

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES — UNCLEAN CHIMNEY FIRES

871. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to an article in the *Busselton–Dunsborough Mail* on 13 August titled “Department calls for chimney clean”.

- (1) How many fires caused by unclean chimneys has the department attended in the south west over the winter period?
- (2) What is the department doing to educate the community about the danger of ash and soot build-up in chimneys?
- (3) Is the minister aware of the claim that fireplaces and chimneys have been incorrectly installed by unqualified installers?
- (4) What is the extent of this problem and what is the government doing to reduce the risks of fire?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the Attorney General, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services advises —

- (1) Between 1 April 2014 and 20 August 2014 the Department of Fire and Emergency Services attended a total of 17 chimney/flue fires in the south west and lower south west regions. Of these, 11 were identified as being caused by unclean or improperly maintained chimneys/flues.
- (2) DFES includes a section on chimney maintenance in its publication “Fire Safety in Your Home” and maintains a “Chimneys and Flues” page on its website.
- (3) DFES advises that its fire investigation analysis unit has received no reports of fires as a result of incorrectly constructed fireplaces or chimneys.
- (4) Each year, DFES implements a home fire safety campaign that provides support to firefighters to deliver home fire safety messages within their local community. The “Fire Safety in Your Home” publication is the key document that supports this work. “Chimney and Flue Fires” is one of the 12 home fire safety messages included.