

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

2014–15 ANNUAL REPORT HEARINGS

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
TUESDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2015**

**SESSION THREE
DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Members

**Hon Ken Travers (Chair)
Hon Peter Katsambanis (Deputy Chair)
Hon Liz Behjat
Hon Alanna Clohesy
Hon Rick Mazza**

Hearing commenced at 3.46 pm

Mr WAYNE GREGSON, APM

Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, examined:

Mr STEVE FEWSTER

Deputy Commissioner, Capability, examined:

Mr LLOYD BAILEY

Deputy Commissioner, Operations, examined:

Mrs CAROLE DOWD

Director, Risk Planning and Reporting, examined:

Ms SUZANNE PATERSON

Executive Director, Governance and Strategy, examined:

Mr FRANK PASQUALE

Executive Director, Corporate Services, examined:

Mrs GEORGINA CAMARDA

Director, Business Services, examined:

The CHAIR: Good afternoon and welcome. On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I would like to welcome you to today's hearing. Firstly, can the witnesses confirm that they have read, understood and signed the document headed "Information for Witnesses"?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: I understand that there is one witness sitting at the back who may come forward so we are also confirming that you have read it. Witnesses need to be aware of the severe penalties that apply to persons providing false or misleading testimony to a parliamentary committee. It is essential that all your testimony before the committee is complete and truthful to the best of your knowledge. This hearing is being recorded by Hansard and a transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. The hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private either of its own motion or at the witness's request. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question. I should point out that we are actually broadcasting it live on the internet as we speak. Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to review agency outcomes on behalf of the people of Western Australia, and the committee values your assistance with this.

Do any of the witnesses wish to make an introductory statement? If not, I will hand it over to the members.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I refer to the State Emergency Management Committee Parkerville bushfire review. In your annual report it says that you have continued to make improvements in managing bushfire-related risk across WA, based on the learnings from that review. I am assuming I am talking about the same review—the State Emergency Management Committee review of the Parkerville–Stoneville–Mt Helena fires? Is that the document?

Mr Gregson: It would mainly be three reviews that we are basing our continuous improvement on and our strategy for continuous improvement. One was the first Keelty report; the second Keelty; and then the SEMC Parkerville fire, yes.

[3.50 pm]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: In terms of the implementation of the findings of those reviews and the learnings of those reviews, do you have a strategic approach to implementing all those findings?

Mr Gregson: Yes. Some were grouped thematically because there were common themes that were identified in Keelty 1, 2 and 3, and some are specific. We have a systematic approach of ensuring that we have implemented each of those recommendations.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: What is that approach? Do you have an internal management group that looks at the implementation framework?

Mr Gregson: We started off having a document, which we publish, called “Future Directions”, which was an interim strategic plan. That has graduated into a strategic plan of 12 years in three four-year horizons. The first four-year horizon focused quite specifically in part on recommendations coming out of Keelty 1 and 2 and the SEMC review of Parkerville. Can I also add, though, not all of the recommendations, of course, relate to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services but, nevertheless, we make sure that we —

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: But a large part of them—I am thinking really about Parkerville.

Mr Gregson: Yes, a large part of them would be, but there are a significant number, surprisingly, that rest with other government agencies, particularly Planning, the Building Commission, Premier and Cabinet, Parks and Wildlife, for example. All of those are regularly reported at the State Emergency Management Committee.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: You mentioned that was an interim strategic plan.

Mr Gregson: The first one—the futures paper—was, yes. That was replaced with a permanent strategic plan. We are just reaching the end of the first four-year horizon on that and it will be reissued.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: When will it be reissued?

Mr Gregson: We finish our four years at the end of this financial year, which has been a focus on style. Each year had a particular focus over the four years of the first horizon. Then we will do an executive retreat; we will do a bit of a gap analysis and see what we need to capture into our program of works moving forward and then we will reissue the plan with a further horizon into the out years.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: What is the status of that strategic plan? Is it a public document?

Mr Gregson: Yes.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: In terms of an analysis of where you are at in that strategic plan, is there any regular reporting method publicly available?

Mr Gregson: I do not think there would be an holistic public report card, so to speak, but certainly internally we do a review. Each of the horizons forms a specific program of works for the year. Our annual program of works is based on the strategic plan. We look at a range of potential initiatives. We cut our cloth to suit our budget. They become specific projects in the program of works and then we report through dashboard reporting on each of those projects. The program of works basically percolates into the high-level strategic intents linked, indeed, to the strategic intentions of government.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I have not checked your website. Is it available on your website?

Mr Gregson: Yes, it should be.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: In terms of identifying within that document where initiatives came from, whether they came from Keelty 1 and 2 or Parkerville, is there an easy way of identifying those?

Mr Gregson: Not from the public documents, no. We would have an audit trail because when we are contemplating the program of works for the year, we have the recommendations from the various reviews. We have an innovation portal where members of staff and volunteers can input ideas into the program of works. We have government priorities that are given to us in the form of election commitments and then we have our capital works program, all of which synthesise into the annual program of works. I could go back. There is a direct correlation between where each of the recommendations might fit. Those that relate to DFES would fit into the annual program of works but it would not be readily discernible from a read of the strategic plan that is publicly available.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: What about a report to the people of the hills—again, I am focusing specifically on Parkerville, Stoneville and Mt Helena—about how you have responded to those specific recommendations? Has there been any way of reporting back to those people, considering that they were consulted in the review?

Mr Gregson: I am not aware at this stage that there has been any feedback with a direct correlation between the recommendations of the review and the outcomes or the endeavours that have been taken with respect to those recommendations but I think one could be put together.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: It would be useful for this committee to know the extent to which those reviews have been responded to.

Mr Gregson: I could make available to you, if you were to request it, a list of all the recommendations that came out of Keelty 1, Keelty 2 and Parkerville and the current status of those recommendations with respect to those recommendations that relate to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: That would be very useful. Thank you.

[Supplementary Information No C1.]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I did not want to ask for information that would be onerous in terms of responding.

Mr Gregson: That is certainly available.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Just on that issue of review, in *The Sunday Times* last weekend there was an article headed “National expert for probe”, stating that “Commissioner Wayne Gregson will ask a member of the Australasian Fire Authorities Council” to do a peer review. Is that right?

Mr Gregson: It is not quite right. I was asked what my intention was with respect to reviewing Esperance. I said that I would be commissioning an internal review—a major incident review—which is the usual and ordinary course of business, and that I would refer that document to be peer reviewed by a member of AFAC. My intention was to then provide that to the police so that can form an integral part of the coronial inquest file.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Are you a member of AFAC?

Mr Gregson: Yes, I am. Just so you know who the members are, it is a company, a separate entity, but the members are commissioners or chief executive officers of land management agencies or emergency service agencies, so they are my peer commissioners and the chief foresters and members of the state emergency service commissioners.

Hon RICK MAZZA: The article did say that they would conduct an independent peer review.

Mr Gregson: I would not read too much into the article. What I was trying to convey was that once the major incident review was done, I would give it to one of my peer commissioners, perhaps the commissioner for Victoria or another commissioner, and say, “Could you review that major

incident review with commissioner's eyes and tell me if there was anything further that you think has been overlooked or have we inadvertently glossed over issues or is more depth required on certain issues?" because I wanted to present a complete, comprehensive picture to the police for the coroner.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Is any consideration being given to a full inquiry, like a Keelty inquiry, into the Esperance fires?

Mr Gregson: They are externally imposed on me as a department. I am not aware that anybody is considering an external review. The coroner, of course, provides external oversight. If he or she chooses to hold an inquest, that would be the ultimate external review, but I am not aware of any consideration being given to a third party—another Keelty or another Parkerville–Darlington review, no.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Just on the Esperance fires, WA Farmers came out a couple of weeks ago and part of their media release was that there should be a separate country fire authority set up. What are your thoughts on that?

Mr Gregson: I can only give you my personal views because that is a policy position for government. My personal view is that it would not be a very well advised course of action. I say that for a couple of reasons. You would just be imposing another layer of bureaucracy, another government department with the various support and institutionalisation that that government department would require. If anything is needed, it would be additional resources in the regions to assist them in a range of measures around response or mitigation. What is not needed, in my view, is another government department.

[4.00 pm]

Can I also say, one of the advantages of having a singular government department—or at least two or three, which we have currently got—in the response space is that every time you respond these days to an incident, which is usually much bigger than they ever were, you require multiagency response. It is about how well you coordinate the State Emergency Service, the bush fire volunteers, the marine and rescue volunteers, the State Emergency Service volunteers, the career firefighters, the police, the ambulance and all the other government agencies. In my personal view, the last thing you would need is another country fire association or another rural fire authority. I speak to my peers on AFAC and they would tell you they would love to have a model that Western Australia has, that South Australia is trying to go down and that Queensland has just gone down; and that is having a singular Department of Fire and Emergency Services with overarching unified command capability, so you can bring and coordinate all of the assets that are required to respond in that emergency. I think you would be compounding the complexity without any return on investment. That would be my personal view.

Hon RICK MAZZA: I thank you for that. Just talking about layers of command, I understand that currently the volunteer bush fire brigade is under the local government authority; is that right?

Mr Gregson: It depends. For their day-to-day operations, their constitution and their management, it is currently under local government. When things escalate such that we, as in DFES, becomes the HMA, and the job escalates, we may assume responsibility, then all personnel who are in the fire zone or in the hazard arena are under the command of the incident controller. That incident controller may be from DFES; it might be a volunteer and it could be someone from Parks and Wildlife. It is about who is qualified and competent there. But they act under the auspices then of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, or, actually, they act under the auspices of the commissioner.

The CHAIR: What does HMA stand for?

Mr Gregson: Hazard Management Authority. In Western Australia, hazards are prescribed at law and different agencies have specific responsibility and accountability for specific hazards. We have

bushfire, fire, cyclone, flood, tsunami; police have road crash rescue, space entry debris and whatever!

The CHAIR: It is just the acronym. We know what FESA is though, so it is okay!

Mr Gregson: Do you know what DFES is? That is more important!

The CHAIR: We will catch up.

Hon RICK MAZZA: I have just a couple of questions out of your answer. The incident controller may be a volunteer.

Mr Gregson: He may.

Hon RICK MAZZA: What level of training and qualification would that volunteer need to be an incident controller?

Mr Gregson: He or she, whoever it is, if it is a level 3 incident, they need to be a level 3 incident controller; and if it is level 2, then level 2; or level 1, then level 1. That requires some specific training on a continuum of incident command and control training, and it also requires an element of experience in the particular hazard competency. So, even though you might be a level 3 incident controller for bushfire, you would not be the incident controller in a hazardous material situation or a structural fire and vice versa. So, you need both of those competencies.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Just say a small grassfire starts up in a rural location and someone rings in and reports it as a fire. Is the initial response from the volunteer brigade?

Mr Gregson: Local government, yes.

Hon RICK MAZZA: So, the volunteer brigade then goes out to attend that fire.

Mr Gregson: Yes.

Hon RICK MAZZA: At what point does it escalate to the level where you need an incident controller involved? Who assesses that?

Mr Gregson: You always have an incident controller, even if it is just a small grassfire. The incident controller may be a level 1 incident controller. He or she arrives at the scene, and as it starts to escalate in terms of severity of incident and/or the requirement for resources there that will then escalate it.

Hon RICK MAZZA: So, that person makes the decision whether they need to then engage —

Mr Gregson: Either that person can make the decision and say, “Hey, can you please step in and assist me? This is rapidly becoming beyond my remit and level of competency or resource capability.” Or we can observe. When we are informed we obviously watch with interest what is occurring. We can, if required, step in and assume responsibility. It is normally done on a negotiated basis, because all parties are working collaboratively and collegiately together, in an ideal world. What will usually happen is, even though we assume command, the original incident controller may drop back to an operations role in the incident management team or we might come in and say, “Well, you can still manage as the level 3 incident controller, but the resources of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services are brought to bear.”

Hon RICK MAZZA: When DFES assumes command, is that often done remotely from the city or do you actually attend on site?

Mr Gregson: The onsite incident controller is always the person in charge of that specific incident. What occurs in Perth—or it might be Albany or Bunbury or wherever it may be—is there are teams working behind the scenes on planning activities, on logistic activities, so on resourcing matters. The team in Perth or in Cockburn would make a decision. If, for example, you had three level 3 jobs on the go at the same time or a number of fires, for example, at the same time, they might make the determination on where some of the state assets, like your aerial assets might go and which job

would get priority. They would be—notwithstanding the onsite incident controller in the incident management team onsite—the officer commanding that particular aspect of that job, or commanding that job.

Hon RICK MAZZA: On a slightly different subject, just reading some of the articles on the Esperance fires, there is a lot of commentary around communications. They were an issue; is that right?

Mr Gregson: Is what right? That there were articles or —

Hon RICK MAZZA: No; is it right that there were actually communication issues?

Mr Gregson: There are always communication issues on every single job. I have been attending jobs in the emergency management sector for nearly 37 years. There are always issues with communications at some level or other. I am not being difficult but we need to be really clear about what we are talking about here. Are we talking about radio communications infrastructure between the teams? Are we talking about back-to-base communications, satellite? Are we talking mobile phone towers? Are we talking public information? What communications are we talking about?

Hon RICK MAZZA: I would have thought communications was a very fundamental and important part of attending an incident, without a doubt. Is the radio communications sufficient? Is that something the department has to look at upgrading? Is there an issue with the towers? I would have thought mobile phones would not be the only source of communication because of the fact that they can get knocked out so easily, particularly in a remote area.

Mr Gregson: We do not rely on mobile phones. They are an ancillary or supplementary form of communications. Our primary incident command and control is done over radio communications, so we place little stock—we use mobile phone towers when they are available, but there are a lot of black spots in the great state of Western Australia. You have 2.5 million square kilometres, as you know, and there are not mobile base stations over the entire land mass and neither is there universal radio coverage. There are black spots, so it depends where the incident is.

Hon RICK MAZZA: With radio.

Mr Gregson: With radio, mobiles and that is why we have a suite, or a range, of communications, including CAD, satellite and we do have capability to put in mobile base stations et cetera.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Can I ask a communications question? Is there a difference between the telephone warning system and an SMS warning system?

Mr Gregson: The telephone warning system uses SMS, but it can also go over landline and mobile as a voice message.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Was a telephone/SMS warning system used in the Ellenbrook fires?

Mr Gregson: I am not sure. I would have to check that. I think one of the fires that we had recently—it may have been Ellenbrook—it was too late to use the telephone warning system.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: What was too late? Had the fire progressed too close to houses?

Mr Gregson: Too close, too quickly. A telephone warning system is one of a range of methods of alerting the community. It does take some time to define what message you are going to get out—what message and by which method. I am not sure with the Ellenbrook fire, so I really probably should caveat my response, but it can be the case where, by the time you have got some situational awareness, the fire is already upon you.

[4.10 pm]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Maybe we could take that on notice then as to whether a telephone warning system was used in Ellenbrook.

Mr Gregson: Sure. I seem to think I may have had a parliamentary question on that.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: You might have from someone really interested and engaged!

Mr Gregson: I think the answer will be exactly the same as I gave to the parliamentary question, I would imagine. We would have researched it for that answer.

The CHAIR: We will make it C2 and you will not need to ask for an extension then!

[*Supplementary Information No C2.*]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: And perhaps the factors of why it was not used if it was not used.

Mr Gregson: Yes.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: At page 24 of the annual report, you talk about building workforce diversity and you rightly highlight the Aboriginal cadet program and the things that you have done to encourage the take-up of Indigenous people within the fire service. Are you able to elaborate perhaps on the programs that you have in place for gender diversity, and what is the percentage currently of female firefighters or female cadets?

Mr Gregson: We do not have any female Aboriginal cadets. They are the only cadets we currently have. I would have to take it on notice, unless anyone else can help me with the gender split on career firefighters. I do not think that is in an appendix, so could I take that on notice?

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Yes; I would appreciate that.

Mr Gregson: We do not have any specific gender-based or CALD programs for recruitment at this stage. We have started with what we thought was the area of most need, which was the Indigenous engagement. We have just established a diversity committee and we will look to where we should put our attention next. We have taken our Indigenous representation from, I think, about 0.6 to 2.9, and I think we will look to focus on other areas in the fullness of time. Over the last 12 months or more, our efforts have gone into the Indigenous program.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Rather than take it on notice at the moment, I think you may have the answer to the question.

Mr Pasquale: We have got some details. If I can refer you to page 136, there is a little chapter in there about equity and diversity and, in particular, there was one initiative regarding women. The third paragraph states —

... implemented strategies to increase the representation of women as career firefighters. These include ... recruitment webpage and information sessions specifically for women and the creation of a 'Girls on Fire' identity for high level female sporting events. These, and other strategies, have resulted in a 200 percent increase in the number of women applying to be a firefighter ...

Not necessarily appointed, but applying —

... More than eight percent of successful applicants are now women, compared to three percent previously.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: So that is eight per cent of current successful applicants are women.

Mr Pasquale: Sorry —

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: If you could just take on notice the number of women within the service —

Mr Pasquale: The actual number?

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Yes, that would be helpful, and what that represents as a percentage. Can you tell me do female firefighters and trainees have to meet exactly the same requirements as the males or are there different requirements?

Mr Gregson: No; they are exactly the same.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: So they go through the same training program et cetera.

Mr Gregson: Yes.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: You do not have height and weight limits and things or minimum height and weight.

Mr Gregson: We have minimum requirements, but I do not think they are height and weight. But we do have fitness and job related, or vocationally related, tests for eligibility.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I understand that. They are the same across everybody?

Mr Gregson: Yes.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: That is good.

[Supplementary Information No C3.]

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Just on a separate matter, I think there is significant awareness of the “Are You Bushfire Ready?” campaign across WA. I noticed you are using some sportspeople to promote that. Is that a paid promotion?

Mr Gregson: I think those questions probably should be directed to Premier and Cabinet because that is their program and they do all of the organisation with that in conjunction with Western Power. We are a stakeholder, but I do not have the details of that, and I really could not tell you with certainty whether that aspect of the program is paid or not. I would think it is.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: But it is not funded out of your budget.

Mr Gregson: No, it is not. We do make a contribution to it. It is a small contribution around some regional marketing, but that is a specific aspect and that is part of an ongoing educational program that we would have done anyway.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Are you able to outline what that contribution is?

Mr Gregson: I think it is around \$100 000 per annum.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: So it is around \$100 000, and which markets is that targeted at?

Mr Gregson: I would have to go back and check specifically. We either did specific regional advertising or purchased specific items. I am not sure because we have done it over two years now.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Perhaps you can take that on notice as well.

[Supplementary Information No C4.]

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: It is a pity that we had the Department of the Premier and Cabinet immediately preceding you. That happens sometimes at these hearings.

Mr Gregson: It is a very successful program in terms of raising community awareness of the risk of bushfire.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I realise that. It is a good program. I think it certainly makes people aware that the risks are not just specific to the regions, but across the whole of the metropolitan area as well.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Just out of interest, how do you know that? What measures have you got to say that it is a good program in terms of raising awareness or that it has successfully raised awareness?

Mr Gregson: There is a post-advertising evaluation done with quantitative analysis to make sure of the degree of market penetration and market awareness in the community in terms of the messaging. There is an evaluation done of the marketing and advertising program.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Great. Could we see a copy of that?

Mr Gregson: I am not being difficult. I do not see any reason why not. I do not know whether it is for me to give it to you or whether it is publicly available. Certainly, I have no problems with that.

The CHAIR: We will make it C5 and then if there are any difficulties and if it is an item that is not yours to provide—whose research is it?

Mr Gregson: It was commissioned by Premier and Cabinet as part of the program, but they did share it with stakeholders, so I do not see any fundamental difficulty.

The CHAIR: What we will do is we will make it C5 for you, and maybe the staff can make a note that when we send the information to DPC, we make that a supplementary question that either they or you provide—one or the other. That is probably the easiest way if we also add it on to the DPC list. We could probably add on your question as well, if you like.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Yes.

[*Supplementary Information No C5.*]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I am just trying to locate what are the total FTEs for the department by —

The CHAIR: Page 136.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: What is the difference between a trainee and an apprentice?

Mr Gregson: I can tell you what my understanding is at the level of English.

Mr Pasquale: In relation to the department, for apprentices we have a workshop capability, so we have apprentices in that environment, and then the trainees are our trainee firefighters.

[4.20 pm]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Across a permanent workforce of 1 471, there is one apprentice?

Mr Pasquale: Yes, at that point in time; so, there would have been a headcount at that point in time if there was one apprentice, yes.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: In 2013–14 and 2014–15, there was one apprentice?

Mr Pasquale: Yes.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Where did that apprentice work?

Mr Pasquale: I am not sure whether that is a radio apprentice or whether it is a tech. We used to have three apprentices—some of them have actually now become tradesmen, so they are no longer apprentices. In terms of which exact apprentice position this one is referring to, I need to validate that, but I am pretty sure it is at our workshops in O'Connor.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Does the department engage mechanical apprentices—so people who fix trucks?

Mr Pasquale: Correct; in the past we have had two types of apprentices: one in the space of the mechanical/electrical and one in radio telecommunications.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: But there are no apprentices in mechanical?

Mr Pasquale: There are, and I am assuming—I am pretty confident that is a mechanical apprentice, but I would need to confirm that because I cannot remember if it is the radio or the mechanical. I am pretty confident it is the mechanical.

[*Supplementary Information No C6.*]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Has the department given any thought to increasing the number of apprentices in both mechanical and radio from one to more than one?

Mr Gregson: I think we have. We have three positions, or four positions potentially, available for apprentices. When they graduate, of course, we want to keep them, and we do not necessarily have the additional FTE to start a new apprentice. One of the other challenges is that they get quite narrow training in our environment, so we have looked at whether or not we can share them with a trucking company, or something like that, so that their apprentice skills would be more broader across the industry, because they get quite specialised working on a particular fire truck all the time, doing limited work.

The CHAIR: Could you not use a group training scheme for that?

Mr Gregson: I guess we could.

Mr Pasquale: We probably could. We have—probably two or three years ago our apprentices kind of—not disappeared, but it is something that we rejuvenated about two or three years ago. As I said, I think now two of the three have actually qualified—one may have left. We are confined by our salary cap and so we are always looking for opportunities to engage apprentices and keep them in the business, and then depending on what capacity we have within our financial cap, then we look at continuing to employ where we can.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: The number of full-time trainees—we went on to talk about apprentices—the definition of “trainees” are those people who are training to be career firefighters; is that right?

Mr Pasquale: In the main, yes; and we also have other trainees in the organisation that might be through—for example, we have some Aboriginal trainees on trainee programs; we also have some graduate trainees. In the main they are firefighter recruit trainees, but we have some other non-firefighting trainees within the organisation as well.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: How long does that traineeship go for—the firefighter recruiting traineeship?

Mr Gregson: Seventeen weeks.

Mr Bailey: It is initial training, with a further three years to complete their qualifications formally and another two years after that; so it is a five-year program to get them out the other end to be senior firefighters.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Why is there a significant difference in the number of trainees from 2013–14 to 2014–15?

Mr Gregson: I think that is a headcount at a particular point in time. If there is an academy school, then the numbers would be —

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So the academy school does not operate every year?

Mr Pasquale: No. Recruit schools will occur based on a planning arrangement, but on a needs basis. So you do not have a recruit school at the same time every year. You may have one in one year and three the next, so there can be variation depending on whether there have been policy decisions to increase the number of firefighters, whether there has been a significant increase in the number of departures. There is a continual requirement to keep our staffing levels to an approved number, and so the recruit schools are a mechanism to do that. They are not necessarily linear, is what I am saying; they can fluctuate from one year to the next.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So, really, that kind of staffing profile for the number of trainees is not a real reflection of where you are at at this point in time or even at 30 June?

Mr Pasquale: That is an actual headcount at that point in time.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: At 30 June?

Mr Pasquale: Correct; it is not an authorised staffing level for the whole year—that is particularly if it is an actual headcount. If you go to—it does not have that level of detail—page 152, it gives the authorised staffing level for 30 June 2015, of 1 505. That is our authorised staffing level and not a headcount, which is a little bit different, but it does not break it down into that level of detail.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Is it possible to get that breakdown?

Mr Pasquale: At the point in time, at 30 June, I am sure we can revisit that.

[Supplementary Information No C7.]

The CHAIR: This question follows on from staffing. You talked about trainees. Have you talked about the staff at O'Connor workshop?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: No.

The CHAIR: You mentioned earlier the O'Connor workshop. What is the budget for that workshop?

Mr Pasquale: Good question.

The CHAIR: Do you have a budget in 2013–14 and 2014–15, and then 2015–16?

Mr Pasquale: We certainly have a budget; I could not tell you off the top of my head what it is, but I am happy to provide that.

The CHAIR: For 2013–14 and 2014–15 and the current year budget?

Mr Pasquale: Yes.

[Supplementary Information No C8.]

The CHAIR: What is the staff profile at the O'Connor workshop in terms of mechanics—I assume auto electricians and other trades assistants?

Mr Pasquale: The exact number, again, I am happy to provide, but there is in the order of—do not quote the exact number—17 or so technical staff with some kind of senior technicians and supervising workshop supervisors.

The CHAIR: If you could give us a breakdown for the 2013–14, 2014–15 and 2015–16, if you could break it down by the mechanics, auto mechanics and trades assistant, and also their employment status—are they full-time, part-time, contract or through a labour hire firm?

Mr Pasquale: Sure.

The CHAIR: Do you use labour hire firms out there?

Mr Pasquale: So that I understand where the question is coming from, at the moment we have a larger than normal labour hire firm component in the workforce. That has primarily been because of two things: one is because we were previously under a recruitment freeze, so the only way we could maintain capability was to engage labour hire because we did not have a salary cap budget to support that.

The CHAIR: If you have a labour freeze, would that not still come under your salary cap?

Mr Pasquale: No; I think the labour services are under a different line item. The second reason is that —

The CHAIR: So you can pay more to employ someone because of a freeze on labour?

Mr Pasquale: That was the way we had to maintain our capability. The second reason we had that was that we are currently doing a reform process down at the workshops in the way we are conducting business and doing some restructure. We were concerned about making permanent appointments and then not being able to adjust that structure based on decisions that may need to be reviewed. But more recently we met with the industrial body, and I gave a commitment to decrease

the number of people on labour hire, and I think two were permanently appointed about three weeks ago. There is a clear intention not to reduce the number of people; it was purely about making sure that the reform is not going to be hindered by decisions we make today and then we are unable to shape the structure to suit our requirements moving forward.

The CHAIR: What is the reform hoping to achieve? What is the aim of the reform?

Mr Gregson: It was to look at whether or not the existing model of service delivery was appropriate. It was to look at the way in which it is currently structured up and the way in which it is doing its functions. So we did a full functional review on the workshops so that we could be satisfied that we were getting a good return on the money being invested in it. That is the predominant reason we did not employ new people into existing roles until we had done a complete—really, it needed a modernising.

[4.30 pm]

The CHAIR: Is that with an intent of using outside labour hire firms or still being directly employed?

Mr Gregson: Look, I think we need to have a good look at what might be outsourced and what properly remains in-house. There may be some opportunities for efficiencies if we look at whether or not it is a good return to outsource certain aspects of their functionality, and it may be an argument to retain critical aspects of their functionality. So, the purpose really was, without any preconceived notions, to have a really good look at that whole area.

The CHAIR: Has that been completed now?

Mr Gregson: Sorry, the review or the implementation? The review has been completed, but not the implementation.

The CHAIR: I guess, have you worked out what it is that you want to do down there then; or, if you have had the review, have you worked out what recommendations you want to accept from that the review?

Mr Gregson: More questions went begging after the review, but we certainly —

The CHAIR: Does that require you to employ more consultants to do more reviews by any chance?

Mr Gregson: We generally do not employ consultants unless there is a skills or resource shortage; if we want good product, we have got to pay for it.

The CHAIR: Who did the functional review? Was it done in-house or did you contract that out?

Mr Pasquale: It was done in-house with some external advice.

The CHAIR: Who was the external advice from?

Mr Pasquale: Engineering firms.

The CHAIR: Was KPMG involved at any point?

Mr Gregson: KPMG, yes, it did do some work for us.

The CHAIR: Is there a final document out of all of that?

Mr Gregson: Yes, there is.

The CHAIR: Is that something you are able to provide to the committee as supplementary information?

Mr Gregson: Yes.

[*Supplementary Information No C9.*]

The CHAIR: KPMG are also your internal auditors, are they not?

Mr Gregson: Yes.

The CHAIR: How does that work in terms of them providing you advice on functional reviews and also being your internal auditors where they may provide you with advice on what to do in a functional review and then they are going to come back and internally audit what you deliver? How do you manage that?

Mr Gregson: They might. I think if you are aware of that potential conflict of interest, you can overcome it. I mean, KPMG is a massive company with an accounting arm and also a consulting arm. But you are right: you could argue that there is a potential conflict of interest by a consultant giving you advice on the one hand and then doing your internal audit, but I would say that that is a manageable conflict of interest, because we are the ones ultimately making the decisions based on those recommendations.

The CHAIR: Is there a list of recommendations of what is going to happen down there, or have you not got to that point yet?

Mr Gregson: We have with the structure, but I still think there is a way to go with regards to decisions around in-house outsource potential.

The CHAIR: Is that something you are able to provide us detail on—what recommendations there are and where they are up to?

Mr Gregson: Yes, we could give you a report on where we are at.

[Supplementary Information No C10.]

The CHAIR: We were talking about apprentices earlier, and obviously one of the ways you could have created new apprenticeship positions would have been to employ the old apprentices. I think you were saying you were using more labour hire firms for a period of time there, so maybe you could give us a snapshot of what you used to have in terms of direct employees and over the last couple years what the changes in profile have been—so, from in-house to labour contractors. Was that freeze something that then stopped you from being able to employ those apprentices as they finished their courses and then employing new apprentices to replace them? You were saying one of the difficulties is you wanted to keep them on, but then you did not have a new position, but in fact, from the sounds of it, you did have the positions; you just could not fill them.

Mr Pasquale: I will see whether I can answer. Whether it is position based or not, the position translates to a dollar value, so we were managing to a salary budget. Whether it was specific in relation to an apprentice or an alternative vacant position, what we were simply doing was working to what our authorised salary budget was to maintain the capability as best as we possibly could.

Mr Gregson: You are talking about during the freeze, are you not?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Gregson: During the freeze you had to argue for exemptions to take on board new employees.

The CHAIR: So that did stop us employing?

Mr Gregson: I think we got exemptions for some positions around a firefighter school, for example, but not others.

The CHAIR: So, you have got a salary cap. How do you then employ someone through a labour hire firm and avoid the salary cap? I am intrigued by that.

Mr Pasquale: I am just going to confirm that that expense line does not form part of the—my apologies, I have been corrected. The labour hire budget does form part of the salary wages line item. I was under the impression that it did not, but that was incorrect.

The CHAIR: So, it forms part of the salaries line item, but during the freeze it sat outside of the freeze.

Mr Pasquale: No, I have misguided. If it is included in the salaries and wages budget, as I said, we have always managed the salaries and wages bottom line, so if we were using labour hire, as opposed to recruiting people, because there was a freeze on recruitment—we were using labour hire but it was still going towards that salary and wages budget.

The CHAIR: So you were avoiding the freeze on recruitment by employing through as labour hire.

Mr Pasquale: Correct.

The CHAIR: I am still intrigued. When did the freeze finish?

Mr Pasquale: I cannot remember the exact dates, but it was effective 2013–14—I think it started part way through 2013–14 and then we were free from 2014–15—1 July, I think. I cannot remember exactly when it started, but it was during 2013–14.

The CHAIR: And from 1 July 2014 or 1 July 2015?

Mr Pasquale: No, it was part way through 2013–14—I cannot remember the exact time—but it finished at the end of the financial year. So, from 1 July 2014 we were free. So, 2013–14 was impacted; 2014–15 we were not impacted by the freeze.

The CHAIR: I assume that must be why the government then introduced the salary cap—because they realised agencies were just employing labour.

Mr Pasquale: The salary cap was there before.

Mr Gregson: We have always had a salary cap.

The CHAIR: If there is a freeze on recruitment, I would have thought going out—I am not arguing that you did not need the staff, and the logic of the freeze kind of makes it ridiculous, in my view. I am trying to work out, and maybe you are able to give us some idea of, the cost of employing people directly versus employing them through a labour hire firm. I would imagine that the labour hire firm in those skills would be significantly higher than if you are directly employing them. I know there some areas where you can drive down wages and conditions, and it is another debate whether that should happen, but I would have thought the cost of using the labour hire firm would have been a lot higher than the salary costs and even your own internal on-costs on top of that.

Mr Pasquale: Without a doubt, at the end of the day when you are paying through a labour hire, as opposed to an employee, you are paying for long service leave, insurances et cetera, so labour hire is obviously more expensive. To what extent and how much of a difference, I could not quantify that.

The CHAIR: Would you be able to quantify, for that period that you were using labour hire firms, what that was—the cost—in whatever is the easiest way, whether it is on an hourly basis or a weekly or an annual basis? I want to know what the cost is through the labour hire firms versus if you directly employ, with all of the costs that are associated with that for you as an agency.

[*Supplementary Information No C11.*]

Mr Gregson: If I could, Mr Chairman, I would also reserve the right to revisit whether we did engage anybody on labour hire during the freeze period. I would like to confirm that.

Mr Pasquale: We will confirm that.

The CHAIR: And if it was not during the freeze, when was the labour hire?

Mr Gregson: Yes. It is a separate issue and I would just like to go back and check.

The CHAIR: Just in case Treasury come looking!

Mr Gregson: I am just not so sure that that is correct. I would also like to underscore that the predominant reason for taking them on under a labour hire contractual arrangement was to get

flexibility during the reform, the review, because it is certainly not our intention for some philosophical reason to go to labour hire.

The CHAIR: If you go to an outsourcing model, how will you then ensure—I suspect your scale is not going to capture the requirements for the outsourced entities to have apprentices. How will you ensure that we are employing apprentices to do that work? You currently employ apprentices in-house; if you do go to an outsource model, how will you ensure that there are still apprentices? To me, that is an issue for all government agencies—there is a shortage of good training and apprenticeships—so how will you ensure that?

[4.40 pm]

Mr Gregson: You would have to have a look at that during the transition as to whether you could either impose it on a third party or whether or not you could retain still a degree of apprenticeships within house. I need to be clear about this: it is certainly not our intention to outsource the entire workshops, but there are potentially some aspects that are particularly time consuming and expensive that might be a better proposition to outsource.

The CHAIR: I understand that, but I guess it also then about trying to maintain an apprenticeship system as well.

Mr Gregson: The current command team is committed to develop apprenticeships where we can.

The CHAIR: I think you talked about three being out at the workshops earlier. Would it be fair to say that your goal out of the process would be to seek to continue to have a system in place to maintain three apprentices?

Mr Pasquale: There has always certainly been a goal by the executive to try to have as many as we possibly can. I think there are two at the workshops and one at the radio tech.

The CHAIR: That is a minimum of three.

Mr Gregson: It depends on how generous the commonwealth is in terms of supporting apprenticeships, of course.

The CHAIR: I think it is one of the things that is often forgotten when we contracted out a lot of government workers. Midland railway workshops, you probably cannot find anyone in the metal trades over the age of 30 or 40—at least half of them were trained, or the BMA —

Mr Gregson: Matters of public policy, Mr Chairman, that I could not possibly comment on.

The CHAIR: In your little sphere, it is a policy that, hopefully, we can continue.

Mr Pasquale: It is probably worth noting there is a very large component of outsourcing that exists under the current service model already. As I said, the commissioner I guess emphasised there is no specific agenda here; it is about making sure we have got the best capability. But already the country maintenance arrangements are outsourced, and have been for many, many years. We do not have remote mechanical inspection sites out in the region. We have a central model at the moment. Some of the other parts of our business are already outsourced. We are just looking to make sure we have got the best balance.

The CHAIR: When you say inspections, is that inspecting other fire equipment?

Mr Pasquale: In terms of general maintenance inspections and services, if we need to do some minor servicing, all that will happen in the region. If there is a major technical repair, that will come back to our O'Connor workshops, which are more specialised.

The CHAIR: When you say inspection you are not talking about inspecting it?

Mr Pasquale: No.

The CHAIR: You are talking about just checking —

Mr Pasquale: Servicing, general maintenance.

The CHAIR: Going through a standard service or change.

Mr Gregson: We do not do licensing inspections.

The CHAIR: There would be some equipment such as fire extinguishers where you would need to inspect them to check that they are current and all of that.

Mr Gregson: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you do you that with your own staff or is that contracted out as well?

Mr Gregson: No; it is contracted out.

Hon RICK MAZZA: On page 27, “Technology Supporting the Frontline” and “Crew Protection Rollout” obviously for volunteer and professional fire fighters. What percentage of the fleet has now got the protection systems in place?

Mr Gregson: It depends what you mean by protection systems. For example, the radiant heat blankets are, I think, 100 per cent. In terms of the panels, I think all but eight vehicles are done. I did compile a short note when I anticipated this. In terms of the burn-over blanket, 1 230 appliances are completed out of a total of 1 215. I do not know how that happened but there are 3 700 blankets out there. Retrofit of radiant heat panels is 100 per cent complete. Radiant heat shields, there is a target of 981 vehicles and 937 are done. The difference are yet to be rolled out. There are 44 new builds in progress and they should be confirmed up to January 2016. There are some light tankers with lagging and in-cab air. That is still a work in progress. The actual installation has not yet commenced. We are just putting together the training packages because we cannot put in-cab air in without the appropriate training packages.

Hon RICK MAZZA: What do you mean by the lagging?

Mr Gregson: Some of the critical panels—electrical things like that—need lagging.

Hon RICK MAZZA: To protect from the heat?

Mr Gregson: Brake lines —

Hon RICK MAZZA: Okay, got you.

Mr Gregson: In some cases it is an engineering solution to move those and in other cases they need to be shielded.

Then there is the heavy appliance. Again, we are looking at 667 vehicles in both cases, and we have done 415 of them with 18 in progress. We are a fair way in terms of percentages. With the deluge in-cab air, there are 415 to be done and we have started five.

Hon RICK MAZZA: There is still a way to go on that one. What about the AVLs? How many vehicles are currently fitted with AVLs?

Mr Fewster: There are no vehicles fitted with AVLs at the moment.

Hon RICK MAZZA: That is right; you are still after a contract or something, are you, or out to tender?

Mr Fewster: That is right; we are resolving the specification for AVL. We do not expect to be in the market for those until next year. That is a very complex piece of work. The AVL is an in-cab monitor that allows us to communicate with the vehicle. The cost of doing that anywhere in Western Australia is expensive, so we need to be clear on exactly what we are going to communicate through AVL and what we are not and the polling and what type of information is going to what type of vehicle. We do not expect to be in the market until 2016.

Mr Gregson: That is automatic vehicle location.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Being a vehicle location device, would that also allow you to monitor that by computer? Is that something you are looking at so you are able to see where each vehicle is?

Mr Gregson: Yes.

Hon RICK MAZZA: What have you got there—2018; so in another couple of years that should be all installed.

Mr Gregson: Yes. You can put a simple AVL in cars by going to Dick Smith's. We want to make sure we have good tracking—that the people in the IMTs, people at the state operations centre, will have really good visibility of where the fleet is and then you can start to make some really good decisions about where your troops are and where your appliances are. Obviously, it needs to work where you have got challenging radio communications infrastructure.

Hon RICK MAZZA: What is the estimated cost of the fit-out of AVLS for the entire fleet?

Mr Fewster: We do not have an estimated cost at the moment. Part of the issue that we have is until we understand the technology and, for example, what use of satellite we are making, what the back haul of data is for each vehicle, we will not know what the cost of the AVL part of the project is. It will be insignificant compared to the cost of a vehicle, however.

Hon RICK MAZZA: You are saying the contract is anticipated to be finalised in 2016. Are you talking the end of 2016 or the middle of 2016? Have you got a time line on that?

Mr Fewster: We expect the specification will be finalised in 2016, and we will be going to market in 2016. I expect that will be in the second half of 2016.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I refer to the “Disability Access and Inclusion Plan” on page 141. You hate people like me but it is the Disability Services Act 1993; I think 1933 might be a little bit early!

Mr Gregson: I am working out of the 1953 Fire Brigades Act.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Yes, in fact the way people with disability were treated in 1933 —

Mr Pasquale: There were no AVLS then, either.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: The last dot point states “support for an injured firefighter in his return to work”.

Why is that an outcome of the disability access and inclusion plan and not an outcome of your return-to-work policy, which would ensure that injured workers return to work in the best possible way?

Mr Gregson: If it is the firefighter I am referring to, he is in a wheelchair.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Why is that a disability access–inclusion outcome and not a usual return-to-work outcome?

Mr Gregson: I do not know, to be honest with you. I will have to find out. Unless it is around the number of changes we made to the actual building and whether that is included in the disability access and inclusion.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Was that included in your plan in the first instance? Were those plans to modify the building included in your plan, which went from 2012–15?

Mr Pasquale: My recollection is that in the plan we catered for what we need to do to our building to cater for anyone within the building who may need special needs on top of the Australian standards we built into the building. In this particular case, if I recall correctly, the person was confined to a wheelchair. We do have already an employee with a wheelchair, but they have different needs in terms of accessing, as I recall, the command centre, so we installed—I am pretty sure this is what it was about—some automatic doors to those parts of the building where this individual was given access to the —

[4.50 pm]

Mr Gregson: But it was not part of the general plan, no. It was specifically for that five.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Why is it reported as such and why is his particular job redesign reported as such as well?

Mr Gregson: I would have to research that for you and come back to you, if I could.

[*Supplementary Information No C12.*]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Which now leads me to ask how many career firefighters were injured on the job in 2013–14 and 2014–15?

Mr Gregson: Again, I would have to take that on notice. Could I ask you to perhaps specify what you mean by injury? Are we talking about —

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: In which an injury was notified under the act. Could I also have the same data for volunteers?

Mr Gregson: To the extent that we know, but as the point was made earlier, many of the volunteers' management comes under local government.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: The extent that a volunteer is injured severely, under the act, they have to be dealt with through WorkCover, so the number of injuries that were sustained by volunteers.

Mr Gregson: I do not think we cover volunteers for workers' compensation, but we will find out for you. Whatever we can provide we will provide with respect to injuries.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: And then as a component of that, how many of those cases have been successfully closed and the volunteers returned to work?

[*Supplementary Information No C13.*]

The CHAIR: I have one last question. On page 29 you refer to having developed the first version of the Western Australian bushfire-prone area map —

Mr Gregson: Yes.

The CHAIR: — and of course we saw that released on the weekend. I am intrigued as to the methodology of how bush is determined to be bush. I understand that it is one hectare of bush and anything within 100 metres of it is then listed in the bushfire-prone mapping area, but I am intrigued to try and understand what is determined as bush for the purposes of that. Just using Kings Park as an example, there are parts of Kings Park that seem to be identified as bush and other parts that are not. Is there a quantitative measure that is used to determine what is bush and what is not?

Mr Gregson: My understanding is that there is a standard. I would happily make that standard available to you. I think it is determined on the type of vegetation which is determined by flammability, but I am not sure, so I can certainly get a copy of the standard to you from the Office of Bushfire Risk Management if that would help?

The CHAIR: Yes.

[*Supplementary Information No C14.*]

The CHAIR: There seems to be that, looking at some of the bush areas, certainly, there are some areas where there are not as many trees, but you know that there is still quite a fair bit of tree cover and some areas that represent that seem to still be in the bushfire-prone—I am just intrigued to work out what the difference is. What is now the implication of a property falling within that area?

Mr Gregson: If they are in a bushfire-prone area, it triggers standards for the Department of Planning and then it triggers standards for building code or for the builders' Building Commission. Really, it is a binary map, you are either in or you are out, and if you are in, then you need to

address certain aspects with regard to planning, whether that be subdivision or whatever, as I understand it, and then that triggers building code standards coming into effect. There is a building standard for building in a bushfire-prone area and there is an expectation, as I understand it, that Planning, local government, will impose that standard on those buildings.

The CHAIR: Right. Is there likely to be implications for people's insurance?

Mr Gregson: It is a possibility.

The CHAIR: Is there any capacity for people to appeal whether they have been included; if they feel that the standard has not been applied, that there is an inconsistency in the standard?

Mr Gregson: Yes, I think there is. It more than anything else just triggers a situation where bushfire considerations have to be taken during the planning and building phase.

The CHAIR: But it obviously adds cost and potentially from the insurance point of view. I would imagine if you do some renovations, you then need to make the whole of the property compliant.

Mr Gregson: That is not quite my understanding, but I understand Planning have a way to address that. Certainly, the improvements have to be to the new standard.

The CHAIR: But if you, maybe as part of C14, can sort of outline the appeal mechanisms. For a public institution—I do not know, maybe it was built to meet the standards—I note one thing is that at least part of Joondalup Health Campus is now in that bushfire-prone area, which obviously has significant implications if there is an out-of-control bushfire where people are being injured and then your major tertiary—or major, it is not tertiary yet —

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Dreams are free!

The CHAIR: Yes. A major hospital is part of that bushfire-prone area, how are we going to manage that?

Mr Gregson: I do not think the planning conditions or the building standards apply retrospectively.

The CHAIR: No, but the risk is still there. I mean, we have now said that —

Mr Gregson: The risk has always been there, it is just now it has been identified.

The CHAIR: Therefore, once you identify a risk, does that, for major significant public institutions like that, I understand it is not retrospective, from a legal perspective, but the fact that it is now an identified risk surely must have some implication for public institutions like a health campus. Schools would be another one. I know there has been work done with schools, but the education department made it clear to us today that that was based on a different standard to what this bushfire-prone mapping applies.

Mr Gregson: We have constantly and consistently advocated that bushfire preparedness is a shared responsibility and if you own the risk, you own the fuel, you are responsible for mitigating that risk. I think that holds true logically, no matter who the owner is.

The CHAIR: So, fundamentally, it is the education department, the hospital and the health department as the owners of those buildings, now that they are aware of that risk, for them to put in place the—as an agency are you involved in feeding into the government any advice to the fact that there now needs to be a review of some of these public institutions that may fall within that risk area? Interestingly, Dumas House just misses out because of the way they map the bush in Kings Park.

Mr Gregson: I will not say what I was thinking because this is on the internet!

The CHAIR: The minister did say it was not worth saving this morning!

Mr Gregson: How could I correct my minister, Mr Chairman?

The CHAIR: Not yours—Peter Collier.

Mr Gregson: Look, we do work, as you may be aware, with other government agencies; we do work with Education, with Lands; we do provide best practice advice standards, either through the department or through the Office of Bushfire Risk Management. But, ultimately, we do that to the private sector as well as to the government sector. Ultimately, the risk has always been there, it has now been identified and one would argue that there is a moral imperative, if not a legal imperative, to do something about it.

The CHAIR: The committee will email the transcript of evidence, which includes the questions you have taken on notice highlighted on the transcript, to you in the next couple of days. The corrected transcript will be requested to be returned within five working days of receipt. Note that is a bit shorter; we used to give you 10 days, but with corrections to the transcript, we have shortened it to five. The answers to questions taken on notice will be requested by 11 January; so that is good news, because of the Christmas break, we have given you a bit longer. Any additional questions the committee has for you will be forwarded by the minister next week, and will also be requested by 11 January 2016. Should you be unable to meet this due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible before the due date. The advice is to include specific reasons as to why the due date cannot be met. Obviously, of course, we ask that you provide the questions that you can by the due date and only delay those where you need an extension. If members have any unasked questions, I ask you to email them to the committee staff by midday on Monday, 14 December. On behalf of the committee, can I thank you for your attendance today. It is probably worth saying thank you to all of the volunteers and your staff over the last couple of months. Hopefully, it will not be too bad, but I am sure that they will have a busy time and we wish them all the best.

Mr Gregson: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Hearing concluded at 5.00 pm
