

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES FIREFIGHTING VEHICLES —  
WORKSAFE INVESTIGATION

**422. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Emergency Services:**

I refer to recent reports in the media that many of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services fleet of firefighting vehicles are the subject of a WorkSafe investigation because vehicles are hundreds of kilograms overweight, have water pressure problems, are equipped with tyres not meant to go off-road and even have water tanks in the wrong place.

- (1) Is the minister embarrassed that he was not aware of these issues until the journalist alerted him to them?
- (2) What responsibility does the minister take for the lives and safety of firefighters, both career and volunteer?
- (3) Can the minister now update the house on the progress of the WorkSafe investigations?

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:**

- (1)–(3) When I get one question on emergency services from the Labor Party in 12 months, I know it does not care about emergency services. When I get two in eight weeks, it only makes me believe —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, through the Chair, please. Answer the question.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** When I get two questions on emergency services in eight weeks, it makes me believe that the rumours that the Australian Workers' Union has its eyes on the seat of Girrawheen must be true.

Several members interjected.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** I think the member for Girrawheen is under the pump.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Cannington, I call you to order for the first time. Member for Mandurah and Minister for Health, you are called for the first time. I want an answer through the Chair.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** I will start by saying that for a number of weeks now I have been continually reminded by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, Wayne Gregson, that there is no formal WorkSafe investigation into fire trucks owned by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** Formal!

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** There is no WorkSafe investigation. I can tell the member for Girrawheen that some time ago someone who used to work in the fleet garage out in O'Connor made some allegations to WorkSafe about the conditions and the structural integrity of a number of fire trucks. WorkSafe had a look at those allegations.

As of this morning, no improvement notices whatsoever have been issued by WorkSafe on fire trucks owned by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. Why did I not know about an investigation? Perhaps because there is no investigation! I also add that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services is spending a significant amount of money—millions and millions of dollars—upgrading the fleet. We have the most modern up-to-date fleet of emergency service vehicles in the history of the state of Western Australia. In the past, under a Labor government, some fire trucks were over 20 years old; they were recycled garbage trucks that members opposite allowed to go onto a fireground, which is a very dangerous place. The Labor government operated 20-plus-year-old fire trucks. We are updating the entire fleet. We are rolling out true protection upgrades and ensuring that any engineering issues to do with weight, suspension and location of equipment on fire trucks are addressed properly. Is the Department of Fire and Emergency Services working with WorkSafe to ensure that is done? Of course, the department consults with WorkSafe, but I can tell the member for Girrawheen for the sixth or seventh time in two weeks that my commissioner has advised me that there is no formal WorkSafe investigation into trucks owned by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.