

PLANNING — BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT — MT HELENA

580. Hon CHARLES SMITH to the minister representing the Minister for Planning:

I refer to the minister's decision in February to approve the rezoning of 46 hectares of rural land near the Mt Helena town site in the Shire of Mundaring for urban development.

- (1) Why did the minister ignore advice from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the Western Australian Planning Commission to reject the rezoning proposal on the grounds that the intensification of development at this location would result in an unacceptable bushfire risk?
- (2) By approving the rezoning, does the minister concede that the state government is knowingly exposing future residents to possibly catastrophic bushfire risks?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

On behalf of the minister representing the Minister for Planning, I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(2) The Minister for Planning had regard to the advice of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the Western Australian Planning Commission when approving the metropolitan region scheme amendment. In making the decision, the Minister for Planning outlined the requirement for the preparation of an updated and refined bushfire management plan to be assessed by relevant agencies at subsequent stages of planning. The Mt Helena urban precinct includes an area incorporating 20 existing houses on the landholdings and it is adjacent to an existing subdivision. The current structure planning proposal, including a bushfire management plan, aims to reduce current bushfire hazard levels from extreme and moderate to moderate and low. As such, it is anticipated that construction standards to protect against bushfires will apply to new developments.