

“ARE YOU BUSHFIRE READY?” CAMPAIGN

813. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I note that over the weekend the minister launched the “Are You Bushfire Ready?” campaign. Can he please tell the house why this campaign is so important for all Western Australians?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

I thank the member for Vasse for that question. The member for Vasse, like many members on both sides of this house, represents an electorate that has significantly high bushfire risk areas within it. I know that every member of this house can understand the tragedy and the devastation that can occur when a bushfire wreaks havoc on a community. I know that the member for Vasse, as much as any of us, represents an electorate that has significant challenges.

This year we have again kicked off our “Are You Bushfire Ready?” campaign, using the Perth Scorchers cricket team. At the end of the day, we will enlist help and fighters for our cause from wherever they may come because our message is simple. The government is doing more than has ever been done before. I say this every year. We go into the bushfire season better prepared than ever before, with better equipped career and volunteer firefighters and emergency services workers, newer fleets of trucks, the biggest aerial firefighting fleet ever assembled, and personal protection equipment for firefighters and personnel. The government has also achieved, mostly through the success of the Department of Parks and Wildlife and the Minister for Environment, almost record targets of fuel reduction burning in recent months. We are doing everything we humanly can do to prepare the state for the onslaught of the bushfire season. However, it is our expectation that private landowners will do their bit as well. It is not fair to expect us to send firefighters into harm’s way to defend houses if people have not done the absolute minimum to look after their own property and prepare for bushfires. It is that time of the year when the weather starts to warm up, the bush starts to dry up and the risk starts to increase. It is a very simple message. It is never too late. If a person owns a property with a bushfire risk around it, it is their responsibility to do their bit to make sure it is bushfire ready. We are proud of the message we are selling to the people of Western Australia: “It is a shared responsibility; do your bit.”