

MARIGINIUP BUSHFIRE — DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES

Statement by Minister for Community Services

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Community Services) [12.19 pm]: It is often said that emergencies bring out the best in people. Last week the best in people from my electorate and the Department of Communities was on display in droves. It has been my privilege to stand with the Wanneroo community and broader communities in supporting those impacted by these devastating fires. I have heard many stories and observed inspirational acts from community members, including people opening their homes to a family of strangers so that they did not have to stay at the evacuation centre; a man helping to move 60 horses out of harm's way with his ute and float; people hosing down their neighbours' home because they were away on holidays; and so many more.

The Department of Communities played an important role in responding to the terrible and fast-moving situation, providing emergency relief and support to the impacted community. On Wednesday, 22 November, the Department of Communities quickly opened the Gumblossom Community Centre to provide immediate shelter, food and water to those impacted by the fire near Mariginiup in the City of Wanneroo. The following day our government announced that the Bullsbrook Centre for National Resilience would be opened to provide additional accommodation for impacted residents and volunteer firefighters. Communities staff worked incredibly hard to open the centre to impacted residents later that day. More than 500 staff and volunteers from multiple agencies worked tirelessly to keep people safe, including the Department of Communities' emergency relief and support team and the north metropolitan regional district, which positioned two field teams and a central team to support the response. In addition to the evacuation centres, Communities also engaged key emergency response partners to support with food and meals, clothing, laundry services and psychological first aid.

I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our purple shirts—better known by some as Communities' staff and volunteers—involved in the emergency response, including local child protection staff. Many evacuated community members have contacted me to express their thanks and gratitude to Communities' staff and volunteers, like Phil and Angela who texted me to say, according to my notes —

Overall a fantastic facility, individuals commitment to go the extra mile is throughout and you should be very proud of what has been achieved, not only here, but at the evacuation centre too.

Graham also texted to say, according to my notes —

Hi Sabine, just to let you know we are finally at home. We got the all clear and left the facility. To say the staff have been outstanding is an understatement, Especially Mark, what an amazing person he is.

The emergency support continues, and I am proud as Minister for Community Services to see the dedication of the staff and volunteers in supporting our local community. To the Wanneroo community I say, as a member: this state government will stand with you and will support you throughout the recovery journey. We've got this, Wanneroo.