

MARGARET RIVER BUSHFIRES — DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION —  
FIRE PLANNING DOCUMENTS

**860. Mr E.S. RIPPER to the Minister for Environment:**

Mr Speaker, I might say I absolutely support the Western Australian government in seeking to secure that 75 per cent compensation.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Do you agree, therefore, that Labor has reneged on reconciliation of native title, to your collective shame?

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** I agree that that compensation should be paid.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members! Member for Armadale, member for Kwinana and Premier, I formally call you all to order for the first time today. Question time is not an opportunity for general debate or anything else. I give the call back to the Leader of the Opposition.

*Point of Order*

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** While you were on your feet I heard the member for Cannington clearly call the Premier a hypocrite. I suggest it is unparliamentary.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, members! Whether the member for Cannington said something or did not say something, I did not hear the member for Cannington say a thing. I will not make any judgement on that at all. I give the call back to the Leader of the Opposition.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** Mr Speaker —

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** How was Margaret River?

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** The devastation was quite disturbing.

I refer again to prescribed burns to take place between now and Christmas and I refer also to yesterday's evasive answer in the other place and the minister's admission in question time yesterday that the Department of Environment and Conservation does have a prescribed burns plan.

- (1) Exactly how many prescribed burns are planned between now and Christmas and at what locations?
- (2) Will the minister table the department's prescribed burns plan; and, if not, why not?
- (3) In the wake of the Keelty recommendations, what bid has DEC made for increased resources to expand burns and has that bid been successful?

**Mr W.R. MARMION replied:**

(1)–(3) I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. He mentioned the prescribed burns currently being undertaken in the south west. We have actually changed the approvals process. No further prescribed burns will be undertaken without the approval of the director of regional services.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** So you have changed the approvals process.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** As of yesterday, we have added another layer to make sure that there is a further layer over the top. What prescribed burns will be conducted between now and Christmas or after Christmas will depend on the conditions at the time because, as people in this house know, and as I reported yesterday, as the weather dries out in the northern areas of the south west region, those prescribed burns are not undertaken, but the opportunity is taken in the Great Southern areas of the south west region so that we can protect the towns along the coast of Northcliffe, Walpole and Denmark, and infrastructure along the coast such as roads and bridges. On a case-by-case basis, prescribed burns will continue, and they will be assessed by the correct people. As a result of the Margaret River fires, we have put in place another safety measure, so now Mr Dans, the director of regional services, will oversee any burns.