

BOORABBIN NATIONAL PARK FIRE — CORONIAL INQUEST

988. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to recent media reports on the evidence at the coronial inquest in response to the Boorabbin National Park fire in December 2007.

- (1) What action has the minister taken to ensure that Department of Environment and Conservation firefighters are properly resourced and have the appropriate competencies should a similar situation arise in the future?
- (2) What action has the minister taken to ensure better coordination between DEC and Fire and Emergency Services Authority firefighters when dealing with significant fires like this?
- (3) Does the minister know when the review announced by the Premier in March this year into the state's bushfire readiness will be released?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

I thank the member for her question. I will just say at the outset that, as the member is obviously aware, the coronial inquest is underway, and I do not intend to make a specific comment on what was a very tragic incident.

- (1)-(3) With respect to the department, following the incident in Boorabbin, a number of reviews were undertaken and a number of recommendations and learnings, if I can put it that way, were made to the department. It has certainly fulfilled most of those recommendations. A number of them relate to improved cooperation. There is a bill in this place relating to the very issue of the role of the Department of Environment and Conservation and FESA. Some of that obviously stems from other recommendations that arose from a committee report a couple of years ago.

It is very important to reflect on the fact that the Department of Environment and Conservation as well as the Fire and Emergency Services Authority and the bush fire brigade provide an absolutely vital service to the people of Western Australia, particularly to those in our south west communities. The department has obviously learnt and acted on a number of recommendations to improve its capacity to deal with fire and emergency incidents. I think it is fair to say that it will continue to do that because we do not want to see tragic situations like that which occurred in that particular circumstance or indeed like that which occurred in Victoria.

I understand that the report that was being undertaken through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet has been completed, but the member would have to refer to the Premier the question on when he intends to release it.