

MARGARET RIVER BUSHFIRES CLEAN-UP — PRISONER WORK RELEASE

882. Mr J.M. FRANCIS to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I understand that in the past minimum security prisoners have been released on work release to clean up after major fire events. Can the minister inform the house if the same has happened again and let us know if minimum security prisoners have helped clean up in Margaret River?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

I thank the member for Jandakot for the question. The short answer is yes.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: We all have an eye on the clock. I appreciate that. Member for Girrawheen, I formally call you to order for the second time today.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I look forward to the opportunity to expand on my very short response. I am sure that members will be aware that during the Lake Clifton fires, the Roleystone fires and the devastating Toodyay fires last year, there was an opportunity for prisoners on work release under the section 95 arrangements to assist, and they did an absolutely fantastic job. Mr Speaker, I am sure you are well aware, as the member for Moore and whose electorate includes Greenough, that during the Greenough floods a section 95 release from the Greenough Regional Prison assisted during those floods by sandbagging homes and so on. Yesterday I spoke to the shire president of the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River to acknowledge the outstanding leadership that he showed over the past week or so during the huge challenges that he faced as the leader of local government working in concert with government agencies to deal with the fires. I also said that we were prepared to send down a couple of teams of prisoners from Bunbury Regional Prison to help in the clean-up. He was most appreciative of that. To that end, the Department of Corrective services has engaged with the recovery team in the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River following the fires to work through the sorts of things that a couple of teams could do. In the first instance, they will be involved with clearing burnt and fallen vegetation from roadsides and fence lines. They will also be replacing roadside markers and, when requested, they will help out with private homes. This work will be done over a period of three to four weeks. Potentially in the long term —

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: This is a really good news story. I do not know why the member wants to interject from the side.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cockburn, I formally call you to order for the second time today.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: During the long term there is also a chance for prison industries to help build some key infrastructure such as fencing and so on. I am sure that they can make a significant contribution to help the community in that recovery process, and clearly that is in great need. It will also be a chance for those prisoners to show some pride in helping the community out, which is very helpful for their rehabilitative process. It will show a level of reparation to the community. I am sure that will be a positive step in their rehabilitation back into society once they finish their term in prison.

I am really proud of the role that the Department of Corrective Services plays in the pre-release arrangements to help people get back into the community, and alongside that for people to play a role in supporting the community that has been through circumstances such as this where there have been huge hits on community infrastructure and where people have been knocked. This is a chance for them to assist. I am sure it will be a very, very positive outcome just as it was after the Lake Clifton, Roleystone and Toodyay fires.