

ASHFIELD FLATS — DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES REPORT

403. Mr D.J. KELLY to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to the Ashfield fire in March 2015 and to the minister's claim in this place on 24 February this year that he denied me access to the fire report only because his department advised him that the report was still in draft form.

- (1) Is it not true that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, in a briefing note signed by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, Mr Gregson, on 7 September 2015, correctly advised the minister that the report was completed, and that the commissioner even provided the minister with a copy of the report, with the recommendation that it be provided to me?
- (2) Why did the minister mislead this house by claiming that his decision to deny me access to the report was based on advice from his department, when clearly that was not true?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

- (1)–(2) I know I am not meant to ask questions of opposition members, but did the member get the answer to the question on notice that he asked during the estimates committee on this issue?

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: We outlined the detail. He asked a specific question in estimates.

The SPEAKER: Just answer the question. Member for Cannington, I have been very lenient on you. If you shout out again, you are going to get called.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The member for Bassendean asked a specific question during estimates on this very issue and I undertook to provide further information and an exact answer. I also told him at the time, and I have stood in this place when he asked another question about a fire that happened over a year ago —

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member has asked two very simple questions and I do not understand why the minister is incapable of answering them.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. A quick answer.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The mind boggles. I undertook during estimates to provide the member with that information and he has been provided with that information. I also pointed out last time I stood here during question time and answered a question from him about a fire that happened over a year ago on land that was owned by the Department of Planning, not the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, that, to the best of my knowledge at the time, it was a draft report. My understanding has not changed since then. I stood in this place earlier this year when he asked the same question and said, "I am sorry; we provided the wrong information to you." There was no conspiracy theory. I am not in the business of sitting on reports on other departments' land. There were no big secrets to keep. It was the advice that I was provided at the time and I tried to give the member the best advice. It was the wrong advice, but back then I apologised to him for that during question time. If the member for Bassendean wants another apology, again, I am sorry; we provided him with the wrong advice. But, as I said, there was no big secret conspiracy to try to keep that information from him.