

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AUTHORITY — ABORIGINAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

**209. Mr P. ABETZ to the Minister for Emergency Services:**

I am proud to be part of the Liberal–National government that is committed to improving outcomes for Aboriginal people. With this in mind, could the minister please update the house on the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner’s Aboriginal scholarship program?

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

I thank the member for Southern River. That is an excellent question. I thank the member for his continued interest and the efforts he puts in every year in his own time educating and working with young Aboriginal people in remote parts of Western Australia. I understand that the member is shortly off again to do that work in remote parts of Western Australia. Good on the member for spending his time away from this place working with Aboriginal kids. I think the member for Southern River is an inspiration to every one of us.

**Mr D.J. Kelly:** You are an inspiration to me.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** If the member for Bassendean spent a couple of weeks of his year doing what the member for Southern River has done in remote Aboriginal communities, he might be a better person as well.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Cannington!

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** I will take this opportunity to inform members about the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner’s scholarships for Aboriginal people across Western Australia. He announced at the start of this year that we will provide two scholarships of up to \$5 000 for Aboriginal people who choose to do undergraduate or postgraduate studies that will help them learn more about building safer and more resilient Aboriginal communities. The scholarship moneys are available to pay for things such as study fees, course materials and sundries for those who study in a unit or a field that will allow them to learn more about emergency management, particularly in Aboriginal communities. The academic requirements have been designed to ensure that candidates are engaged in study that is obviously relevant to emergency management and building community resilience in times of disaster. This government believes that Aboriginal people should be able to reach for the stars. If they want to go and learn more about emergency services, emergency management and building more resilient communities out where they come from, they should be encouraged to do so. I congratulate the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner for showing some initiative and getting on in providing these scholarships.

Finally, I note that applications for this round close on 1 May. We have about a month to go, and I encourage any member in this place who has a constituent who may fit that requirement to get in contact with us and put in an application for the scholarship program.