

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY - ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

182. Mr B.J. GRYLLS to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

Given that the government introduced the emergency services levy to provide a more efficient firefighting service for all Western Australians no matter where they live -

- (1) Why have Western Australia's 250 volunteer bush fire brigades, such as Greenough and Three Springs, been refused finance from the emergency services levy to buy level 2 tunics and boots to allow volunteers to tackle fires in houses and buildings?
- (2) Does the minister understand that bush fire brigade training and policy prohibits firefighters who are not wearing level 2 tunics and boots from entering buildings to extinguish fires?
- (3) If a fire occurred today, would the minister want the volunteers to adhere to Fire and Emergency Services Authority policy and allow houses and buildings in country areas to burn to the ground?
- (4) What is the minister's advice to a volunteer who has the opportunity to enter a burning building to rescue a trapped person if that volunteer does not have level 2 protective clothing?
- (5) Will the minister ensure that funding is made available in the upcoming state budget for shires to purchase protective clothing for their firefighters?

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO replied:

- (1)-(5) I thank the leader of the National Party for the question, although I wish he had given me some notice of it, so that I could have researched the answer.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the members for Vasse and Cottesloe.

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO: The levy has been put in place to provide support, and has resulted in the provision of support for volunteers and the emergency services. The commitment of those funding allocations goes through a process, as the member knows.

Mr B.J. Grylls: They applied, it was rejected and then they appealed and it too was rejected.

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO: I thank the member for giving me that information, because I was unaware of the particular circumstances to which he referred. I will make sure that the member is provided with an appropriate answer. The government is committed to supporting volunteers. They are a very important part of the emergency services response in this state. We must ensure that they are supported, and they will be. A number of applications for grants are made by a number of people, and we must ensure that that support is given on a proper basis. I am happy to take up the member's cause and give him a proper response.