

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE — WEAR ORANGE WEDNESDAY

890. Mr M.H. TAYLOR to the Minister for Emergency Services:

Before I ask my question, I would like to acknowledge the Hoiland family from Norway in the gallery today.

I am aware that this morning some State Emergency Service volunteers were abseiling down cliffs near Blackwall Reach overlooking the Swan River. Can the minister please provide the house with some details as to what they may have been doing there this morning?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

I absolutely can and I thank the member for the question. I congratulate the member on his choice of tie. Obviously, we shop at the same tailor—it is a very classy tie! I congratulate everyone who is wearing orange. Today is Wear Orange Wednesday to raise awareness of the SES and say thank you to the 2 000 volunteers across the state of Western Australia who are part of our state emergency services groups. Every year, the SES receives about 500 calls for assistance through the 132 500 number and the SES does a wonderful job. It is a job that it does not only when the SES turns out to an emergency, but also when its members prepare themselves by turning up every Wednesday, or once a week, to train and maintain competency, ensuring that they are up to date with things such as first aid, communications and how to use chainsaws and other equipment that they are trained to use. When the SES responds to call-outs for storm damage, the volunteers help people make temporary repairs to their houses and lift fallen trees off driveways and buildings. They do an awful lot of work to repair storm damage. The SES has horses, dogs, and flood rescue boats and the volunteers use a lot of skills to help the people of Western Australia when needed. They also do an awful lot of searching for missing people at the request of Western Australia Police. However, we need to give these volunteers more than gratitude and platitudes. Between September just gone and February next year, 48 new appliances will be delivered to SES units across Western Australia. The SES does a wonderful job helping people when they are most in need, so I want to thank those members who have been a part of Wear Orange Wednesday and who have shown their support for their local SES volunteers.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Sorry, what was that member for Girrawheen?

Ms M.M. Quirk: Especially the member for Maylands.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Sorry, I do not speak “hiss” after the member’s interjections yesterday. She should be ashamed to ever open her mouth in this place again.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: How about the member shows a bit of respect for someone making a maiden speech instead of hissing like a cat at her first speech. It was her first speech and the member was hissing.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order for the first time the member for Forrestfield, the Minister for Emergency Services and the member for West Swan.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: We all know what we heard on this side of the house yesterday during someone’s first speech, but anyway —

Mr P.B. Watson: Sit down, boofhead!

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Can I repeat the SES number? It is 132 500. The SES is always there. The volunteers spend an awful lot of time training to come to the aid of people and I suggest that every member engage with their local SES and say thank you during SES awareness week.