

Chairman; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Rob Johnson

Division 66: Fire and Emergency Services, \$31 911 000 —

Ms W.M. Duncan, Chairman.

Mr J.M. Francis, Minister for Emergency Services.

Mr W. Gregson, Commissioner.

Mr S. Fewster, Deputy Commissioner, Capability Command.

Mrs G. Camarda, Director, Business Services.

The CHAIRMAN: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard staff. The daily proof *Hansard* will be published at 9.00 am tomorrow.

It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item program or amount in the current division. It will greatly assist Hansard if members can give these details in preface to their question.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee clerk by Friday, 30 May 2014. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office.

I now ask the minister to introduce his advisers to the committee.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Girrawheen.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to "Expenses" on page 736 of the *Budget Statements*, and to the \$12.4 million impairment loss on the sale of FESA House.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will start by giving the member some background and then I will go into the detail of this matter. FESA House had well and truly passed its use-by date; indeed, it was no longer fit for purpose. The member for Girrawheen would be very aware of the history of this issue. In line with the government's policy to encourage departments to decentralise and move into the metropolitan area, we spent a significant amount of money—the amount of which I will get for the member—relocating the new Department of Fire and Emergency Services to Cockburn, which is the state operation centre and the base for department staff. That left us with a fairly run-down building that was not fit for purpose on a prime piece of city real estate. The government as a whole considered what to do insofar as disposing of the asset. Clearly, there is increased demand—it is not rocket science—for hotel accommodation, especially in the central business district; our occupancy rates are exceptionally high in the metropolitan area. When options were considered, the decision was made to allow it to be developed into a hotel, so it went out for expressions of interest and a tender process.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: We are not there yet, minister; keep going!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: What else does the member want to know?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: What does "impairment loss" mean?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will let Mrs Camarda go through that for the member.

Mrs G. Camarda: It is associated with the revaluation of the building. Once we signed the deal for the sale of FESA House, the present value of the future proceeds for the sale of the house were in the order of about \$5 million, so we had to devalue the value of FESA House in our books. It is an impairment loss associated with the reduction in the fair value of the house in our books. So, it is an accounting entry.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Was it an incentive payment for the developer to buy the building? I am sorry; I am having some trouble working out what it means.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am having some trouble working out the member's question.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I do not know what the term "impairment loss" means, minister.

Mr W. Gregson: Perhaps I can assist, minister.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Commissioner.

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Mr W. Gregson: It was an accounting exercise based on the book value of FESA House. At one stage, it was valued at a certain amount. At the time of the sale, it was valued at a lesser amount due to the real estate valuations. At the time of sale, it was on the books at a certain amount, and at the time of sale it was on the books at a lesser amount. That is reflected as an impairment loss in the accounts.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Can the minister tell me the original value of FESA House and what it sold for?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: As an estimate, I think the original value was about \$20 million. Consideration was also given to the costs of demolition, which was taken into account. The final amount the department will receive is approximately \$8 million. If the member wants the exact numbers, I am happy to take that on notice.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Yes, please.

The CHAIRMAN: Can the minister please advise what he will provide as supplementary information.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I undertake to provide the member for Girrawheen the original valuation of former FESA House in the CBD, the last valuation at the time of sale—obviously, probably two separate ones—and the amount it sold for and a breakdown of the costs involved.

[*Supplementary Information No A31.*]

Mr R.H. COOK: Apart from the demolition costs, was the minister provided with briefing notes from the valuers as to why the value of the property had diminished so significantly? Obviously, a valuer will say, “You might think it’s worth this, but we think it’s worth that.” Did the department seek an explanation on why there was such a large discrepancy?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I was provided the information at the time. It was a year ago; I do not remember the exact figures, obviously, but we will provide that information to the member.

Mr R.H. COOK: I understand about the figures, because the minister mentioned that he would provide that information as supplementary information.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I was provided that advice. It is my recollection that the finalisation of the disposal had to be approved by cabinet as well. We went through a significant process to dispose of the asset, which involved open and accountable processes for expressions of interest and tenders. We will provide that information.

Mr R.H. COOK: The second dot point on page 733 of the *Budget Statements* refers to safety risk management and so forth, particularly in the context of it being provided a high priority. In that context, is the presumptive cancer legislation for volunteers in the pipeline, and, if so, at what stage is it in its development, and when does the minister anticipate bringing it to Parliament?

[9.10 am]

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: That is a good question. Obviously, the government went to the election with a commitment to provide presumptive legislation for specific cancers effectively modelled on the actions of the commonwealth for its commonwealth firefighters—that is, to give a rebuttal of presumption to firefighters who were engaged predominantly in structural firefighting. We said all along that we will do it in two tranches: the first will be for the career fire and rescue firefighters because, as the member will remember, that was a fairly simple amendment in this place to the Workers’ Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981; and the second will cover retired career fire and rescue firefighters, and whoever else comes under the definition of “predominantly engaged in structural firefighting”. At the moment, this is being considered by cabinet and is a red-hot issue right now, so we are very close to taking the next step on this matter. Obviously, I will not disclose cabinet deliberations but we are right in the middle of this process at the moment. I acknowledge that it has taken some time to get to where we are now because it is not an easily resolved issue. If I can be really blunt, it is effectively a question of who is in and who is out, who is covered and who is not, who will get that presumption and who will not, whether it applies to volunteer fire and rescue firefighters and volunteer bushfire brigades that may or may not also attend structural fires, and whether it applies therefore to another department such as the Department of Parks and Wildlife. It is a very complicated process but, as I said, the best answer I can give the member is that the government intends to honour its election commitment and we are on the cusp of proceeding to the next stage right now. It is a red-hot issue in cabinet.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: In last year’s budget, \$1.486 million was allocated over three years commencing in 2014–15 for the implementation of the cancer legislation for career firefighters, but that amount seems to have disappeared. Can the minister enlighten me on what stage the implementation of the cancer legislation is at for career firefighters?

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Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I brought a bill into this house to amend the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act. It was debated in this house and the Legislative Council and it was passed by both houses and assented to by the Governor, so it is in force right now.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: An amount of about \$500 000 was allocated over the forward estimates for the next three years to assist in that implementation, but that amount is nowhere to be seen in this year's budget. What has happened to that money?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The amendment caused a slight increase in the risk for employees of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, so the additional cost to provide that protection is reflected in the RiskCover premium paid by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. I cannot see the need for it to be a separate line item in the budget. Certainly, I would expect to see a reflection in the premium paid. Obviously, if there is a difference in the presumption on certain cancers that could or could not be contracted, I expect it to be covered under the premium paid to RiskCover.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Can the minister provide supplementary information concerning the entries in the 2013–14 budget and where those forward estimates amounts for the implementation of the legislation have gone?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am happy to do that, but I will put it to the member differently. I think the member is asking for a breakdown of the RiskCover premium that is paid by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services so that it reflects an increase in the premium cost to cover.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I am not sure that that is what that amount was for. The RiskCover figures are not necessarily about that.

The CHAIRMAN: Can the minister define what supplementary information he will provide?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Sorry; I am trying to be very cooperative.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Expenditure has been allocated in the forward estimates for 2014–15, 2015–16 and 2016–17 for the implementation of the cancer legislation. Will that \$500 000 or so be spent this year; and, if so, on what?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will provide an explanation to the member for Girrawheen about why the allocated amount in last year's budget to cover the increased cost to the department for implementing the presumptive cancer legislation is not listed as a line item in this budget, and under which line item it is located.

[Supplementary Information No A32.]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: The last line on page 736 of the budget papers refers to the new fire station at West Perth and an allocation of \$11.1 million for the site purchase. Can the minister indicate where the site is?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I cannot at this stage. The department is going through the process and I will ask the commissioner to elaborate on that shortly. There comes a time when the population pressure, in this case in the central business district, demands that a responsible government look at the allocation of resources, which includes the location of fire stations. The population of the Perth CBD is expected to double in just over 10 years if we consider the massive development going on in the Perth area, including Elizabeth Quay, the Perth City Link project and the expansion of residential units. When we also take into account that it is more difficult with the traffic to traverse from the east to the west side of the city and the demands on the current East Perth fire station, it makes perfect sense to provide a second fire station on the western side of the CBD. We announced that we are committed to building this fire station and we have budgeted for it, and part of that process will be to finalise where it will be built. The site must meet a certain standard for ingress and egress, and it must have an appropriate turning circle space for large fire trucks. I guess there is a checklist that the land has to meet, and the department is in the process at the moment of determining where exactly that station will be built. I will ask the commissioner to elaborate on that project.

Mr W. Gregson: No decision has been made on the location, but a number of sites are being considered. We must go through a stage of consideration as to their appropriateness and their utility, but as yet we have no definitive answer on where the station will be placed.

[9.20 am]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I am a bit confused because there are a number of figures for this station within the various budget papers. We have an amount of \$11.1 million, which seems very precise given that no site has been identified yet. Budget paper No 3 on page 196 has an amount of \$20.3 million for the new fire station. Presumably, that is capital expenditure and recurrent. Elsewhere is a figure of \$9.5 million. If we add \$9.5 million and \$11.1 million, we get to \$20.6 million. I am a bit confused about the costing of this station. We have different figures in different places in the budget.

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Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The member will have to provide where the figure of \$9.5 million is.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: The \$9.5 million is on page 159 of budget paper No 3.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will clarify by referring the member to the heading “New Works” in the table on page 736 of budget paper No 2.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: That looks like operating costs recurrent.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The estimated total cost for that project is \$20.28 million, which if rounded out is pretty close to \$20.3 million. It is estimated that the total cost of the project is \$20.3 million. Obviously, there is a variable in there. The department has done estimates on how much a suitable-sized piece of land would cost. That is why that figure is —

Ms M.M. QUIRK: So precise.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It is as precise as it can be. I am not going to put my hand on my heart and say that a suitable piece of real estate is an exact amount of money at the moment. Smarter people than me —

Mr P.B. WATSON: There are a lot of them in here!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: And Collingwood supporters as well! People who know far more about the central business district real estate market than I have put their best estimate into that figure.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I have a further and last question on this. We have an approximate cost of \$11.1 million for the site and then the recurrent expenditure is \$9.5 million. My calculation gives me \$20.6 million, but as the minister said, the total cost is \$20.3 million. I need an explanation for the variation.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: We are talking about a fairly small percentage figure of the project cost. I am happy to take that on notice.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: It is 300 grand of taxpayers’ money, minister!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, member! The minister is responding.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It is a \$20.28 million project so I am happy to take that on notice and get the member a more definitive breakdown on any discrepancies that may occur on that project.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we need a bit more definition.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I undertake to provide the member for Girrawheen with an exact breakdown of how the \$20.28 million estimate for the new West Perth fire station was calculated.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: For the minister’s assistance, the references are on page 736 of budget paper No 2 and pages 156 and 159 of budget paper No 3.

[Supplementary Information No A33.]

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: My question exactly relates to the West Perth fire station so it almost sounds like a supplementary question—but it is not. I am interested to know why the minister selected that particular site —

Ms M.M. QUIRK: There is no site! The minister just answered that. Was the member not listening?

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: I am sorry; I did miss that and I apologise. I suppose what I am looking for is the requirement, from the minister’s perspective, that this clearly major investment of \$20.28 million is in the West Perth region. I would have loved to see it come a little bit closer to Marmion Avenue or maybe out towards Churchlands. I understand that the minister envisages the station being in the west of the Perth area, but why is it integral to the inner-city area?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am sure that the member for Churchlands would like the station closer to his electorate, but the general precinct for the location is determined by a number of different factors, including where the projected concentration of population will be in the future, as well as current demands. In fact, I am sure that every member of Parliament would love a brand-new \$21 million fire station in their electorate, but, unfortunately, we cannot buy fire stations with a 1987 bottle of Grange Hermitage, member for Churchlands—it just does not work like that!

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: It is in the mail, minister.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Even if your name is Craig, you just cannot do it.

It is determined on a needs basis, upon which I am sure the commissioner could elaborate. Why is it being placed there? The department had a lot of different considerations. It is certainly something that a few people

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have been talking about for some time. In fact, Eleni Evangel, the member for Perth, did a grievance to me in this place a few months ago and raised the issue as well. A lot of people have been talking about this matter for some time. When we consider the development in the central business district, particularly the western side of the CBD, as I said before, Elizabeth Quay, and when we look at the projected population increases in the City of Perth over the next 10 to 20 years, a prudent, responsible government will realise that sooner or later it has to invest in infrastructure. That includes investing in a new fire station because we want to be able to get fire trucks and resources to a fire or an emergency as quickly as possible. When it comes to fighting fires, it is not rocket science—time to target is a very important factor. The proximity of resources to the emergency is key to reducing time; the faster they get there, the less damage and the less risk to life. That is why it is assessed that the best location is the western side of the CBD.

Mr R.H. COOK: I confess that I am struggling to hang this off a particular line item. I might just put it under page 733.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Rule it out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the member for Pilbara for his assistance, but I will be able to manage. Member for Kwinana, we require a page number.

Mr R.H. COOK: Let us say the third dot point on page 733 of the *Budget Statements* which is about safety and so forth and career pathways for the volunteer brigades. As a metropolitan member of Parliament with four volunteer brigades in my electorate—Mandogalup, Kwinana Town, Kwinana South and Baldivis—I want to explore the minister's decision last year to consolidate the Bassendean Volunteer Fire Brigade with another. I would like to know whether the government has a policy on the viability of volunteer brigades. Does the government have plans to consolidate, merge or wind-up other volunteer stations in the outer metropolitan area, and, obviously, does the government have any specific plans for Kwinana?

[9.30 am]

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: What an excellent question. I thank the member for asking me that question. That is a really good question, and now no-one else will have to ask that question. Certainty for volunteers is, obviously, a fairly controversial topic. We now have about 30 000 volunteer firefighters across Western Australia. That includes volunteer fire and rescue service firefighters and volunteer bush fire brigade firefighters. Then there are volunteer marine and sea rescue and the State Emergency Service, but when it comes to firefighting, they are the biggest two groups. In the member's area of Kwinana, the four brigades—Mandogalup, Kwinana, Kwinana South and Baldivis—are volunteer bush fire brigades. The brigade the member spoke about in Bassendean was a volunteer fire and rescue service brigade. A number of different factors need to be considered when looking at the resources provided to a community. The Bassendean of 2014 is not the Bassendean of 1914. There is a massive increase in urbanisation and high-residential development in certain areas of the metropolitan area. Obviously, I know the issue fairly well because my electorate, which has a boundary with the member's electorate, has similar areas that are essentially still bush, and they are serviced by career fire and rescue fire brigades and, to some degree, volunteer bush fire brigades because of the large amount of bush in those suburbs and the surrounding areas. Even in Kwinana and Cockburn, a large amount of area is regional park. Jandakot Regional Park stretches from my electorate almost to the member's electorate and down to Serpentine and Jarrahdale. That presents a risk of potential bushfire. The same issues apply further out in the peri-urban fringe towards the hills and north towards Wanneroo.

What happened in Bassendean was very different from what I expect the future will hold for areas in the member's electorate. The people of Bassendean essentially pay a higher emergency services levy. A number of different factors determine the ESL rate that residents in an area pay, including risk and resources; for example, whether an area has a career fire and rescue station backed up by a career fire and rescue station determines whether residents in that area have to pay a higher ESL. Bassendean is now part of the absolute metropolitan area, as are Atwell, Success and many other areas, and almost the CBD. When we considered that a new fire and rescue station was built to service the area, the residents in the area pay a higher ESL, it has a career fire and rescue brigade backed up by a career fire and rescue brigade and the brigade has attended quite a number of call-outs, we had to weigh up whether it was sustainable. We value volunteers. We value the fact that that was a very historic brigade, but, at the end of the day, we could not keep spending money for sentimental reasons. Those volunteers have now been invited to be part of the metropolitan response division at Forrestfield. Many members of that brigade have taken up the invitation to be part of that, but some of them declined, and that is fine. They are volunteers; they get to choose. That is essentially what is happening in Bassendean.

Moving on to what I expect the future will hold for those areas that the member is talking about, I know Mandogalup fairly well as I have been to the station quite a number of times. From my knowledge of the Kwinana area, which still has a large number of five-acre bush blocks, I cannot see any change in the foreseeable

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future unless something changes in the zoning process and someone determines that a certain bush area will be bulldozed and turned into a residential area. I will give the member a really clear example. The Honeywood estate, just south of Rowley Road, is in the member's electorate. A couple of years ago it was all bush and now it is essentially a normal urban area. The services provided to that estate include reticulated water. There are fire hydrants in front of the houses, which is why the gazetted ESL area changed from category 3 to category 1, and so the residents pay a higher ESL rate. They have reticulated water so they are not as prone to the impacts of bushfire as they would have been when they were on five-acre lots. Unless there is a dramatic change in the development of Kwinana and someone cuts down all the trees and builds lots of houses, I cannot foresee any changes, but there may be some tinkering around the edges as urban infill happens. I could go on forever on this, but I know the member wants to ask some questions.

Mr R.H. COOK: I know, and that has taken quite a while. Very succinctly, does the minister have plans to wind up or consolidate any further volunteer brigades in Western Australia over the next year or the forward estimates?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: In the entire state of Western Australia?

Mr R.H. COOK: In the metropolitan area.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: In the metropolitan area, no, I am not aware of any. However, recently we have agreed to determine the guidelines and turn them into prerequisites for changing the ESL boundaries. In that way, we will be able to make it crystal clear which areas may or may not be impacted in the future rather than leaving it open to interpretation. We will clarify the ESL boundary requirements. Unless the member knows more about the development in Kwinana and he knows which areas will be turned into residential areas, I cannot see any change in the ESL boundaries; therefore, I cannot see any change in the volunteer brigades that are provided by the City of Kwinana for the member's constituents.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to page 204 of budget paper No 3. I gather that \$3.7 million will be spent in this financial year to improve fire crew protection. Will that acquisition of crew protection equipment be impacted on by a freeze on procurement?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No. This is essential equipment that we committed to provide at the last election. We went to the election with a commitment of over \$12 million to provide a number of different crew protection measures. There are over 1 000 appliances in Western Australia and over 670 in high-risk bushfire areas, and that includes career trucks, volunteer fire and rescue trucks and volunteer bush fire brigade trucks. There are a number of different components to the crew protection measures, and we are getting on and delivering them. The first measure that we have recently committed to—in the last week or two—is the provision of burnover blankets. The other components that are taking a little longer because they are far more complicated include radiant heat shields, although the new appliances being rolled out are fitted with them—I have seen a lot of trucks fitted with radiant heat shields—the water spray and water deluge system, the in-cab air breathing system and the GPS for fire trucks. We cannot just go to Harvey Norman and buy an off-the-shelf GPS unit; it would not be fit for purpose. I will not dwell on this, but I will just give the member an understanding of the complexity of this because we want to do it only once and we want to do it right. We expect the GPS units to talk to each other. With the tyranny of distance in Western Australia and the fact that there is no mobile phone coverage in many of the areas that are impacted by bushfire, brigades have to be able to talk to each other, ideally without the use of the GSM network, so that on a fire ground, the people in one fire truck will know where the people in another fire truck are located. A different type of terrain map needs to be installed on the GPS unit from that installed on an off-the-shelf GPS unit from Harvey Norman. It is fairly exciting technology that we are looking at rolling out in fire trucks.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I have a further question.

The CHAIRMAN: The minister is not finished.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I have not finished answering the question.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: The question actually required a yes or no answer.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, finish your answer, please.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: We made a commitment to improve the crew protection measures that are provided to both career and volunteer firefighters across the state. We are rolling that out. They have to meet a certain standard, even the basic measures such as the one that we have already fully delivered on—the burnover blankets. They needed to meet a certain Australian standard, so they all had to be custom made and that took some time. I think we have delivered almost all 1 000 burnover blankets.

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The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, minister; I think you are now starting to repeat yourself.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: As I understand it, this crew protection equipment can add up to 150 kilograms to the weight of an appliance. Can the minister confirm that that is an accurate estimate, and does this cause any issues with the vehicles being overweight?

[9.40 am]

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will ask the commissioner to go into detail on this because he is right across it. The simple answer is that some vehicles are pretty much at their weight limit at the moment, although there are other considerations to that. We cannot effectively put a water deluge system into a light tanker that has a 600 litre tank on the back because a warning alarm will activate when the reserve gets down to a certain level. If we put an extra 100 litres as a reserve on the back of a light tanker for an emergency water deluge system, we would change the tare weight of the vehicle. Some of the heavier appliances are also close to the maximum weight. In addition, those weights are calculated based on the average weight of four crew members, including gear, of 100 kilograms each. In determining whether it is safe to add extra weight to a vehicle we need to calculate how much it will carry and whether that weight calculation is effective in 2014, and we also have to bear in mind that we are not going to send either career or volunteer firefighters out in trucks to risk their lives in equipment that is not safe.

Mr W. Gregson: The answer to the member's question is that weight is a factor with the appliances we have in service. We are looking at the weight variable, in conjunction with crew protection measures and also future equipment. We are looking at rationalising the fleet, the appropriateness of the chassis for various purposes and making sure that the project is delivered in a holistic way with weight, equipment and crew protection measure considerations all in one project.

The CHAIRMAN: I remind committee members of the statement we read at the beginning that questions and answers are to be short and to the point. We have quite a few divisions to get through this morning and we need to keep that in mind.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: I refer to page 731, "Spending Changes", and the line item for the Erikson Airplane. The allocation is around \$3.4 million a year into the out years. It is a separate line item, which is unusual because I am not aware that that has happened in the past. Can the minister explain how effective the Erikson Airplane has been over the past 12 months, and what he sees as its capacity into the out years?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will keep this succinct. I get excited very easily about some of the issues that are raised. I could talk for hours on this topic.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: This is a very important question.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It is a very important question and the member raises a very important issue. This is a good news story that hopefully our friends in the press gallery will pick up on. Over the past five years, we have seen a massive increase in aerial firefighting capability provided by the government, through the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, throughout the fire season in the southern half of the state. Obviously, the northern half of the state has a different fire season from the southern half, which is more developed and highly populated. We have dramatically increased the number of aircraft that have been used, as they say, "to drop wet stuff on red stuff" to fight a fire. When it comes to putting out a fire as quickly as possible, you cannot beat a helicopter. They can move at enormous speed, suck up a massive volume of water and drop it very quickly. An incredible volume of water was dropped on fires this year—the key ones at Parkerville and Banjup—simply because of the capacity of these helicopters. The Erikson helicopter platform spends our winter in Greece. It is then broken up, put on a ship and brought here for our summer; it goes back and forth. Over the last five years, in each year it has been in service, the Minister for Emergency Services, whoever that may have been—last year it was me—has gone to cabinet and asked for an extra \$3 million to secure the lease agreement over our fire season for the Erikson helicopter, which is the biggest one in our fleet and can carry over 7 000 litres of water; it can load that in less than a minute. It is an incredible piece of machinery. Each year the Minister for Emergency Services has asked for more money out of consolidated revenue for this. I thought about this last year, through that process of asking cabinet for money. The reality is that no Minister for Emergency Services and no government is going to go into a fire season in the future without that asset, so I took it upon myself to ensure the lease agreement is secured into the future. That annual negotiation process will not happen anymore and from now on funding for that asset is part of the department's continuing budget. There will be some security for people to know that they do not have to wait until the last minute to find out whether they will get these kinds of assets. We will have these helicopters every year; the money is there for that in the budget every single year from now on. I will wind this up, Madam Chair. This will also provide certainty for the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner to

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negotiate that contract on a longer term basis to try to get better value-for-money for the taxpayers of Western Australia.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I ask about progress on the firefighters' enterprise bargaining agreement and I relate that to the last dot point on page 79 of budget paper No 3—just briefly, minister.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Absolutely. I am aware that the EBA is being negotiated at the moment. A number of different issues are being resolved. The Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner is deeply involved in those negotiations that will, I hope, be concluded in the very near future. I ask the commissioner to give the member an update on that.

Mr W. Gregson: Negotiations are ongoing. I do not think we are far apart. There are a couple of minor sticking issues that are still subject to negotiation.

Mr R.H. COOK: That is how it is done—nice and short.

Ms S.F. McGURK: When did the agreement expire or has it expired?

Mr W. Gregson: I believe it is subject to expiration on 9 June.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Is it expected that the negotiations will be concluded by 9 June?

Mr W. Gregson: It would be my expectation, but of course that is dependent upon agreement between the parties. As I said, I do not think we are too far apart.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Minister, I refer to the table for a standard representative household on page 305 of budget paper No 3, and the emergency services levy. Can the minister describe a representative household?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Obviously the ESL is levied amongst landowners and is collected by local government. My personal view is that it is one of the more transparent levies, fees or taxes—whatever you want to call it—because we know exactly how much we pay; it is itemised on our rates every year and we know where our money goes. It is my understanding that a representative household is determined by Treasury using a number of different factors. The ESL is also calculated individually by the gross rental value of a particular house, as determined by the Valuer-General on a regular basis

Ms M.M. QUIRK: That is why I asked that question, because in fact this levy is somewhat regressive in the sense that for households with the lowest gross rental value, effectively, ESL has gone up disproportionately over the last five years compared with other households. Therefore, I am curious how the representative household figure is calculated.

[9.50 am]

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am a bit lost on how the member for Girrawheen can say that essentially a lower valued house is disproportionately paying more for the emergency services levy than, say, a higher value house. Let us not mix this up. Is the member saying that a house worth \$300 000 pays disproportionately more than a house worth \$2 million in the western suburbs?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Over the last five years, because of property values, the proportion of ESL paid has increased more rapidly for lower valued houses than it has for more expensive houses. That is on my calculations. We do not have time to go into that now. That is why I said that the ESL is going up five per cent this year—that is on a representative household. That is why I am asking the minister what a representative household is.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: People who own more expensive houses pay a greater net amount for the ESL because their gross rental value is higher. I do not accept the premise of the member for Girrawheen's question that people in lesser valued houses pay a disproportionately greater amount of ESL. I am happy to ask the commissioner to elaborate on that. He is certainly an expert when it comes to ESL.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: In fact there is a maximum on the ESL, minister.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Girrawheen, we will go to the commissioner and then I will come back to you.

Mr W. Gregson: Perhaps I could ask what specifically is the question?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I want to know what a representative household is.

Mr W. Gregson: I would only be guessing. It is not a term with which I am familiar. I suspect it looks at the average rental charge of an ESL category 1 when averaged out across all suburbs.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: If the member wants, I will take it as a supplementary question. I will ask Treasury to provide an exact breakdown on how it determines the definition of a "representative household".

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Ms M.M. QUIRK: Thank you.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: For clarification, under the heading “Key Government Charges Affecting Households” on page 304 of budget paper No 3, there is a breakdown on what a representative household is. It is not my department, but I will undertake to provide the member for Girrawheen with a definition of a standard “representative household”.

[*Supplementary Information No A34.*]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: What is the maximum ESL payable this year?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Is that for a business or a residential house?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Residential, obviously.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I understand that the maximum ESL on a residential house for the 2014–15 financial year is estimated to be \$320.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Has that gone up from \$310 last year?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: That is correct.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer the minister to the total cost of services under “Expenses” on page 736 of the *Budget Statements*. The total cost of services has gone up 1.6 per cent. Does the minister agree that that is the case?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: What line is the member looking at on page 736?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: “Expenses”.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It is on the fifth line under that heading; yes.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: But ESL has gone up five per cent. The total cost of services has gone up less than CPI, yet ESL has gone up five per cent. Can the minister explain why that is necessary?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Obviously, the member is seeing a shift towards more of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services being funded through ESL rather than consolidated revenue—I accept that. As I said before, of all the levies, taxes and surcharges that can be imposed upon a community, the ESL is clearly the most obvious, fairest and transparent. Everyone knows exactly what they pay and everyone knows what they get. Regardless of which bucket of money the Department of Fire and Emergency Services is totally funded by—obviously at the moment it is a combination; majority ESL, but also partly from consolidated revenue—people who pay the ESL are the same people who pay tax into consolidated revenue.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I have a further question.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Girrawheen, this is your last further question.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Thank you. I will have to make it triple-barrelled then!

The minister concedes that less money for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services is coming out of consolidated revenue and more is coming out of householders’ pockets. The money is therefore being spent on items that were not originally intended—for example, human resources and corporate support in the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, which was never the intent of the ESL.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: What I concede is that householders, whether they pay for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services through a very transparent levy such as the ESL or indirectly through taxes into consolidated revenue, are pretty much generally exactly the same people. Whether they pay for it through less transparent and more hidden taxes or they pay for it through very open and transparent taxes such as an ES levy, they are essentially the same people paying it.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I refer to the fourth dot point at the bottom of page 732 of the *Budget Statements* that refers to the Office of Bushfire Risk Management and its work in managing bushfire-related risk. My question relates to the north west. Bushfires in the Pilbara and Kimberley are often deliberately lit and cause substantial problems for pastoral lessees and people in tourism spots, as well as the obvious danger. It is a difficult and complex area. I wonder whether the minister or the commissioner can shed any light on the work being done in the north west to try to put bushfires out, if problematic, with limited resources—so stopping them being lit in the first place is the best plan. What work is the Office of Bushfire Risk Management undertaking?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The member for Pilbara would recall that a couple of years ago the government amended the penalties for people who deliberately light fires. Included in that list were those who may, for example, light what was intended to be a controlled burn on their own property but it got out of control. A person starting a fire has responsibility for the fire; it is a very clear message. That changed about three years ago. There are now significant penalties, including jail sentences, for people who deliberately light fires. Regardless of whether it is up north or down south, in whatever part of Western Australia it is, deliberately lighting a fire is a significantly

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dangerous event. It can take lives and it can destroy houses. Sometimes accidents happen, such as what occurred in Parkerville, which was essentially beyond the control of a reasonable person. What I find most abhorrent is people who deliberately light fires to cause terror and fear in a community.

The issue with the Pilbara is a good point. Obviously, the Pilbara is faced with the tyranny of distance. I recently drove from Broome to Derby and saw a massive bushfire burning down one side of the road that went maybe for 20 kilometres. When talking about that area of the state, the reality is that \$20 million worth of helicopters cannot physically be put on top of that fire, so risk and resources have to be assessed. The trouble with fighting fires in very remote areas is that it takes a significantly longer time to get resources and fire trucks in to put them out. The department certainly manages these. Another thing it is now doing is, essentially, real-time satellite mapping of the state to identify faster where fires initiate. If via satellite imagery over Western Australia a hotspot is seen to flare up, or where the fire starts is identified, the situation can be responded to faster—rather than the fire getting out of control and burning for three or four days in very remote areas before someone may report it. By the time it gets to the end of the dry season, it may be a more difficult fire to fight.

[10.00 am]

Mr R.H. COOK: My question concerns the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators table on page 733 of budget paper No 2, in particular the item concerning prevention and recovery from emergencies. I refer to the first outcome in the table on that page. Will the minister explain why there is deterioration in the performance around the prevention of fires? For instance, I note that the number of accidental residential fires per 100 000 is increasing and the proportion of structural fires confined to object/room of origin is reducing. Can the minister provide an explanation? Are we losing the fight against structural fire prevention in Western Australia? I have a specific question about aged-care facilities, but could the minister answer these questions first.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Obviously the member is referring to the outcomes and key effectiveness indicator table. In 2012–13 the actual was 63 per 100 000 of accidental residential fires and the budget was for 70; so the service got to 63, which is under what was budgeted for. I think the member for Kwinana may have mixed up the tables.

Mr R.H. COOK: I understand that, but why is the target 70 rather than 63? If it managed to do it for 63 in 2012–13 and 2013–14, why is the target not 63?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am not sure how the budgeted estimate for the number of accidental residential fires per 100 000 is worked out. What we do know, obviously, is the actual every year, so in 2013–14 the service budgeted for 70 per 100 000 as a target, or benchmark; it got to 63, so it was less than expected. This year it has gone to 70. I am not sure why that has been done.

[Ms J.M. Freeman took the Chair.]

The CHAIRMAN: Does the minister want to go through one of his advisors? Mr Gregson.

Mr W. Gregson: To be perfectly honest, a lot of the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators are pretty ethereal. We aim for 70 but obviously we want zero house fires. The figure this year came in at 63 but next year it could be 73. At the end of the day, the service tries its best to get the least number of household fires and do the best it can with the resources it has. We cannot really budget for the number of fires we will have next year. It is a best-guess estimate; it could be set at 63.

Mr R.H. COOK: It is like preventive health. We cannot stop people smoking, but there are programs to try to prevent it.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Mandatory smoke alarms were rolled out in Western Australia about 10 years ago. If a person wants to buy or sell a house, build a new house, or rent out a house, it needs to meet certain standards. That means the house needs to have effective and operating smoke alarms installed. These things all help reduce the risk of fire to some degree because it provides an early warning and it helps save lives. Essentially, it will not help stop the fire starting in the first place. A lot of it is commonsense.

Mr R.H. COOK: Can the minister advise what the current requirements are for aged-care and nursing homes to have fire sprinklers if built pre-building code? What sort of requirements do we have for some of the older aged-care facilities to have sprinklers and other fire mitigation and prevention measures?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: That is a fairly specific technical question, but I am happy to take that on notice. I will undertake to provide the member for Kwinana information on what the regulations are for all retirement villages and nursing homes; is that right?

Mr R.H. COOK: For aged-care facilities and nursing homes.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: That will include any retrospective increase in the standard for older facilities.

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Mr R.H. COOK: I believe the expression is built “pre-building code”.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Okay.

[Supplementary Information No A35.]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to “Works in Progress” on page 735 and a number of things relating to the career fire rescue service in the regions. Firstly—if I had a dollar for every time I have asked this question, I would be able to buy a nice table and chairs!—what is the hold-up with the Geraldton fire and rescue station?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I wish I had a dollar for every time someone asked me about it because, if I did, I would be able to buy a new table and chairs too. I have to say that if any one of the 59 members of the Legislative Assembly wanted to see the darkest, dingiest and most run-down electorate office in the state, they should come and have a look at mine. In fact, if anyone wanted to see the darkest and dingiest ministerial office, they should come and have a look at mine!

Mr P. PAPALIA: I hear violins!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: If you want to see the darkest and dingiest parliamentary office, come downstairs and see my windowless one! It is an absolute bloody box, I tell you! It is a box with no windows.

The CHAIRMAN: Members, can we get back to the question.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: That tends to happen when no-one wants to share with you!

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, move onto the question.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Geraldton is scheduled for a new career fire and rescue fire station. The estimated cost for that in 2013–14 was \$7.153 million. It will facilitate the replacement of the existing Geraldton volunteer fire and rescue co-located station. I understand an agreement on building design and concept was reached between the United Firefighters Union of WA and DFES, and that was registered in June 2013. It is now in the planning, design and development phase and it is estimated that project will be completed by July 2015.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: What was the reason for the delay, minister? It has been on the budget for five years.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The commissioner will elaborate on that matter.

Mr W. Gregson: My understanding is that there are a whole range of reasons, from site suitability, building design, agreement with the UFU and issues with stakeholder management around volunteers and career fireys. It is on track now, but they were ostensibly the reasons for the delay, is my understanding.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Can we guarantee that there will not be similar delays with the proposed Albany fire and rescue station?

Mr W. Gregson: Some of the delays have been out of the control of the department, such as contractors who have been engaged. However, subject to elements that are within the control of the department, it will be done on a best-endeavours basis. Nothing is guaranteed in construction, I imagine, but, certainly, we will be doing our best to be on target. No-one more than those in our service want a new station up and operational as quickly as possible, and we are striving to do that on time and on budget.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Now that there are these so-called super cities in the regions, what considerations are being given, for example, to having a career and rescue station in Karratha, where there will be a lot of high-rise buildings? Is it reasonable to expect volunteers to have to respond to those sorts of emergencies?

[10.10 am]

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The department continually does a risk-to-resource review and projects future asset planning. However, the decision to provide resources in a certain area depends on the population and the risk. It is certainly not an unlimited budget; it has its limitations. Ultimately, there are competing priorities but the location to where resources are provided is determined on the greater risk and where they can do the greater good. The commissioner may want to comment.

Mr W. Gregson: I do not think I can add to that. Obviously, the agency puts forward its priorities for where we would like to see future asset development such as stations, capital works and equipment programs, and they are competing priorities for the government of the day.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I have a further question about aerial appliances that are referred to in the replacement program at page 735. Where are the aerial appliances currently located, and is there a plan to expand the location given this development in the regions?

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Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Once again, this is an issue about where we allocate resources, particularly when we are talking about where the aerial firefighting fleet can do the most good. The member must keep in mind—I pointed this out earlier—that the state can, essentially, be divided into two sections. The northern half of the state has a different fire season from that of the southern half of the state. However, as most people live in the southern half of the state, we will put more resources into that area during our summer. The great thing about helicopters is that they can travel very quickly, sometimes 180 kilometres an hour, and we can move a helicopter very quickly from one area of the state, especially in the south west, to another area of the state.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I was talking about an aerial appliance such as a ladder.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am sorry, when the member says “aerial appliance”, I am thinking of helicopters. My apologies!

Mr R.H. COOK: It depends on how high they climb! They might not be aerial at all; they might be slightly elevated!

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I was talking about ladders that are used at a multistorey structure to get to multiple floors when attending a fire.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: My apologies. My understanding of an aerial firefighting appliance is something that flies through the air. The member is talking basically about the extension ladder trucks.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Yes.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Obviously there is a program for the replacement of two aerial appliances.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Are they located in Fremantle and Perth? Where are they located?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Currently one is located at East Perth and it is almost brand-new.

Mr R.H. COOK: What colour?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It is red. It is a big red truck and I think it is less than six months old. However, as far as the vehicle fleet is concerned, these are very expensive assets, as members can imagine. The second one is located in Fremantle.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Further to that, the department is replacing the one at Fremantle, presumably under the program.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The department is replacing two.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Is the plan to roll them out in any other location, such as Bunbury or wherever there are multistorey dwellings?

Mr R.H. COOK: Karratha!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will ask the commissioner to answer that because the actual deployment of assets is an operational decision made by the department. I do not involve myself in determining which fire trucks go where.

Mr W. Gregson: The aerial appliances are a limited asset. We have two and we are about to get three. We place them where there is the greatest evident risk and the most likelihood of need for them; and obviously trained personnel are on those particular stations. Notwithstanding that, they can be deployed wherever they are needed. Yes, time is an element to get them into other areas; yes, it would be nice to have them in other areas; but again they are a limited asset and the way we deploy them is to use them in the best way we can and as appropriately as we can.

Mr R.H. COOK: I refer to page 731, and my question probably comes under “Total Cost of Services” or “Total Appropriations”. This is a question for either the foolish or the ill-informed! Essentially, from my long experience now in the shadow portfolio, I note that there are two service outcomes. Basically, there is prevention and mitigation of services, and emergency response or emergency services.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Sure.

Mr R.H. COOK: What percentage, for instance, would the department allocate to response and what percentage to mitigation?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: We will break down the percentages for the member. While the percentage is being calculated, obviously the estimate for this budget for prevention and mitigation is \$51 335 000 and emergency services response is \$282 896 000. That works out at a percentage split of 15 per cent to 85 per cent.

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Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to page 739, line item “Regulatory fees and fines”, which obviously includes the emergency services levy, but are there any other regulatory fees that the minister can tell us about? In particular I am interested to know whether a fee is charged for building inspections.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: A direct brigade alarm, I think, is the key one but the department does not charge for building inspections.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Further to that, there are complaints about the lack of timeliness in building inspections. Would that be ameliorated if in fact a fee were charged for building inspections?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I guess if we were to start charging fees, we would be able to collect more money and put more resources into that, but the net flow-on from that is another thing that would add to the cost of building.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Further to that, what measures have been taken to streamline building inspections by removing red tape?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The commissioner.

Mr W. Gregson: The Department of Fire and Emergency Services has only an advisory role in building applications, so there is very little red tape in the agency with respect to our role in the building process.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Further to that, the department would advise local government, presumably.

Mr W. Gregson: Local government or any certifier who seeks our advice on our disposition with respect to building.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Finally, for buildings that are certified for fire compliance, or whatever, I understand that there is no qualification or licensing system for certifiers in Western Australia. How can we be assured of their integrity and appropriate qualifications?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I understand the issue the member is raising. There is an argument that those who carry out building inspections should be certified to a certain standard—whatever that is; we can talk about it separately—for the firefighting system or as engineers. When we talk about structures and buildings, there are different factors for fire compliance. They include everything from the diameter of the pipes, to the pressure at the head and whether it needs a booster pump, to whether the building is designed properly for ingress and egress of people. A lot of complicated factors have to be considered to determine whether a building is safe to be occupied, and varying standards apply to all these little issues, even to the design, the location, the spacing of the sprinkler heads within a building and whether the doorways are wide enough for firefighting. There are a lot of complicated inputs into the equation for determining whether a structure is safe. I believe we can certainly have a conversation in the future about whether those who carry out those building inspections should or should not be certified to a particular level.

[10.20 am]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to page 733, which refers to professional development and pathways. Do not be too concerned about what is written there, because it is a general question. The minister would accept that the Western Australian community is extremely diverse. It would have to be said that the career fire service is not diverse. What measures are being taken to broaden the recruitment criteria so that we will get a career fire service, the membership of which is more truly reflective of the broader community?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: That is a really good question. Certainly, to be frank, if we go back 50 years, career firefighting was generally the domain of young, fit men. Obviously, fitness is a very important factor for career firefighters. We expect them to maintain a specific level of fitness, and that is very important, because, at the end of the day, it is about workplace safety as much as it is about their ability to accurately carry out their job.

From my experience, when I go to graduation ceremonies at the academy—like the member—when I see people in fire trucks, and when I visit brigades, I am seeing that more and more women are joining the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, and I am encouraged by that. But, obviously, if the member asked me whether that was reflective of the overall Western Australian breakdown, the answer would be no. We are roughly 50–50 in the real world. I am happy to get further information on this, but my personal assessment is that I am seeing an increase in the number of women who want to become firefighters, and that is encouraging, because it should not be the domain of just men, obviously. There is nothing to stop a capable woman from doing exactly the same job as a capable man.

The other issue—I am not sure whether the member is getting at this—is the programs that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services has to encourage more Aboriginal Western Australians to take up a career and a pathway in this area. The member may remember that a couple of months ago, I was asked in question time

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about a program that the commissioner has established to encourage people with Aboriginal backgrounds from Aboriginal communities to get more involved in the process of emergency services. I am happy to ask the commissioner to talk about that as well. It is an interesting subject.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: It is not only Aboriginal people, but also our diverse community.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Gender.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Not gender—ethnicity.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The commissioner.

Mr W. Gregson: I would like to premise this by saying that for career firefighters, we set the standards that are required to enable people to perform the function of a career firefighter. So the issue of diversification or diversity is a secondary consideration. However, having said that, we want to make sure that the standards are appropriate. We have a great new Aboriginal engagement strategy that we are using to try to encourage Aboriginal people. In fact, we have a program designed to assist Aboriginal people to get over the benchmarks and get into the job. We also do some multicultural engagement. We send career firefighters to talk at multicultural venues to encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds to consider firefighting as a career. We have a suite of encouragement and assistance for people of diverse backgrounds to enable them to apply for jobs more broadly in the department, but as career firefighters particularly. But we will not drop the standards that are required to enable people to perform the job of an operational firefighter.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: That is a given, commissioner.

The appropriation was recommended.