

WUNDOWIE BUSH FIRE BRIGADE

838. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Emergency Services:

I would like to acknowledge in the public gallery members of Northam Women in Business who have been in Parliament today, learning more about the parliamentary process and being entertained, I am quite sure, during question time. It is lovely to have you here.

I refer to the Wundowie bush fire brigade, which is currently housed in a Shire of Northam depot with minimal facilities, which is a step up from the dilapidated shed with no water or power they were in 12 months ago.

- (1) Why has the Shire of Northam's application for funding to build an appropriate facility for the bush fire brigade been rejected on multiple occasions?
- (2) Why does the government refuse to acknowledge the Wundowie bush fire brigade as an important asset in fire management for the west ward of the Shire of Northam and support for neighbouring communities like Wooroloo in the Shire of Mundaring?
- (3) Is the government satisfied that the Wundowie bush fire brigade's 16 dedicated volunteers will be left to operate from a makeshift base at the shire depot shed ahead of a projected very high risk fire season?

Ms J.L. HANNS replied:

I rise very pleased to address this question on behalf of the Minister for Emergency Services and I thank the member for the question on his behalf. I would like to provide some information that was given to me today as background to the member in relation to her question.

- (1)–(3) The local government grant scheme funding request was considered by the local government grant scheme bushfire service capital grants committee. The committee did not support the application and it provided the following information, according to my notes —

The Wundowie application was deemed a lower priority than other requests and the addition of a bush fire brigade was not supported by DFES due to the Wundowie town site and surrounds being serviced by volunteer fire and rescue services.

The government acknowledges that all bush fire brigades are important assets, including Wundowie bush fire brigade. The Shire of Northam has 10 registered bush fire brigades within the shire, including Wundowie and most Wundowie bush fire brigades are dual registered with other nearby brigades.

I want to acknowledge on behalf of the minister the significant preparations underway by DFES, bush fire brigades and volunteer brigades right across Western Australia, including in the member's electorate. I understand and appreciate that this will be a very difficult fire season. On behalf of the Cook government, I want to thank all our volunteer and career fire services for helping keep our communities safe in the upcoming fire season.