



Hon Alannah MacTiernan MLC
Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food; Ports;
Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade

Our ref: 64-18232
Your ref: Petition No. 155

Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Chair
Legislative Council Committee Office
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Mr ~~Swinbourn~~ *Matt*

PETITION NO. 155 – MID WEST REGION BASED RESCUE HELICOPTER SERVICE

I refer to your correspondence dated 13 August 2020 regarding the petition which was tabled by the Hon Colin de Grussa MLC on 25 June 2020 in the Legislative Council and referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs pursuant to the Legislative Council's Standing Orders. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Whilst the rescue helicopter services is primarily the responsibility of the Minister from Emergency Services, but noting the Committee's reference to Royalties for Regions funding, I provide the following comments.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$29.95 million was provided for the establishment and early operation of the South West Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service (SWERHS) and was increased by a further \$4.601 million as part of the 2018-19 Budget. The decision was then taken to fund the ongoing operation of the SWERHS from the Emergency Services Levy and the Road Trauma Trust Fund, currently at \$9.3 million per annum.

I am advised the SWERHS was Western Australia's first regional rescue helicopter that provided advanced paramedical capabilities to people in motor vehicle accidents and other trauma injuries or sickness; enabled time sensitive critical care inter-hospital patient transport; and searched for missing persons on behalf of other hazard management agencies. It was recognised at the time that the establishment of SWERHS in Bunbury, 150 kilometres from Jandakot, provided redundancy for the Jandakot based Rescue Helicopter and allowed concurrent tasking.

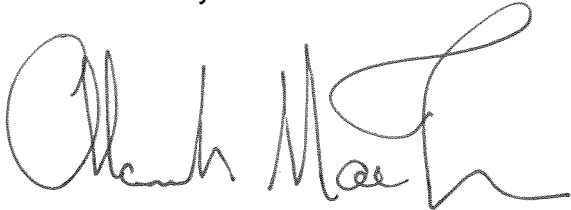
More generally, I acknowledge that emergency rescue helicopter services have many benefits for regional communities.

A new service in Geraldton could potentially provide benefits to the regional community in terms of jobs growth and economic development, through the new positions that would be created to support the service. It could also enhance the liveability of the Mid-West region by supporting improved paramedic capabilities and providing time sensitive and critical inter-hospital patient transport.

However, these services come at considerable cost and the merits of such a service needs to be considered against other State and regional priorities.

Accordingly, I recommend to the Committee that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services would need to further consider the merits and operational capability of establishing the Mid-West region based rescue helicopter service that you have proposed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alannah Mactiernan', written in a cursive style.

**HON ALANNAH MACTIERNAN MLC
MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT; AGRICULTURE AND FOOD; PORTS;
MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT,
JOBS AND TRADE**

30 SEP 2020