

FORRESTDALE FIRE — FIREFIGHTING EFFORT

Statement by Minister for Emergency Services

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Emergency Services) [2.10 pm]: I would like to take this opportunity to inform the house of the amazing efforts of the career, volunteer and Parks and Wildlife Service firefighters who faced extremely difficult circumstances during the Forrestdale fire last week. They worked tirelessly together on the ground and in the air, and did an incredible job protecting lives and property from serious harm. The firefighters faced extremely challenging conditions, with winds on the fireground gusting up to 80 kilometres an hour. To make matters worse, the fire was burning in peat land, which is very hard to extinguish and get under control. I am sure everyone in this house will join me in thanking each and every one of those people who in some cases travelled hundreds of kilometres from their homes to help protect Forrestdale and surrounding communities. I believe at one stage nearly 50 per cent of our career service assets were at that blaze, which shows just how challenging it was and the extraordinary efforts our emergency services went to.

Of course, it was not just those on the front line. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the State Emergency Service, local government, St John Ambulance, the Salvation Army, the Department of Child Protection and Family Support, Main Roads WA, Western Power, the Bureau of Meteorology, the Department of Education, Catholic Education Western Australia and the WA Police Force. Everyone involved in this fire, whether they had a small or a large role, was integral. Incidents such as these require an extensive and dedicated team not only on site, but also behind the scenes. We must acknowledge all those involved, including the families and employers of emergency responders.

I wish to express my thanks to the community and residents for heeding the advice of the public warning alerts and implementing their bushfire survival plans or remaining vigilant at what must have been a very stressful time. Being prepared and having a bushfire plan in place is vital. The Forrestdale fires show once again that even in the metro area residents can face serious bushfires. Again, thank you to everyone involved in the Forrestdale fires.