

Division 64: State Emergency Management Committee Secretariat, \$4 970 000 —

Ms J.M. Freeman, Chairman.

Mr J.M. Francis, Minister for Emergency Services.

Mr M.G. Cronstedt, Executive Director.

Mr R.M. Bailey, Business Services Manager, Chief Finance Officer.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Girrawheen.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: This reflects on a question I asked the minister earlier. One of the roles stated on the SEMC website is to lead programs that develop resilience and to liaise with certain stakeholders, including industry. How does SEMC interact with those stakeholders, such as industry?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will ask Mr Cronstedt to answer that question.

Mr M.G. Cronstedt: The State Emergency Management Committee and its secretariat are embarking on a state risk project that involves examining state risks across the state and also at the district level. Those district examinations have risen to develop a risk profile that involves all industries that take risks or have a potential risk in that district.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Thank you. What is the time frame on that?

Mr M.G. Cronstedt: The time frame is in the next two years the state risk project will be rolling out and developing a risk profile for all 27 hazards that the state faces.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I asked the minister earlier about the timing of major incident reviews and the fact that learnings from this year's incidents will emerge only in October. A similar thing happened last year with changes to cyclone guidelines; they came out in December. How can we ensure that these changes are made in a more timely fashion?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I know that I said that I would have a conversation with SEMC about that, and I will have that conversation with SEMC right now. I will ask the executive director whether there is a way that he can provide that report and those outcomes in a more timely fashion.

Mr M.G. Cronstedt: The development of major incident reviews and their examinations will develop learnings as they go. We will share any early learnings with the State Emergency Management Committee as soon as they are available independent of the report. If there are easy targets or easy things to do, they will be done.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I am interested in the process. A consultant is appointed to go away and do a major incident review. The draft comes back to the SEMC, which has on it senior representatives from police, DFES, DPaW and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Are they in a position to change the report that they get before it is released?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The process is that they do not have to, or do not always, engage a consultant, although I believe that in this instance one will be engaged. The State Emergency Management Committee Secretariat as a committee will consider the report. My understanding is that it is able, if it so chooses, to modify that report. There may be glaring, obvious inadequacies or mistakes in the report, as we learnt last year following Parkerville; the member may remember that there was a mistake that was not picked up with regard to whether an individual was still with us or not. It certainly has the ability to modify the report. I am then briefed on the report and it is tabled in Parliament, and my foot certainly will not be on the hose with regard to the timeliness of the release of the report, particularly if there are lessons to be learnt and implemented before the next fire season.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Is the minister in a position to make changes to the report?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I do not believe I am; I do not believe I can make changes to it. It is an independent authority.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Members of the SEMC include Mr Conran, the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, the Commissioner of Police and the director general of the Department of Parks and Wildlife. They are all on that committee and effectively oversighting a report that is released by the SEMC with an air of independence. Clearly, they are all in a position to influence the outcome.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A — Thursday, 11 June 2015]

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Ms J.M. Freeman; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Murray Cowper

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: There are other independent members on the committee and there is an independent chair. I would be gobsmacked if the member were suggesting that any of the members she mentioned would act in any way other than in the best interests of the state and independently.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Is it possible to get a list in a matrix format of the current membership of the SEMC and the membership over the past 12 months, how often it holds meetings, and the attendance at each meeting of the representatives from the various departments?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: My understanding is that all that information is contained in the annual report and on the website, so it is readily available. I will send a copy to the member.

The appropriation was recommended.

Meeting suspended from 10.53 to 11.00 am