

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — BUSHFIRE RISK MITIGATION

**846. Hon RICK MAZZA to the minister representing the Minister for Emergency Services:**

I refer to the minister's media release of 14 September titled "Record \$7.3 million to combat the threat of catastrophic bushfires".

- (1) Can the minister advise the eligibility criteria for local governments to access the \$500 000 of funding?
- (2) Given that we are fast approaching the ideal time to carry out mitigation measures, why is the funding not available until "later in the year"?
- (3) Will the funding be available to local governments on an annual basis?
- (4) Which other government agencies will have access to the nearly \$1.2 million available "to treat bushfire risks in areas such as unmanaged Crown reserves"?
- (5) Are local governments required to report their progress and reach set targets?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services advises the following.

- (1) The amount of \$500 000 in funding will be available through a second mitigation activity fund competitive grant round planned for late 2018. The MAF competitive grants program is accessible to local governments with a bushfire risk management plan that has been endorsed by the Office of Bushfire Risk Management and can be used for physical treatment works that mitigate extreme, very high and high bushfire risk on state-held lands affecting regional town sites in Western Australia.
- (2) MAF competitive grant rounds are held regularly. The most recent round, awarded in September 2018, supports treatment works that will be completed by June 2019. MAF supports a variety of physical mitigation treatments, not all of which have a seasonal window for completion. The upcoming funding round will allow local governments that have recently received OBRM endorsement of their BRM plan to access MAF. Previous funding was allocated to 15 local governments in February 2018, totalling \$1.48 million.
- (3) MAF has been seeded with \$15 million from the royalties for regions program and will be distributed between 2016 and 2020. It is intended that MAF competitive grants rounds will be held at least annually over the duration of the program.
- (4) The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage received MAF support totalling \$1.2 million in September 2018 for treatment activities on unallocated crown land and unmanaged reserves for mitigation of extreme, very high and high bushfire risk to regional town sites in Western Australia. Additional government agencies with these land management responsibilities will be eligible to apply for future MAF support.
- (5) MAF competitive grant funding agreements establish reporting requirements for recipient local governments. These include progress reports and both financial acquittal and evaluation reporting. All treatments identified through MAF are captured in DFES's bushfire risk management system. Relevant information such as treatment objectives, treatment status and associated costs are recorded and updated in the system by each local government.