

GRIFFIN COAL — EWINGTON MINE

496. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

Can the minister update the house on the current situation at Griffin Coal's Ewington mine, which was impacted by fire earlier this morning?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

I thank the member for the question. I will inform the house of some advice that I have received. This refers to the Ewington mine of Griffin Coal, the company that the member for Riverton asked to shut down and leave the state. Around 2.00 am this morning, there was a significant fire at the Griffin Coal mine load-out facility located on the Ewington mine site near Collie. The site emergency response team attended the scene, together with fire crews from the local area—Bunbury, Eaton, Collie and Donnybrook—and, I understand, the emergency response team from the neighbouring mine. Mining operations were suspended and non-essential personnel were sent home. The fire was brought under control at about 4.00 am. No injuries have been reported. Mine safety inspectors from the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety attended the site very early this morning and are investigating the incident. The fire has impacted two conveyors, conveyors 11 and 12, that feed the coal storage bins above the train load-out facility. The site is unable to load coal trains without this facility until the conveyors are repaired. The company is exploring other options for transporting coal to its customers. The main customers that are impacted are Worsley Alumina and Cockburn Cement. The coal storage area and infrastructure used to supply the nearby Bluewaters power station was not impacted by the fire. The Public Utilities Office has been in touch with Bluewaters and indicated that it is not currently concerned about the situation. Bluewaters expects that the infrastructure can be re-energised and restarted once the area is declared safe. Accordingly, Bluewaters is expecting to experience only a one-day interruption to its coal supply and during this period it will be using coal from its stockpile.