of emergency services volunteers from across the state and recognise the incredible contribution of employers who support their staff to attend incidents and training during work hours, as well as provide donations of material, skills and funds. Seventy-nine businesses, organisations and self-employed volunteers are recipients of these awards, now in their eleventh year. I was privileged to meet employers and self-employed volunteers from WA who received awards, with 38 in the gold category, 29 in silver and 12 in the bronze category. These awards are an important way to acknowledge those who support our emergency services volunteers who keep our community safe. Employers' support of the emergency management sectors is essential. This gives volunteers the ability to take time off work, often at short notice and sometimes for extended periods, to protect our community. Their efforts have a direct impact on our lives. This is especially significant for self-employed volunteers, who often close the doors to their business and reschedule clients and jobs to respond to an emergency.

I met 36 award recipients who attended the award ceremony in Perth on 1 November 2019 at Government House Ballroom. A regional ceremony was held in Margaret River on 8 November 2019, at which I was represented by Hon Adele Farina, MLC, member for the South West Region. To the 24 recipients in the south west, I thank you for your continued contribution and celebrate your community spirit. For those who were not able to attend the ceremony, the remaining 19 awards will be presented to the deserving recipients in the next few months. I am sure that everyone in this house will join me in acknowledging the important contribution made by employers of emergency services volunteers and self-employed volunteers. In closing, there has been some recent discussion around remunerating volunteers or employers of volunteers. I can attest that neither of these measures could be implemented without fundamentally altering the spirit of volunteering, which is service to our communities.