

NURSING HOMES AND AGED CARE FACILITIES — FIRE ALARMS

2291. Ms M.M. Quirk to the Minister for Emergency Services:

Can the Minister advise what the current government policy is in ensuring fire safety and alarms in nursing homes and aged care facilities for those built prior to BCA national standards coming into force?

Mr J.M. Francis replied:

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) advises:

DFES do not undertake smoke alarm inspections other than by goodwill or by appointment via community groups like APEX and LIONS, and the DFES Community Engagement fire awareness programs at pre-determined times of the year. The April one "*Don't be a fool, check your smoke alarm*" campaign is an example of these initiatives.

All aged care facilities in Western Australia, including those built prior to Building Commission of Australia national standards coming into force, are required to meet State development laws (including local laws) relating to fire safety. These are administered by the Local Government.

In addition, aged care facilities must meet the Australian Government's building certification and accreditation standards to be eligible to receive accommodation bonds and charges. This certification process encourages the provider to maintain and provide compliant fire safety systems with the current codes and standards.

Since 2004 monitoring relating to fire safety has been carried out through the completion of an annual Fire Safety Declaration process. This requires all approved providers of residential care to complete and return a declaration to the Department of Health and Ageing on an annual basis.

On 1 July 2010, amendments were made to this requirement requiring the providers of residential care to notify the Department Health and Ageing if they become non-compliant with any applicable State and Territory laws (including local laws) relating to fire safety in respect of any residential care service operated by an approved provider.

Notification of the identified non-compliance must be provided to the Department Health and Ageing within 28 days of the approved providers non-compliance.