

EMERGENCY SERVICES — PRESCRIBED BURNING

2466. Hon Diane Evers to the minister representing the Minister for Emergency Services:

- (1) Please provide a list of all the departments, agencies and offices involved in any way in prescribed burning under the Minister's responsibility and what activities they perform in regards to prescribed burning?
- (2) For the financial years 2017–18 and 2018–19, what was the estimated cost and the actual cost of the involvement of these bodies in prescribed burning?
- (3) Do any of the departments, agencies and offices in (1) provide funding for prescribed burning to any other persons or entities:
 - (a) if yes to (3):
 - (i) to who and for what services; and
 - (ii) how much was provided to or is estimated to be provided for each of the years 2017–18 and 2018–19?

Hon Stephen Dawson replied:

- (1) The Minister is responsible for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services that performs the following activities:

DFES and the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage (DPLH) have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for DFES to manage bushfire risk on Unallocated Crown Land/Unmanaged Reserves (UCL/UMR) within gazetted town sites and the greater Perth Metropolitan area. Under this agreement DFES manages 89,000 hectares of UCL/UMR.

DBCA is responsible for all UCL/UMR outside of this area.

DFES meets with the DPLH and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) annually to discuss and coordinate the proposed UCL/UMR program of works across the State to ensure the best outcome for the Western Australian community.

DFES also engages at regional levels with local government (LG) and DBCA to ensure prescribed burning programs are cohesive, collaborative and maximise the use of resources to reduce costs.

DFES works with the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) to enhance the tools available to local governments in meeting their obligations to manage bushfire related risk under the Bush Fires Act 1954.

DFES through the Office of Bushfire Risk Management, provides a Prescribed Burning Assurance Program, working with agencies such as DBCA to align their prescribed burning activities to the international risk management standard (ISO31000).

- (2) The actual amount spent on prescribed burning carried out by DFES for the years requested:

2017–18 – \$119,365.

2018–19 – \$74,172.

Note: Prescribed burning is only one mechanism to mitigate bushfire risk. There are many other mitigation activities funded by DFES such as mechanical clearing and slashing to manage the risk of bushfire.

- (3) Yes.
 - (i) DFES administers funding to local government and agencies to treat bushfire related risk. The State Government announced an additional \$35 million over four years for bushfire mitigation, as a part of the rural fire reform package. This commitment significantly increased funding for mitigation works on state owned or managed land. Funding through the Emergency Services Levy was made available to treat risk in December 2018. This is in addition to the \$15 million of Royalties for Regions funding running to 2019–20 that is accessible to local Governments in eligible areas that have an endorsed Bushfire Risk Management Plan.

Note: prescribed burning is only one mechanism to mitigate bushfire risk. There are many other mitigation activities funded by DFES such as mechanical clearing and slashing to manage the risk of bushfire.
 - (ii) 2017–18: Funding for mitigation works (ESL) was first made in December 2018.

2018–19: DFES estimates that it administered \$30,200 to local government for prescribed burning activities, which is a small component of the mitigation activities performed to protect communities from the threat of bushfire.