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**Division 44: Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia, \$22 051 000 —**

Ms A.R. Mitchell, Chairman.

Mr R.F. Johnson, Minister for Emergency Services.

Mr F. Pasquale, Executive Director, Corporate Services.

Mr C.A. Hynes, Chief Operations Officer.

Mr J. Butcher, Executive Director, Emergency Management WA.

Mr D.J. Caporn, Executive Director, Community Development.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member for Darling Range.

[9.00 pm]

**Mr A.J. SIMPSON:** I refer to “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 507 of the *Budget Statements* and the Fire and Emergency Services Authority’s community information and warning mechanism—the state alert system. The minister is very well aware that my electorate was affected by a massive bushfire this year in the hills of Roleystone and Kelmscott. The state alert system will be a great system to alert people of the direction of a fire. Can the minister update the committee about how that system is progressing?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will make a general comment and then I will ask John Butcher to give a more detailed response. As the member is aware, state alert is a purpose-built telephone-based system that delivers alerts through a variety of mediums to complement the range of methods already used by the Fire and Emergency Services Authority to transmit emergency alerts. The state alert system has been used on 23 occasions to send more than 42 000 messages to save lives and homes. The funding boost provided for in the 2010–11 budget will enable the implementation of ongoing maintenance and enhancements to the state alert system. The enhancements include further hardware upgrades and the possibility of sending emergency warnings to location-based mobile phones. I will ask John Butcher to provide some more technical comments about that.

[Ms L.L. Baker took the chair.]

**Mr J. Butcher:** The state alert system has been extremely successful in boosting community safety, saving lives and alerting people. In 2009–10, the state alert system sent nearly 20 000 emergency warnings to residents, including during cyclone Laurence and the Toodyay, Brigadoon and Moore River National Park bushfires. In 2010–11, the state alert system was activated for three incidents requiring 14 sets of messages to be sent to approximately 23 000 recipients. Some enhancements have been made to state alert, including hardware upgrades and work towards the possibility of sending emergency warnings to all active mobile telephones based on the location of the handset, as the minister just mentioned. The hardware upgrade enables the system to handle between 200 and 300 voice calls a minute. However, there have been occasions when the system has delivered between 800 and 900 calls a minute. FESA has been collaborating with the Victorian Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner and with the other states and territories to develop the ability to send emergency warnings based on the location of a mobile handset. This proposal was a recommendation of the Council of Australian Governments and is in its very early stages. If it is successful, it will enable emergency services to send emergency messages via a mobile phone to tourists, including international tourists, as well as other people who may be visiting an area for other reasons.

**Mr A.J. SIMPSON:** Through the minister, does the system pick up the mobile phone signal in the area and send a message to the phone? Can the system pick up the mobile phone signal of overseas visitors and others so that if there is an alert for an area, an emergency message can be sent to all mobile phones?

**Mr J. Butcher:** That is the proposal. As I said, it is in its early stages. There are technical issues with it, but that is what is proposed, and hopefully we will get to that stage.

**Mr A.J. SIMPSON:** There are different mobile phone carriers and some work better than others. Does the signal sent by the alert system work across all mobile phone carriers? Will there be a time delay if I am with one phone company rather than another? Some people have told me that they will not receive a text message straightaway but that their partner, who is with another phone company, will get it straightaway. Has the minister had much feedback on that?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I think the member’s question is about different phone carriers such as Vodafone and Telstra. I do not know the answer. I am trying to ascertain the nub of the question. I will ask John Butcher, who is a specialist in that area, to respond.

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**Mr J. Butcher:** The delivery of the message depends on the carrier. The delivery will work just as it does for any other message carried by that carrier.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** During the Lake Clifton fires there were reports that people had not received an emergency text message until five hours after the fire had passed. Is there an explanation about why that occurred?

**Mr J. Butcher:** I have no information in front of me regarding the Lake Clifton fire.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** When the minister was there, he heard firsthand from people who told him that there was a delay in getting the emergency message. Some people got the message at one o'clock in the morning, five hours after the fire had passed. The minister was there and heard those people. He said that he would pursue that issue. Has there been an outcome in that respect?

**Mr J. Butcher:** The time someone receives a message depends on the congestion within the network. The information we have is that in the majority of cases, in one instance in particular, 83 per cent of voice messages were received within five minutes.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Working on those figures, 17 per cent of people in that location did not get the message. I would suggest that that needs to be improved. What will be done to improve it?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I accept the sentiment of the member's question, but I remind him that the state alert system was not in place a year or so ago and that FESA had to rely on alternative ways to alert people about a fire. If 83 per cent of people received the message, I would say that we are on the right track to making it 100 per cent if we can. If there are some delays with some of the specific carriers, that is very unfortunate. However, I know that FESA is looking at this. The member for Murray-Wellington brought this matter to my attention at the time and I brought it to the attention of FESA, which is looking into it. It is sometimes very difficult to get information from the some of the carriers about the possible delays on those carriers or on someone's phone. Some calls on a BlackBerry go through Canada and then come back to Australia, which can cause delays. I do not know the answer to the question, but it is something that FESA is fully aware of and I am confident that FESA will take every step possible to try to alleviate that problem in the future.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I refer to the emergency services levy on page 299 of budget paper No 3, appendix 9.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I need to know where the member's question relates to division 44. Can the member repeat where it relates to division 44?

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I refer to budget paper No 3, appendix 9, and page 299.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That is not in this division.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** That is the Treasury division, not this division.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** Am I able to talk to the minister about the emergency services levy?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Certainly.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I refer to outcomes on page 508 of the *Budget Statements*. There is nothing there of particular note; I just want to ask the minister whether the cost of maintaining fire hydrants is taken out of the emergency services levy.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** Can the minister advise how many hydrants are awaiting maintenance? I understand that FESA reports a problem to the Water Corporation and that the Water Corporation fixes those hydrants. Is that correct?

[9.10 pm]

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** That is correct, yes

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** How many are actually waiting to be repaired, to the Fire and Emergency Services Authority's knowledge; and what is the cost to FESA, on an annual basis, that comes out of the emergency services levy for the repair of hydrants?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will address the first part of the question, then I will get the information for the second part.

There are approximately 68 000 fire hydrants in Western Australia. Approximately 61 000 are owned by FESA, and 7 000 are owned by local governments in non-gazetted fire districts. Fire hydrants owned by FESA are tested by firefighters on a 12 to 18-month cycle. Hydrant work orders on fire hydrants owned by FESA are

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generated in two ways: by a member of the public reporting that a hydrant is leaking; or by firefighters observing a fault during their testing of hydrants. If firefighters observe a fault during testing of a hydrant, a work order is raised and passed to the appropriate water supply authority. There are currently 1 115 hydrant work orders outstanding; this equates to 1.6 per cent of the total hydrants in the metropolitan area. It is important to note that a number of these work orders relate to damaged hydrant boxes or lids and do not actually impact on the functionality of the hydrant. Hydrant work orders come in at the rate of 150 new orders a month, and FESA has been informed that more Water Corporation contract staff members have been employed, and that by the end of December the Water Corporation expects to be down below 400 outstanding work orders. I am told that the cost is in the order of \$1 million.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** Annually?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** To the best of our knowledge, yes.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I have been advised that in one case the cost billed back to FESA for the repair of a hydrant was \$175 000. Is the minister aware of that, or are his advisers able to tell him whether that is plausible?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** My advisers are not familiar with the cost quoted tonight, but we will certainly look into it. That is the advice I am given tonight. I do not know where that figure came from. Does the member know where that figure came from?

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** Yes, I do.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Where?

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I am not at liberty to disclose it.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Okay; so something has come out of the blue that the member has accepted as fact.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I am not telling the minister. Is FESA capable of providing supplementary information as to the highest and lowest costs of repair of hydrants in the past year?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes, we can do that.

*[Supplementary Information No B17.]*

**The CHAIRMAN:** Minister, would you repeat that?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** We have the question; that is okay.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Minister, I refer to the second bullet point on page 508 of budget paper No 2, which relates to key stakeholder emergency management preparations, and states —

... FESA will finalise and implement planning strategies for the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting scheduled for October 2011.

What level of operational planning has the service been involved in with the police or any other agencies; and what level of meeting has it been involved in—is it down to station level? Maybe the minister can give us a bit of an explanation of the interagency cooperation that has occurred to date in relation to the coordination of CHOGM.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member, did we have a reference point in the document?

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** The second dot point on page 508.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will give the member an overview, and then I will get some more specific information that is probably more up to date than my knowledge. I can tell the member that FESA has been involved in all levels of planning and preparation for the CHOGM event. Specialist capability is being developed in cooperation with WA Police and key partners, being ChemCentre and the Department of Health. FESA has also procured and is making ready an additional specialist aerial appliance for the metropolitan area, and has purchased a number of specialist monitoring and technical equipment to supplement its technical rescue and hazardous material response. In addition, risk assessments have been undertaken and appropriate training and exercising has been undertaken, or is programmed, before the event. I will ask Craig Hynes to give the member some of the perhaps more specific details.

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** As the minister said, we are working on the various CHOGM committees from the one chaired by the deputy commissioner, Chris Dawson, through the emergency management field, right down to the groups with whom we are working on security matters; and also on our concept of operations plan that we have developed within the organisation. We are working with our key partners, in particular ChemCentre.

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Communication plans are very important, and we have a plan for the purchase of digital radios to provide secure radio communications between FESA and, in particular, Western Australia Police and other secure agencies. We have agency training and exercise plans, and we are working very closely with other key agencies, particularly on issues such as dignitary protection. Our plans are very well developed, and we have purchased new equipment, including detection equipment which will be used not only for the CHOGM event, but also in general, increasing our special-risk capability.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** When will the training and/or briefings occur at places like Perth station?

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** That concept of operations is currently being developed. That, in the main, is looking at our specialist operations—that is, our involvement—but certainly an exercise training program is being developed now across multiple agencies, and that certainly will involve firefighting stations.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** For example, has the Perth station been intimately involved in the training or preparations for that? Sorry, I am focusing on that station for obvious reasons.

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** At this stage, it has not gone down to that tactical level; it has been at the planning level and working with the other agencies to detail the types of operations that we will be involved in. We have developed that through our concept of operations, and that is certainly going to be exercised in the coming months.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** My question goes to the expenditure outlined on page 506, and the very first line item, “Delivery of Services”. Item 69 is the net amount appropriated to deliver services. I would ask for some explanation as to why the amount appropriated has gone from nearly \$46 million in 2009-10, down to a projected \$21.5 million for 2011-12, and stays at around \$21 million, \$22 million or \$23 million into the future. What is the reason for that major reduction in the appropriations to deliver services in this area?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The member is probably familiar with the answer to that question from the days when he was the minister, and I am sure the member has not forgotten that supplementary funding comes in, in relation to disasters under the Western Australian natural disaster relief arrangements program. The actual expenditure for 2009-10 was \$45.9 million, which included \$22.2 million in supplementary funding. This funding mainly relates to the state’s natural disaster relief and recovery arrangements, and wildfire, and the State Emergency Service response expenses. FESA’s budget does not contain allocations for these activities. In accordance with the agreed arrangements with the Department of Treasury and Finance, FESA submits a supplementary funding request in June of each year, and, as a result, the eligible recoupable expenses incurred by FESA during 2010-11 are not reflected in the 2010-11 actual.

It should also be pointed out that, in addition to the reported consolidated account appropriations to FESA, the government also pays the emergency services levy for state government-owned property. I refer the member to the line item “State Property—Emergency Services Levy” under the Treasury division on page 299 of volume 1 of budget paper No 2. When this contribution of \$16 million in 2011–12 is added to the reported consolidated account appropriations, the state’s total contribution to FESA is \$38.1 million in 2011–12 compared with \$37.3 million in 2009–10, and remains constant over the forward estimates. This was the problem I had with the member for Cannington, who did not understand. He thought that there was a sudden drop in the funding for FESA last year. He thought it was something like \$20 million or \$30 million.

[9.20 pm]

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** It was a drop in the government’s contribution.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** It is not just the government’s contribution; it is also the disaster relief funding that comes in at a later stage.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** So what is the anticipated payment for disaster relief for 2010–11?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** At the moment it is around \$20 million, but it could go up to \$50 million, because we have seen disastrous effects from flooding, bushfires, earthquakes and cyclones. Mother Nature has been very unkind to Western Australia in the past 18 months or so.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I return to the numbers that the minister read out. Is he willing to provide as supplementary information a breakdown of the figures that he gave me for all the years that appear on page 506?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will get Mr Pasquale to answer that question.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** It is hard to follow the minister when he just reads out a whole lot of figures. It would be much easier if he could provide by way of supplementary information a breakdown of the figures he gave me, but on an equal basis for each of the years on page 506.

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**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will ask Mr Pasquale to add to the answer that I gave the member and say whether we are able to provide further information by way of supplementary information.

**Mr F. Pasquale:** It is possible to provide the detail that the member is seeking. Just to clarify it, the only year in which the supplementary funding is reflected across the forward estimates period is the 2009–10 actual. The estimates across the forward estimates period for that line item purely represent the continued direct contribution by the state for the total cost of FESA services. It is basically a subsidy. In addition to those direct contributions that FESA obtains through consolidated appropriations, the state government pays an emergency services levy on government property, which, as the minister referred to, is in a different section of the budget papers. It is in the order of \$16 million. In addition, the state indirectly pays through the Office of State Revenue for the cost of pensioner concessions, which is also referenced in another section of the budget papers. That is in the order of \$16 million. In terms of those direct appropriations to FESA, the only figure that includes supplementary funding is the 2009–10 actual.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Again, I ask the minister whether he is willing to provide that information in a table by way of supplementary information. I realise that there will be blanks, because the emergency costs into the out years cannot be foretold.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** We can do that, but, as the member quite rightly says, there will be blanks. Will the member repeat what he is looking for?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I am looking at the first line on page 506.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The member is asking for a breakdown.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I am asking for a breakdown, to the extent it is possible, of those components that the minister is talking about across those particular years and forward estimates. I realise that some of it will be blank because it cannot be foretold.

*[Supplementary Information No B18.]*

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The reason I am trying to get at these numbers is that we know that the emergency services levy has increased by 31 per cent in the past three years, yet the funding for the services, which is outlined on page 507, rises by only about 10 per cent over two years. I am not doing three with three; I am doing three with two. The fact is that the emergency services levy take has increased by 31 per cent, yet the funding for emergency services has increased by only 10 per cent in the past two years. It looks as though someone is not putting the money from the emergency services levy where it is needed in front-line services.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Is the member referring to the total cost of services on page 507?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Yes. Apart from the fact that there is \$2.5 million for additional firefighters, funding for the maintenance of effort, replacement of equipment et cetera for emergency services and prevention mitigation services is not increasing by anywhere near the same amount as the emergency services levy is.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will get Mr Pasquale to answer that question.

**Mr F. Pasquale:** It is probably an incorrect assumption to look simply at the total cost of services without understanding all the different funding sources that go towards those costs. Although it is obvious when we look at the total cost of services, the extent of the increase in those costs does not necessarily match any movements in the ESL. The ESL is affected by a number of issues, including property valuations and a whole host of things. We would need to look at the emergency services levy budget line item to determine the movement in the levy, and that is on a different page. I am happy to provide further explanation on that if required.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Can I have an explanation—if the minister allows?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes.

**Mr F. Pasquale:** I refer to the line item “Regulatory fees and fines” in the income statement on page 512. That line item represents the emergency services levy that is to be collected. In 2011–12 it is \$234 141 000. The movements in that line item do not represent 31 per cent; they are obviously more in line with what the ESL budget needs to collect and are more in line with the movements that the member is talking about. Obviously, the movement in the average charges that the member may be referring to excuses that, but that is the movement in the ESL budget. If my memory serves me correctly, the ESL budget will rise by 7.5 per cent from last year to this year. I will confirm that quickly; I have not done the calculations.

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**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I have just put those figures into my calculator and they show a 30 per cent increase over the two years. That basically reflects the figure that I mentioned. There is a very large increase in the ESL but the same percentage increase is not flowing into the delivery of services.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I ask Mr Pasquale to answer that question.

**Mr F. Pasquale:** I refer to the outcomes of the 2010–11 budget process. A significant funding boost was provided in 2010–11 that flows right through the forward estimates period. There is \$128.2 million over the forward estimates period. The outlay for that funding was just in excess of \$30 million. That relates to the 2011–12 financial year. The majority of those services were funded by the emergency services levy.

**Mr A.J. SIMPSON:** I refer to page 510 and to Cockburn Central. Can the minister advise when FESA expects to locate its new emergency services centre at Cockburn?

[9.30 pm]

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I am happy to say that construction of the new emergency service complex at Cockburn is on time and, indeed, under budget, which is good news. As a consequence of a competitive market and tendering process, the tender outcome has provided a saving of \$11.85 million on the pre-tender cost estimate. This state-of-the-art facility is due to be completed before the end of this year, and occupancy of the new emergency services complex is anticipated for early 2012; I think occupancy will take place in February or March.

**Mr A.J. SIMPSON:** Does that mean that all the head office emergency services that are currently in Perth will now be in Cockburn? Will the Fire and Emergency Services Authority's head office now be in Cockburn?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** That is correct, yes.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I have a further question on the capital works issue. Can the minister advise me whether sites have been identified for the Geraldton and Australind fire stations? When will they both be completed?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will deal with the Australind one first. The developer of the proposed site is in receivership, and the receiver is yet to advise whether the development will continue; the member may or may not be aware of that already. However, FESA is committed to delivering this project on time and is looking at alternative sites should the development not proceed, or if significant delays are expected. If there are any problems with the fact that a receiver is now involved with that location, FESA will look at an alternative site.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** Geraldton is the other site.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will ask Craig Hynes to give an update on Geraldton.

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** We have identified a suitable site for the Geraldton station, and we are still in the process of procurement for that site.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I refer to page 507, under "Outcomes, Services and Key Performance Information". Proposals have been mooted to change rostering arrangements for firefighters. I want to know whether any modelling or financial analysis has been done on whether these proposed changes will cost more or less money, will lead to a reduction in overtime, or will mean that there needs to be greater staff numbers. In other words, has any modelling at all been done on the changed rostering arrangements for firefighters?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will ask Craig Hynes to answer that question.

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** If the question is related to the current enterprise bargaining agreement negotiations, yes, we have factored in the cost of overtime and consecutive shifts, but that is not the prime purpose of the discussions.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** Through the minister, what is the cost?

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** I cannot provide a figure off the top of my head.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** Can that be provided by supplementary information?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Well, let Craig Hynes answer the question first, and then if the member wants supplementary information, she can ask for it.

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** In essence, the modelling is about people who work a second shift and then cannot present for their normal rostered shift, requiring other firefighters to work extra overtime; that is, a firefighter cannot work his normal rostered shift, and another firefighter comes in on overtime hours. The proposal is related to reducing the amount of time a firefighter spends in consecutive shifts, which is not a safe practice. That will reduce the time that a firefighter is required to come back and fill another firefighter's normal rostered shift.

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**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** Can the minister provide by way of supplementary information modelling of the costs of changes to existing rostering arrangements?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** No, I am not prepared to supply that by way of supplementary information. I understand that it is part of the EBA negotiations, as I am sure the member is aware, and therefore it is not appropriate for that information be provided by way of supplementary information at this stage.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I have a further question. Who undertook this modelling and how much did it cost?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will ask Craig Hynes to answer that.

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** The costing has been done internally by FESA and, in conjunction with our normal negotiation strategy, with the Department of Commerce and the Department of Treasury and Finance.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** They did the modelling?

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** We undertook the discussion for the efficiencies; we discussed the EBA negotiations and provided that modelling as part of the normal practice for EBA offers.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I refer to page 509 and the explanation for the increase in full-time equivalents. The number has increased significantly, and I understand that there has been the appointment of additional community emergency service officers and career firefighters. Can the minister give us a breakdown of how many additional FTEs we have appointed over the past two years, and what proportion are actually career firefighters as opposed to other personnel?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will ask Frank Pasquale to answer that question.

**Mr F. Pasquale:** Commencing last year, at the beginning of 2010–11, there was a commitment to provide an extra 102 firefighters over four years. The breakdown, from memory, was 22 last year, with a further 26 allocated for this year. In terms of community emergency services officers, an additional 15 were allocated last year, with 10 planned for the coming year.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** According to the notes, there is an additional 146 FTEs over the past 12 months. That does not add up, and I am wondering whether there are any other areas that may have been bolstered.

**Mr F. Pasquale:** In addition to the FTEs we just talked about, an extra nine were provided last year for the establishment of a regulatory unit and enhanced compliance monitoring. An additional 10 FTEs were provided to support the improved community information and warning mechanisms—supporting our operational systems, state alert and communication centres. And a further seven extra staff were provided to establish the regional office in Manjimup; I have already talked about the 22 firefighters last year. Additional staff were also provided for a number of commonwealth programs for which funding has been provided, but acknowledgement of the positions that that funding supports has not been recognised.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** In relation to the staffing profile, have any redundancies been offered this year; and, if so, on what basis have they been offered?

**Mr F. Pasquale:** To my knowledge, the only redundancies provided for have been under the government's voluntary redundancy scheme. Those schemes were offered to those people who were eligible in accordance with the guidelines, so voluntary redundancies have been offered.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** How many redundancies have there been, and have there been efforts made by FESA to replace the skills that have been lost through redundancies?

**Mr F. Pasquale:** The exact number does not come to mind, but it is very limited. I think it is fewer than four or five, but I am happy to qualify that. The redundancies that were taken up were not of substantive positions, so they were only in situations where people were surplus to requirements in that they were not held against a substantive position, so there was no loss to the substantive FTEs allocated to FESA.

[9.40 pm]

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Would the minister explain the difference between a community emergency service officer, a community officer, and a regional officer addition to, say, Manjimup? I thought they would all come under the same heading as, say, a CSO or —

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will get the chief fire officer, Mr Hynes, to answer that question.

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** Community emergency service officers are funded partly by FESA and partly in association with the local government area they are servicing. It is a partnership between the local government and FESA. They provide emergency services, and coordinate the planning and support of volunteers in that area. The other

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positions within the regional office include district managers, area officers and bushfire mitigation officers. The district managers and area officers have direct roles related to managing direct services, including our volunteers, and services to community safety. Bushfire mitigation officers, who are working as part of a new program across the state, are working with local governments to address bushfire risks in high-risk areas.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I refer to the table on page 507 of the *Budget Statements* under “Desired Outcomes” —

Western Australian communities able to prevent, prepare for and recover from emergencies.

The Water Corporation advised that the 10 suburbs with the lowest water pressure are Atwell, Aubin Grove, Brigadoon, Hammond Park, Hope Valley, Orelia, Parmelia, South Lake, Success and Manjimup. How does low water pressure impact on the capacity to deliver services, if at all; and, if it does, what is that impact and what is the mitigation for it?

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** Low-pressure water is not a desirable outcome for firefighting, for sure. We identify where those low-pressure water areas are in the hydrant system through our computer-aided dispatch system. When there is a turnout in those areas, it alerts the responding brigades and their dispatchers that there is a water problem so that they can then add extra resources; namely, either mobilise extra tankers or provide further mobile water sources to those areas. I cannot be specific about all those areas, but certainly that is the case in those ones closest to the Swan River.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** But somewhere in the organisation it is known where all those low water-pressure points are as a constant, as opposed to something that is periodic?

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** We have a dedicated water supplies officer who deals with the Water Corporation on an ongoing basis. His role is to identify those areas that need identified strategies. As I said, that would be incorporated in our computer-aided dispatch system.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I refer the minister to “Outcomes, Services and Key Performance Information” on page 507 of the *Budget Statements*. Can the minister confirm that CEO Jo Harrison-Ward’s contract has been renewed, and did he contemplate deferring that renewal until such time as the Keelty and Ellis reports were released?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I do not know what relevance that question has to the page we are looking at and what the member is quoting as a desired outcome.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** It is to do with management to achieve government goals, on page 507.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Does the member believe that that question is absolutely relevant to this one?

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** Yes.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Let me say that Jo Harrison-Ward’s contract has been renewed. I am not quite sure what the other part of the question was.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** Did the minister consider deferring the renewal of Ms Harrison-Ward’s contract until he saw the findings of the Ellis and Keelty reports; and, if not, why not?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** No. I did not consider deferring it until after those reviews. Her contract was up for renewal at least a couple of months ago. I had no reason to defer the renewal of her contract. I think she has done a very good job as CEO of FESA since she has been there—contrary perhaps to what the member may think and what some others may think. For that reason, I had no reason to defer her contract renewal.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** Can the minister now confirm whether the Ellis report, or a draft version, is in the minister’s office and whether he has sighted it?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I have obviously seen the draft report of Stuart Ellis. I had a brief read of it. I am more interested in the final report because, as the member would be aware, there are other parties that have to be consulted. It would not be fair to make a comment until those parties have responded and the final report is available. That is coming to a rapid conclusion. The latest information I have is that the final report, it is hoped, will be with me within two to three weeks. As soon as I receive that report, I will obviously take it to cabinet so that cabinet is abreast of what the report says. Once I have done that, I will carry through with my commitment to table it in Parliament. I will do that at the earliest opportunity.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** It is looking like the minister will table it in August.

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**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** No. I am very hopeful—this is a genuine comment—I will table it before the winter recess. I have asked FESA to make every effort to complete its final report so I can actually go through those steps and table it in Parliament before we break for the winter recess.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** The minister mentioned that that report is being looked at by various stakeholders. What is the process if, for example, the stakeholders object to certain findings or passages in that draft report? Does the report get changed? Is there an annex that provides the commentary or provisions? How will that work?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** It is a standard major incident review procedure, as I am sure the member is aware. To answer specifically—I think I know where the member is coming from—I will get Craig Hynes to provide more detail.

**Mr C.A. Hynes:** The MIR, as the minister said, is an internal FESA report. It has been conducted by Stuart Ellis, AM, who is an eminent fire reviewer. He has impeccable credentials. He takes carriage of presenting that report. He has worked with us in its draft stages and has gone through the stakeholder consultations. It is up to him whether he accepts the stakeholder feedback. That is the process. Once he is ready to finalise that report, he will submit it to FESA so we can pass it on to the minister.

**The appropriation was recommended.**