

EMERGENCY SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS — HEARING IMPAIRED

**555. Hon SIMON O'BRIEN to the minister representing the Minister for Emergency Services:**

I refer to correspondence from the president of the Deafness Council Western Australia to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services' strategic communications coordinator on 25 October 2018 and to the Minister for Emergency Services on 17 April 2019. Will future emergency services announcements broadcast by television be open-captioned; and, if not, why not?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

Each media outlet controls its own broadcasting and captioning; however, DFES and Access Plus WA Deaf work in partnership before and during DFES major emergencies to ensure broadcasts are as accessible as possible to the whole community. This includes accessing the latest information and what action to take in an emergency via the Emergency WA website or the DFES Facebook page or Twitter feed. Recently completed initiatives include a joint memorandum of understanding and new activation procedures for emergencies; WA deaf society interpreters routinely appearing alongside DFES spokespeople during emergency press conferences; the production of videos specifically for hard of hearing people that explain what to do in an emergency, which have been promoted across each organisation's channels and are ready for broadcast during emergencies; DFES funding WA deaf society interpreters to attend interstate emergency public information training; regular information exchanges and updates; and the hosting of reciprocal education and awareness sessions by both organisations to promote shared understanding. DFES staff presented to members of the WA deaf society and the wider community, and WA deaf society staff have held awareness sessions for DFES staff.

The state emergency public information coordinator, based within the Western Australia Police Force, has the overall responsibility for educating and raising awareness with media outlets on the need to ensure broadcasts are as accessible as possible. DFES supports and will continue to support this process through its contribution to the guide "Emergencies in Western Australia: A guide for the news media". This publication encourages media outlets to reach a wider section of the community through the use of captions and TV crawlers.