

BUSHFIRE MITIGATION

**410. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Minister for Emergency Services:**

I thank the member for Willagee for the vote of confidence!

This is a serious question. I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to reducing the risk of bushfire in local communities across Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on this government's significant investment in bushfire mitigation measures?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house what this record investment means for bushfire-prone communities across WA?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:**

- (1)–(2) I can do that, member for Swan Hills. I thank and congratulate the member for her excellent advocacy and the hard work she has done for her constituents, especially after a very tough year. With the Wooroloo bushfire largely impacting her electorate, what she has done over the past few months has been extraordinary. It has been very tough. I thank her for what she has done. This question gives me an opportunity to explain what the government is doing about bushfire mitigation, which the member obviously has a special interest in.

More than 90 per cent of our state is bushfire prone. Over the past five years, we have invested a record \$50 million in mitigation, which includes \$35 million for mitigation on crown land. It is the first time the Department of Fire and Emergency Services has performed this important work. We also secured \$15 million for the bushfire risk management planning program to support local governments identify and then treat bushfire risk. Our state is entering a new era of enhanced bushfire management, the likes of which we have not seen before. This funding is making a real difference.

We are seeing more planned burning and other mitigation activities. Since 2017, the McGowan government has invested \$31 million, which has been provided to 48 local governments across the state. That has meant 4 306 potentially life-and-property-saving bushfire mitigation treatments across more than 9 000 hectares and more than 4 700 kilometres of upgraded firebreaks and fire access roads to reduce the threat of disastrous bushfires. Just weeks ago, 26 additional local governments shared a record \$7.5 million in mitigation activity funding for more than 1 100 mitigation activities in high bushfire risk areas. This includes mechanical treatments to reduce fuel levels, the creation of firebreaks and planned burns.

We know that we are the true party of the regions. I have a long list of local governments that have benefited from this mitigation funding. I will go through the list. As I look through the list, they seem to be all Labor seats, but we share the responsibility across some of the few remaining non-Labor seats across the state. I can see Pilbara, Warren–Blackwood, Collie–Preston and Vasse on the list. The member for Moore will be glad to know that the seat of Moore is included, and the McGowan government is looking after the constituents of Moore, even if the local member is not. It is true to say that we have done more for Moore than ever before! As I look through the list, the member for Roe is not forgotten about. We have not said no to Roe either. They are all there.

It has been a very difficult year. We have had the Wooroloo and Red Gully bushfires, and we have had to attend to a lot of issues with firefighters and first responders. Our emergency services continue to work harder than ever before. They cannot do it by themselves. We cannot stop every bushfire, but we can reduce the impact of those bushfires when they occur. As the member for Swan Hills well knows, a prepared community is a safer community.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I give the call to a member to ask the last question, I think I saw the former member for Kimberley Carol Martin walk in. Yes, she is here.

Members: Hear, hear!

**The SPEAKER:** I give the last question to the member for Roe.