

COMMUNICATIONS AND MOBILE PHONE COVERAGE — REGIONAL AREAS

4810. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Science and Innovation

I refer to the Minister's promise to provide royalties for regions funding to go towards building communication towers and upgrading services in strategic areas of the State to improve mobile phone coverage as well as emergency services communication for Western Australia Police and the Fire and Emergency Services Authority, and I ask:

- (a) when will the money be available to provide a communication tower that will give full coverage to the Noggerup and Mumballup area;
- (b) given that these communities are in a high fire risk area, is high priority given to upgrading communications in such areas;
- (c) can the Minister provide information on how high priority areas are assessed; and
- (d) how much money has been allocated for a communication tower to give full coverage to the Noggerup and Mumballup area?

Mr J.H.D. DAY replied:

The Industry, Science and Innovation Division for the Department of Commerce advises:

- (a) The tender for the Regional Mobile Communications Project (RMCP) was released to the market on 29 March 2011, closing on 6 May 2011. Respondents are encouraged to propose solutions to "Priority Target Regions" outlined in the tender request. Noggerup and Mumballup have been identified as part of the "Priority Target Regions".
- (b) An ability to leverage the outcome of the RMCP to enhance the capabilities of the emergency response in regional Western Australia is considered a key component of the project. An example of this is the recently completed Community Emergency Mobile Communications Project. This project improved mobile telephone coverage in the Blackwood Valley area from Nannup to Balingup while simultaneously providing facilities that are currently used by emergency services at Balingup and Quongup.
- (c) The evaluation criteria for the RMCP tender are published as part of the tender documents. A copy can be downloaded from the Tenders WA website.
- (d) No allocation of funds has been set aside for any specific location or facility. The aim is to achieve the maximum number of new mobile sites and coverage with the allocated \$39.2 million for the RMCP project. The cost of the individual sites will only become apparent once responses to the tender have been assessed through the tender process.