

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES — BUSHFIRE SEASON

Statement by Minister for Emergency Services

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Emergency Services) [2.43 pm]: As New South Wales faces catastrophic fire conditions today, with bushfires out of control, I rise to inform the house of Western Australia's preparedness for the bushfire season. On Saturday, I attended the Department of Fire and Emergency Services' metropolitan volunteer pre-season forum. The outlook for the southern half of Western Australia points to an above-average fire risk for significant pockets of the state. Dry conditions in the Kimberley and increased fuel loads in the Pilbara due to tropical cyclone Veronica are keeping northern volunteer and career firefighters busy even as they enter the wet season. We are now experiencing our third driest year since records began. Saturday's fire at Gnangara showed how the bushfire season is shifting and how quickly fires can take hold. I want to thank the volunteers and career officers for their tireless efforts on Saturday to bring that fire under control and to protect residents and their property. I also want to thank our volunteers throughout the state for their efforts over the weekend.

As our climate continues to change, the ferocity, duration and number of fires will increase. The McGowan government has invested record funding into mitigation efforts and has given local governments the financial support they need to identify and address their bushfire risks. We are increasing our efforts at preparedness and prevention, while continuing to support our resources in response and recovery. Just last week, I handed over more than \$1 million worth of emergency services levy funding in the form of a new 12.2 water tanker for the Mundijong Bush Fire Brigade, and a multipurpose urban pump type 3 for the Roleystone Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service. I have also witnessed firsthand the advanced technology in our aerial fleet to help map and track fires to support crews on the ground.

But all Western Australians must appreciate their personal risk, and they must take action now. We cannot have a fire truck on every corner or a water bomber over every house. The lessons from Queensland and New South Wales are clear—we all have to be better prepared. People must have their "5 minute fire chat" today to determine exactly what they would do if a bushfire strikes. Complacency can be fatal, and individuals must prepare now before it is too late.