

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES — AERIAL FLEET

1308. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to the Fire and Emergency Services aerial fleet, and ask:

- (a) how many aircraft and type of aircraft comprise this fleet;
- (b) where are the base locations of these aircraft;
- (c) what is the flight range and duration limits for each of these aircraft;
- (d) is the aerial fleet staffed or operated by permanent employees or contractors;
- (e) how many crew are assigned to each aircraft, and with respect to each aircraft:
 - (i) what is the number of permanent employees and what is their prescribed role; and
 - (ii) what is the number of contractors and what is their prescribed role; and
- (f) if applicable, who has the contract to assist Fire and Emergency Services' aerial firefighting efforts and what is the term of their contract?

Mr J.M. Francis replied:

In addition to these resources, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) manage the 'DFES Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service' but this is not used as an aerial suppression resource. Department of Parks and Wildlife also contractually manage a fixed wing aerial fleet.

Department of Fire and Emergency Services aerial fleet

- (a) The rotary fleet managed by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) comprises:
 - 6 x Bell 214B Helitacs;
 - 1 x Eurocopter AS355 F1 Air Attack platform;
 - 1 x Bolkow 105 Aerial Intelligence platform; and
 - 1 x Sikorsky S64E Aircrane.
- (b) Based at Jandakot:
 - 4 x Bell 214B Helitacs;
 - 1 x Eurocopter AS355 F1 Air Attack platform;
 - 1 x Bolkow 105 Aerial Intelligence platform; and
 - 1 x S64E Aircrane Based at Busselton;
 - 2 x 214B Helitacs.
- (c) Flight range and duration limits are dependent on fuel carried and considerations such as temperature and the weight of the load carried. In general terms the following information applies:
 - Bell 214B Helitac — range 450 kms — duration of 2.5 hours;
 - Eurocopter AS355 F1 — range 500 kms — duration of 3 hours.
 - Bolkow 105 — range 450 kms — duration of 2 hours;and
 - Sikorsky S64E Aircrane — range 324 kms — duration of 2 hours;
- (d) The aerial fleet and pilots are supplied by the contractor. Fire agencies supply staff for the fire specific roles including the Air Attack Supervisor (AAS), the Air Intelligence Officer and the Air Observers.
- (e) The contracted crews assigned to each type of aircraft varies:
 - The contracted Bell 214B Helitacs and the Eurocopter AS355 F1 Air Attack platform have 1 x pilot each supported by the contractor's aviation engineers and 3 x fuel support trucks.
 - The contracted Sikorsky S64E Aircrane operates with a pilot and co-pilot supported by the contractor's aviation engineers and 1 x fuel support truck.
 - The contracted Bolkow 105 Aerial Intelligence platform operates with 1 x pilot and is supported by the contractor's aviation engineers and 1 x fuel support truck.
- (e) (i) There are 7 x DFES permanent employees, each a qualified AAS, rostered throughout the contracted aerial suppression period only from 1 November to 15 April. These personnel are attached to the Air Attack platform.

Their role is the coordination of fire bombing and related tactical activity in support of the incident, provision of specialist aviation advice at the incident and collaboration in preparation of the Air Operations section of the Incident Action Plan.

There are 6 DFES permanent employees qualified Air Observers and 2 trainees rostered throughout the contracted aerial intelligence gathering period from 1 December to 15 April.

These personnel are attached to the Aerial Intelligence platform. Their role is to undertake activities associated with gathering intelligence over a fire including:

- o mapping of fire spread;
- o recording and reporting of fire behaviour,;
- o monitoring and reporting on fire control progress; and
- o reporting on terrain features that may affect fire control and providing relevant information to ground crews.

- (e) (ii) There are currently two contractors involved in Aerial Fire Fighting, and such Emergency Operations and other activities as may be reasonably required by the National Aerial Fire Fighting Centre (NAFC) or the State Member (DFES). There is 1 contractor whose role is the provision of an aerial platform inclusive of equipment for the gathering of aerial intelligence over emergency incidents for DFES.
- (f) The contracts to assist the Department of Fire and Emergency Services aerial fire fighting are a national contract managed by the National Aerial Fire Fighting Centre (NAFC). The new contracts are fixed three year terms with 2 x one year extensions and commence this fire season. The Aerial Intelligence contract is a State contract with a fixed term of 5 years with no extensions from 1 December 2011 to 3 November 2016.