

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND WILDLIFE — BURN-OFF TARGETS

**643. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Environment:**

I begin by acknowledging the people of New South Wales and the dreadful fires that are challenging the people and communities there.

I refer to the government's failure to meet burn-off targets.

- (1) How far behind is the Department of Parks and Wildlife currently with its essential burn-off targets?
- (2) What percentage of burn-offs specifically target areas that, if left unburnt, would pose a significant risk to human life and property?

**Mr A.P. JACOB replied:**

Speaking of New South Wales, I should have mentioned earlier that the government has contributed \$250 000 to that appeal.

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Gosnells for the question. Firstly, he refers to the burning targets of the Department of Parks and Wildlife. I thank him for the opportunity to address that issue, because the ones he refers to actually relate to last year's burning targets, not the season that we are currently in. It is a very good opportunity to point that out.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire:** Could you answer the question?

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Gosnells!

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** We have been very up-front about that. The government has readily acknowledged that although there was a transition to rolling out the WorkSafe improvement notices and the Keelty recommendations, there was a drop-off in the previous season's prescribed burning target; however, we are only just now ramping up this current season's prescribed burning program, and I look forward to updating the house about our progress in that space.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire:** So you cannot give me a number for this year so far.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Gosnells!

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** Following on from recent Liberal–National government initiatives, we have contributed an extra \$32.9 million towards prescribed burning. This is something that the state government supports strongly as it recognises the importance of the prescribed burning program. This \$32.9 million includes an extra 77 dedicated fire management officers, taking our full staff complement to about 800 fire staff operating in that space. Those new processes are now in place and, as I have already answered, equipment upgrades are well underway.

**Mr M. McGowan:** That does not answer the question.

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** It does answer the question. By the end of November this year, the south west fleet will be substantially upgraded.

**Mr M. McGowan:** No, it does not.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire:** I asked the minister about burning targets.

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** The question was specifically about our prescribed burning targets and I am directly addressing that. Unfortunately for the member opposite, he was asking about data from 2012.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire:** No, minister; I want to know for 2013.

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** We have acknowledged that those burning targets fell well short, we have upgraded the fleet in preparation for this season and we are upgrading the final few trucks at a rate of about four per week, which should be completed by the end of November. The prescribed burning season is well underway, with 147 counted burns and, indeed, people are out there burning today.