

BUSHFIRE SEASON — HOMEOWNER PREPAREDNESS — ARE YOU BUSHFIRE READY?

**883. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Energy:**

Could the minister update the house on the Are You Ready campaign that has been launched to help home and property owners prepare themselves for this year's fire season?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:**

This is an important issue. The Are You Bushfire Ready? multimedia campaign is one of the most important things that this state and the community have to deal with. We live in a fire-prone land. Last year there were 3 800 bushfires around the state. We all remember the Roleystone–Kelmscott and Margaret River fires and the Keelty report that came from them. The key message from them was prepare, act and survive.

The state government has responded to that report with major expenditure on the following: a fleet of 22 helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft with record capacity for water delivery; 127 000 career and volunteer firefighters who are better equipped with safer gear than ever before; and 800 people ready and involved in fire prevention and firefighting within the Department of Parks and Wildlife. Western Power has also spent a record \$250 million to address fire risks, including \$142 million on pole replacement, \$17 million on pole reinforcement and \$400 million on vegetation management—a record expenditure.

No matter how the government prepares, fire risks exist. Governments cannot do everything. Fires are uncontrollable and unpredictable; they can get out of hand and threaten people and lives. We all realise this from experience here, interstate and overseas. The obligation is also on the community to act, prepare and help us all to survive. That is why the government has set up the areyouready.wa.gov.au website and direct-mail campaign. To show the interest in it, in the first 24 hours there were over 1 000 hits on the website, with 343 downloads of the prepare document. This document shows people how to prepare their properties and react in the case of a fire. The document that tells people how to act if a fire comes onto their properties has been downloaded 182 times and, most importantly, the document that shows people how to survive in the case of a catastrophic fire has been downloaded 195 times. That is quite a good response.

I add that this campaign is an investment in the future. Unfortunately, fires are part of our landscape and existence. This campaign is preparing us for the future. Hopefully the Are You Bushfire Ready? campaign and the message it brings will be here in the future, and I encourage all members to get the message out to the community to act and prepare.