

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS —  
CODE OF CONDUCT — COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

**466. Mr D.T. REDMAN to the Minister for Emergency Services:**

I refer to the mandatory online code of conduct training for all Department of Fire and Emergency Services volunteers that commenced this week.

- (1) Is the minister aware that this code of conduct forbids emergency services volunteers from communicating with state and federal members of Parliament regarding emergency services matters?
- (2) What does the minister intend to do about the gag order on the volunteer fire and rescue service, the State Emergency Service, the Volunteer Marine Rescue WA and bush fire services under the control of DFES?

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

I thank the member for that question.

- (1)–(2) I think we have been down this path before—remember?

**Mr D.T. Redman:** No, we haven't.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Yes, we have. Oh, yes we have. I remember answering a question from the Nationals WA about a visit by one of its members to Marine Rescue Port Hedland. Remember? Just turning up, unannounced—he wanted to go and see everybody. He was an upper house member from the Agricultural Region, remember? He just turned up, unannounced, because there was a National Party meeting up there in Port Hedland and he thought it was a good idea to just drop in and go and see the volunteers, and I denied that request.

I will go through the groups of volunteers that are covered by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services: they are the volunteer fire and rescue service, the State Emergency Service, the volunteer fire and emergency services and, of course, the Volunteer Marine Rescue Services. When it comes to anybody, whether politicians or not, going along and talking to bush fire brigade volunteers who are covered by local government, that has nothing to do with me. If the member wants to go along and talk to them and have his picture taken before the election, he can go along and do that—if they want to talk to him. He can go along and do that, but if they are funded out of taxpayers' funds and through the emergency services levy —

**Mr D.T. Redman:** Then you put a gag order on them.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warren–Blackwood!

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** No, there is a code of conduct. Just like you cannot walk into any government agency and get your photograph taken with public servants, nor should you be able to do that with people who are part of the state apparatus. Even though they are volunteers, they are still part of the state apparatus, and the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner himself would like to know. That is the reason it is there. Those volunteers come directly under him in all their actions, in all their legal coverage, and in terms of their discipline, and they do not want people like you or any other MP going in without notice and interfering with what those volunteers do. There is no problem at all with you contacting my office and seeking approval, and then going along; there is no problem with doing that. That, my friend, is no different from what it was like when you were in government; no different at all.

**Mr D.T. Redman:** I have a supplementary, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warren–Blackwood, you asked about six questions there; I thought they were your supplementaries!