

**GERALDTON CAREER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE FIREFIGHTERS —
GROUP BRAVERY CITATION**

Statement by Minister for Emergency Services

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Emergency Services) [12.10 pm]: I would like to take this opportunity to inform the house about a Group Bravery Citation bestowed on seven firefighters from the Geraldton Career Fire and Rescue Service. On the afternoon of 4 May 2016, Geraldton Career Fire and Rescue Service firefighters responded to rescue a 17-year-old male student who had become trapped in rocks below the water level at Geraldton Town Beach. He was in danger of drowning, as the swell continued to wash over him. The firefighters entered the water and placed a breathing apparatus on the student. The dangerous surf conditions made the task extremely difficult for them, as they were repeatedly washed off the rocks, pushed back onto the rocks or carried to shore by the swell. With the risk of injury increasing to the student and his rescuers, the decision was made to remove the breathing apparatus and instead connect an airline to the mask; however, as the mask was not designed to function under water, it made it difficult for the student to continue to breathe uninterrupted. Time was critical, so the firefighters set to work using a crowbar to drive a wooden wedge under the boulder, allowing them to lever it up and dislodge it enough to free the student's arm.

Station Officer Parkin maintained the safety of his crew by continually monitoring their actions. Due to the large swell and nature of the rescue, firefighters sustained minor injuries, but this did not deter them. The Geraldton Career Fire and Rescue Service received the Group Bravery Citation for its firefighters' bravery and courage above and beyond the call of duty in challenging conditions. Their ability to think outside the box and implement a life-saving solution using equipment not designed for use in water while under extreme duress was heroic. I am sure that members in this house will join me in acknowledging the seven professional firefighters who have been bestowed the Group Bravery Citation: Station Officer David Parkin, Firefighter Damien Gilbert, Firefighter Christopher Worthington, Firefighter Ben Clune, Firefighter David Geqwin, Firefighter Matthew Merritt, and Firefighter William Gillespie-Harp. On behalf of the state, I would like to recognise each of them for their efforts and thank them for their ongoing service in protecting our community.

Members: Hear, hear!