

CORONAVIRUS — EMERGENCY SERVICES

Statement by Minister for Emergency Services

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Emergency Services) [12.06 pm]: I would like to take this opportunity to update the house on the recent amendments to the Emergency Management Act and regulations made to significantly strengthen our state's response to COVID-19 and community safety into the future. Together with the rest of the country, Western Australia has faced an unprecedented emergency. The types of measures needed to combat this deadly virus have forced us to require the community to act in certain ways. We introduced new legislative measures to ensure emergency management personnel could protect public safety. The new legislation included: \$1 000 fines for individuals and \$5 000 fines for businesses who go against the directions issued; enhanced powers for the State Emergency Coordinator to compel electronic location monitoring for the purpose of ensuring quarantine requirements are followed; and providing certainty to the State Emergency Coordinator when issuing directions to a group or class of persons, such as a remote community.

In the past 13 days two new cases of COVID-19 have been detected in Western Australia. This is a good position for our state. There is no doubt that the new provisions, which have been extensively used by the State Emergency Coordinator, have directly contributed to this result, including directions ensuring social distancing requirements. The amendments have also meant our emergency management authorities are well placed to address behaviours posing a risk to public safety, with WA Police issuing approximately 50 infringements under the new provisions. These are not the only recent changes to the emergency management framework we have made for the ongoing safety of Western Australians.

We have recently introduced a hostile act hazard provision into the emergency management regulations so that the Emergency Management Act can be used in a number of security-related situations. These amendments allow Western Australian authorities to use the emergency management framework to manage situations such as the 2017 Bourke Street Mall and Flinders Street–Elizabeth Street intersection vehicle attacks in Melbourne. We hope that we never have to use these powers, but we must be prepared as a community. This government is committed to continually strengthening our emergency management framework, and I thank all members in this house for their support as we continue to put public safety first.