

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES — FIREFIGHTERS

Statement by Minister for Emergency Services

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Emergency Services) [2.04 pm]: I would like to take this opportunity to inform the house about how the Department of Fire and Emergency Services is encouraging greater diversity of our firefighters and emergency services personnel, particularly in boosting the number of women now applying to join the ranks as career firefighters.

DFES now follows a contemporary recruitment process, which encourages greater diversity and more women to consider a career in firefighting. Female firefighters are now attending home-and-away fixtures of the AFLW to promote firefighting as a career option. These programs are delivering impressive results. In 2019, a record 230 women applied to join the firefighting ranks, up from 87 in 2016. DFES has made it a priority to challenge misconceptions around what it takes to be a firefighter. Social media, print and television promotion is raising the profile of our female firefighters. Beyond recruitment, other key programs are being delivered to support improved female recruitment and retention rates, such as the design of new fire stations that include change room facilities and unisex toilets. This has not always been standard. The state government has also made additional ablutions and change room facilities a priority as part of the emergency services facility upgrades being delivered through the McGowan government's WA recovery plan. This means that 12 stations across the state will directly benefit from the recovery plan. A further 16 stations will also be upgraded over the next two years, with this program continuing to be rolled out until all facilities are modernised.

This government is committed to encouraging people from all walks of life to take up roles in emergency services, whether it be as a career firefighter or a volunteer or in a logistics role. Each and every member of our emergency services performs an important role in helping to protect our community. I encourage anyone interested in emergency services to consider stepping up. These are rewarding roles that make a significant difference to the safety of our state.