

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES — SERVICE CAPABILITIES

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

I refer to the minister's recent statements in the other place suggesting that the Shire of Wiluna and Wiluna Town Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade be encouraged to convert from a local government-managed brigade to a Department of Fire and Emergency Services-controlled fire and emergency services brigade.

- (1) Will the minister provide a matrix showing the default capabilities of volunteer bush fire brigades, volunteer fire and emergency services brigades, volunteer fire and rescue brigades, career fire and rescue brigades, and State Emergency Service units; and, if not, why not?
- (2) Is there any overlap in the capabilities of any of the services; and, if so, can the minister please explain the value, if any, of the duplication?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The answer is in tabular form, so I seek leave to have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I thank the Leader of the House for granting me leave. If the member wants the documents, he should probably say yes!

The following material was incorporated —

(1)

Response Functions	Career and Volunteer Fire and Rescue Brigades	Bush Fire Brigades	State Emergency Service Units	Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services	Volunteer Marine Rescue Groups
Bushfire	X	X		X (if authorised)	
Structural Fire	X	X (defensive)		X (if authorised)	
HAZMAT	X			X (if authorised)	
Rescue (includes road crash rescue)	X			X (if authorised)	
Natural Hazards			X	X (if authorised)	
Search and Rescue			X	X (if authorised)	
Marine Search and Rescue				X (if authorised)	X
Assistance Operations			X	X (if authorised)	X

- (2) Although there is an overlap in functionality between the firefighting capabilities of fire and rescue brigades and bush fire brigades, this overlap occurs because they service different areas. Fire and rescue brigades provide primary response within gazetted fire districts, and bush fire brigades provide a primary response outside gazetted fire districts. There is also an overlap between the functions of volunteer fire and emergency services and the other types of emergency services brigades, groups and units. The purpose of the overlap is to provide flexibility to meet the needs of different communities. VFES is a more flexible type of emergency services arrangement, which can be established to align with community needs. If a community's SES unit and bush fire brigade do not have sufficient membership numbers to continue to provide the necessary response capability, as sometimes occurs in regional and remote areas, the groups may amalgamate into a VFES, which is authorised by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner to provide the capabilities of both SES and BFB utilising their combined membership. Similarly, if it is identified that a community requires the provision of response capabilities in addition to those provided by, for example, an SES unit or a VFRS brigade, a VFES may be established to provide the relevant capabilities required in that community.