

POLICE AIR WING

**669. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Police:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to keeping the Western Australian community safe.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on plans to bolster the aerial fleet for police and emergency services?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how the new aerial fleet will assist in keeping the community safe?

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for her question. I am going to advise the house a little about the Department of Fire and Emergency Services' air wing, although I am a little envious because I understand that it numerically exceeds the police air wing. However, in terms of quality and capability, I think the police have got it! The Minister for Emergency Services, who is a member of the other house, asked that I convey to the house that an additional two Black Hawk helicopters will be joining the fleet to help fight bushfires this coming bushfire season. These extraordinary, top-of-the-range helicopters, with the best capability in terms of rotary-winged aircraft, will join the many other rotary-winged aircraft, of which there is a large number, and also the many fixed-winged aircraft. The department has an air tanker and a fleet of other aircraft to help tackle bushfires. Those two Black Hawk helicopters will join the department this year and provide additional opportunity. Crikey! I have just been notified that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services has 38 aircraft at its disposal—an extraordinary number.

The police air wing does not have that number, but recently we announced a further upgrade to the police air wing, with \$15.8 million to help upgrade our fixed-wing aircraft fleet. The existing PC-12 turboprop aircraft will be refurbished to enhance their capabilities and allow them to continue to provide support. Members would probably have heard the announcement that the Western Australia Police Force will be the first police force in the country to operate jet aircraft when the PC-24 is provided to the police air wing in 2026. This aircraft will halve the time for deployment anywhere in the state. Currently, the PC-12 can take as long as six hours, subject to how long it takes on the ground. If it is going to Kununurra and has to refuel in Meekatharra on the way, it can take a minimum of six hours to get there with a team of police, whether it be homicide or forensics teams, the tactical response group or a regional operations group—any one of the police capabilities, with the exception of the mounted police; I do not think they will get on the aircraft! This aircraft will get there in a three-hour single flight, halving the time. This will provide an exceptional uplift in support to all regions in Western Australia. The same aircraft are operated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service. They can land on some dirt strips and roads in remote regions. We will provide the highest quality police response anywhere in Western Australia. This comes on top of our upgrade of the H145 Airbus helicopters that were provided to the police earlier this year. We are ensuring that our police are the best equipped in the nation.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Cottesloe with the last question.