

VOLUNTEER FUEL CARD SCHEME

Statement by Member for Swan Hills

MR F.A. ALBAN (Swan Hills) [12.58 pm]: In December 2015, applications opened for the Emergency Services Volunteer Fuel Card scheme. Several visits from our Minister for Emergency Services and his predecessor have resulted in this scheme covering all Swan Hills emergency services brigades, groups and units. Being on the rural fringe, we are often excluded from schemes due to the geographic boundaries that exist within the same postcode.

I am pleased to see that these cards, which will provide the volunteer brigades in my electorate with a \$2 000 fuel card every year for the next four years, are now being delivered. We are constantly reminded of just how much work volunteers such as firefighters put into this electorate. I understand that Swan Hills has a particularly high fire risk compared to most other electorates and history has shown that to be accurate.

Although some volunteers may take the stance, “I’m a volunteer and I don’t want any payment”, no doubt there are volunteers who are between jobs or on a fixed income, so this scheme will benefit them when they have used their own vehicle in service to their local volunteer brigade. Most importantly, it will benefit those communities across the state that rely on such volunteers, their skillsets, training and commitment, throughout the long hot summer we are currently in. The intent of these funds is to cover the costs that some volunteers may incur whilst using their own vehicles in the course of their official duties and to reduce the personal impost that volunteers bear in their commitment to the state.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm