

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES — SIMULATION TRAINING CENTRE

275. Mrs G.J. GODFREY to the Minister for Emergency Services:

Last Friday, I joined the minister at the opening of the new Department of Fire and Emergency Services simulation training centre in my electorate of Belmont. Can the minister please inform the house of how this new facility will enhance emergency response in our state?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

On behalf of government members, I just quickly acknowledge someone who is leaving the staff of this side of the house, Zak Kirkup, and wish him all the best. It is his last day here today. I wish him all the best for the future in his new career.

I thank the member for Belmont very much for her question. It was wonderful that she could make it last Friday, along with Commissioner Eric Yap from the Singapore Civil Defence Force, for the opening of the new state emergency simulation centre in Belmont. I will keep my answer short, but this is a really interesting project. The centre is located in the member's electorate of Belmont and it is Western Australia's only underground bunker. It was built during World War II and it was commissioned and used by the Royal Australian Air Force's No 6 squadron as headquarters for the last part of 1945—for the last part of the war—for six months. For the following 20 years, it pretty much sat idle and was gifted in the 1960s by the commonwealth to the state. Since then, it has been home to a number of organisations that have served emergency services in the state of Western Australia in different ways.

The government proudly put \$2.2 million into refurbishing that underground bunker in Belmont into the state simulation centre. It is almost a replica of the state operations centre and allows all the personnel who are involved in the management of emergency service situations to hone their skills and be trained in how to deal with real-life situations and manage significant emergency service events.

Mr M.P. Murray: Do you think they'll be able to find the bloke who took the dog for a walk?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much! Member for Collie–Preston, I call you to order for the first time. Member for Pilbara, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I thank the member for Collie–Preston for his interjection; I am wondering whether we will ever find out if he supports the member for Bassendean or the member for Cannington in calling for Joe Bullock's future to be determined.

Anyway, what I will say —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I do not know who is right here! I would love to be a fly on the wall when they get together next time.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Members are a bit sensitive over there.

The simulation centre is a great facility so that people involved—fire and rescue service personnel and volunteers in the future—can hone their skills in emergency services management for calling in resources. It covers how to call in Helitac support, how to call in medical services, how to use radio communications to communicate between different emergency services units and how to call up 6IP and 6AR—all those kinds of skills that people really need to work out and hone before they are put in a real-life situation. Sometimes in a real-life situation, when people are under pressure, they make the wrong call on the big issues and the results can be devastating. The government put in \$2.2 million and we are getting on with the job of providing the best modern facilities to train emergency services personnel that the state has ever had.

In closing, unfortunately, but also ironically, as we opened the centre on Friday, that afternoon we received a phone call from the federal government asking for a suitable facility close to the airport that could be used with the same resources to assist in the search for flight MH370. That facility, until further notice, although it is ready to be used as a SIMCEN—simulation training centre—will be used by the commonwealth as part of the resources to help find flight MH370. It has all the facilities—the communications, equipment and catering. We

wish all the personnel, including State Emergency Service volunteers from Western Australia, who are working on that search right now, godspeed, and all the best in the continued search for that plane.