

BUSHFIRE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE — LOCATION

116. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to the McGowan government's recent announcement on the location of the Bushfire Centre of Excellence. Can the minister update the house on the McGowan government's historic emergency services reform and what this will mean for communities across the state, including those in Murray–Wellington?

Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:

Thank you very much, member for Murray–Wellington. Can I congratulate her and the Shire of Murray–Wellington for their efforts to have the Bushfire Centre of Excellence located in Pinjarra. They have done a great job—a very, very good job.

If we compare the achievements of the McGowan Labor government in the area of fire and emergency services over the past two years with the struggles the opposition—both Liberal and National Parties—had when dealing with these issues, it is black and white. Let us look at what has happened over the last two years. The government has dealt with the recommendations out of the Parkerville and the Black Cat Creek fires, which were left to us to complete. We have dealt with the recommendations from the Ferguson report, which the former government basically struggled with and did not know what to do. This government created the Rural Fire Division, which was strongly supported across the whole of Western Australia. The former government really struggled with that; it had no policy and did not know where it was going in that area at all. This government has poured \$80 million into keeping people in regional Western Australia safe. We have put \$80 million into the Rural Fire Division and \$35 million into bushfire mitigation. We have put \$15 million into extending the bushfire risk management planning program, something that the former government did not fund.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The \$35 million for mitigation on crown land, as the member for Warren–Blackwood knows, is strongly supported by his shire, the Shire of Denmark. He was there when that announcement was made and the shire was over the moon about it. Our government has dealt with all the issues that the former government left it—resolved them. One big policy initiative that we have taken forward as a new policy initiative is, of course, the Bushfire Centre of Excellence. It will increase the level of skill in the area of bushfire management and planning for both volunteer and career firefighters, and people from the private sector, from parks and wildlife, and from a whole range of backgrounds—anyone who is involved in bushfire management and bushfire planning—will get access to the Bushfire Centre of Excellence once it is built in Pinjarra. It is a great outcome.

I compare it to the criticism—we actually got criticism, believe it or not—over our announcement. That criticism, of course, came from the person who has just been interjecting on me, the member for Murray–Wellington —

Several members interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I am sorry. I apologise. I take that back, member for Murray–Wellington.

Mr D.T. Redman: Another bungle.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No. The member for Warren–Blackwood said quite clearly—I would like to hear what the member for Murray–Wellington and the member for Mandurah would say about this—that where it is being located in Pinjarra is not rural enough. He said it is not in a rural area.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Peel, apparently, is not rural enough. It was rural enough when he was in government.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The member for Warren–Blackwood and his team of pirates over there put a very dismal—member for Mandurah—\$8.7 million into 27 projects in the area of Peel. Of course, that was a drop in the ocean compared to his pork-barrelling in the Pilbara. Why did the former government and particularly the National Party put that money into the area of Peel? It was because they saw it as being regional. If it was good enough for them when they were in government, it is certainly good enough for us. The Bushfire Centre of Excellence has been located in the right place because that area fulfilled the whole criteria that was requested of it during the freedom of information process. It is a great outcome, which the former government could not do over eight years.

