

Victorian Bushfires — Adjournment Debate

HON MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM (South West) [9.52 pm]: I would like to make a brief statement regarding the Victorian bushfires. Mr Deputy President, as a Legislative Council member whose family has experienced the worst of rural Western Australian bushfires, I would like to send my condolences to the families and friends of those who so tragically lost their lives in the recent Victorian inferno. Many people lost their entire life's possessions in Australia's worst natural disaster. The scale of devastation, as witnessed on our televisions, was quite staggering. People will be scarred for life, both mentally and physically. I am particularly thinking of close personal friends who amazingly survived the fires as their house burnt down around them.

As an Australian, I am proud of the way the entire nation has responded to the fires and to people's needs. The gifts of money, food and accommodation, together with the many prayers and best wishes that continue to flow, say so much about the character of Australians.

Mr Deputy President, again I send my sympathies to the families of those who have lost their loved ones, and I hope that in the fullness of time we can all come to terms with the huge tragedy.