

**ESPERANCE BUSHFIRES — CORONIAL INQUEST — GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

*Statement by Minister for Emergency Services*

**MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Emergency Services)** [9.06 am]: I would like to take this opportunity to inform the house about the state government's response to the coronial inquest into the tragic deaths during the devastating bushfires in Esperance in November 2015. The bushfires were some of the worst fires in recent Western Australian history. They had a devastating impact on the Esperance community, especially those who tragically lost family and friends. I have travelled to Esperance six times since 2017, and I am continually heartened by the resilience that the community has shown.

The state government has supported all but two of the coroner's recommendations, many of which have been implemented since the McGowan government was elected. We have boosted the capacity of emergency services through unprecedented bushfire management reform including, but not limited to, the creation of the Rural Fire Division within the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, with an increased focus on bushfire management, particularly mitigation. DFES is now a holistic emergency management agency, focused on prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The establishment of the Bushfire Centre of Excellence will enhance capacity and capability through building skills, knowledge and experience in bushfire management. We are investing more than \$50 million in bushfire mitigation.

Last year, the Shire of Esperance was provided with \$96 140 to fund a bushfire risk planning coordinator for six months to begin development of a bushfire risk management plan. So far, the Esperance BRMP has identified 2 084 assets that have been mapped, with its risks assessed and recorded in the DFES bushfire risk management system. The establishment of a Bushfire Fleet Mobility Working Group, with members including DFES and Shire of Esperance personnel, volunteers and subject matter experts working together to explore opportunities that enhance the mobility of fleet in local terrain. We have contributed funding through the emergency services levy for four new fire stations in Esperance. We have completed a comprehensive crew protection program of safety enhancements and automated vehicle tracking and distress alerting, all of which are designed to protect our emergency services personnel who put their lives at risk to protect local communities. We have installed, in conjunction with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, a new radio repeater to improve coverage across the area.

The conditions faced by firefighters on that day were horrendous and resulted in a tragic loss of life. We can continue to make improvements to the emergency management landscape and enhance the safety of our emergency services personnel and the community. I now table the state government's response to the recommendations of the Esperance coronial inquest.

[See paper [3953](#).]