

EMERGENCY SERVICES — SOUTH WEST RESCUE HELICOPTER

500. Mr G.M. CASTRILLI to the Minister for Emergency Services:

It was a pleasure to join the minister last week as he announced that the new south west emergency rescue helicopter will be based at Bunbury Airport. Could the minister explain how this vital resource will benefit communities in the region?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

Thank you, member for Bunbury, for the question. I can tell the member that it was an absolute pleasure to go to Bunbury and announce that the second rescue helicopter, as we committed to in the 2013 election would be based in Bunbury —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It was a pleasure to be there, as finally the member for Bunbury will get off my case on this. He has been like a dog with a bone, and he has been like a union boss in Labor caucus, fighting to get this helicopter based down in Bunbury and he has finally won. This is an important issue.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: At the moment we have one rescue helicopter based in my electorate of Jandakot. It is a wonderful facility.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It flies around 600 rescue missions a year at the moment. It is very busy, and it has a flying range of 500 kilometres and a radius of 250 kilometres without refuelling. As we would all know, and as the Minister for Health knows, commonsense dictates that the time it takes to get critical care to an emergency situation in which someone has been seriously injured is absolutely vital to that person's chances of survival. We have one rescue helicopter at the moment. As I said, we committed to a second one, and last week we announced that the second rescue helicopter will be based in Bunbury to cover the south west and north to the southern part of Perth. This is a \$29.95 million to \$30 million investment in trying to save lives in the south west, and trying to find people when they are lost. But predominantly much of what these helicopters do is to provide critical care and evacuation for people who have been seriously injured. In fact, 80 per cent of the call-outs are for bad situations of road crash, and in particular road crash rescue assistance.

The good news is that along with the current rescue helicopter, there will be a large area that the service will overlap. Therefore, anywhere from the southern parts of Perth to north of Bunbury, there will be two helicopters available, because at some time or other we will find that one helicopter will already be pre-tasked and parts of the state will go without. It does mean that now 90 per cent of the state's population will be under the coverage area of a rescue helicopter, and this is something that we are very proud of.

The other good news, as I said, is that some parts of the state, in particular the south metropolitan region, will be covered by two rescue helicopters, which is very good news for the member for Willagee and very good news indeed for the member for Armadale—so we can now rescue them from the Labor Party caucus and the factual infighting that obviously goes on in there! Just yell out when you need a hand, guys, and you are more than welcome to come over to our side; you are more than welcome to come over here!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Right. There is shouting going on from both sides here.