

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION — FIREFIGHTERS' WAGE CLAIM

732. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the wage claim of the Department of Environment and Conservation firefighters and the government's offer of eight per cent over four years. Given that this offer will maintain the wage disparity between DEC firefighters and those employed by the Fire and Emergency Services Authority, is the minister concerned that officers employed by her department are being treated unfairly, particularly given the enormity of the task of managing bushfires?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The government is committed to treating its employees fairly. DEC does not specifically employ firefighters, so a direct comparison with FESA firefighters is not appropriate. DEC staff who are involved in fire management are employed to undertake a wide range of environment and land management responsibilities of which firefighting is a component. Agreements covering a number of DEC employees expire on 31 December. The government will seek to negotiate a fair pay increase for those employees in the context of the current economic circumstances and the government's wages policy.