

NORTHCLIFFE AND BODDINGTON BUSHFIRES

**211. Hon RICK MAZZA to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Emergency Services:**

I refer to the Northcliffe and Boddington fires in 2015.

- (1) For each location —
  - (a) what were the costs of suppression activities by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Department of Parks and Wildlife, and firefighters from the eastern states;
  - (b) what was the in-kind value of volunteer brigades;
  - (c) what were the estimated costs for loss and damage to timber resources;
  - (d) what were the estimated costs to replace lost infrastructure; and
  - (e) what was the total amount claimed under private property insurance?
- (2) Should the minister not be able to provide costings or estimates that relate to other agencies or departments, can he please name the agency or department that has responsibility for tracking the overall cost to the community of devastating bushfires?

**Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN replied:**

On behalf of the Minister for Emergency Services, I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

In light of the discussion earlier this afternoon on the matter of privilege, I am a bit reluctant to deliver an answer as I have not had any opportunity to verify personally the content of the information that has been provided to me at third-hand.

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order, members!

**Hon Sue Ellery:** If you are not comfortable with the answer —

**Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN:** I did not say that, actually, if the honourable Leader of the Opposition would listen. I said that I had not had the opportunity to verify independently from my own knowledge the information that has been provided to me. I have no reason to suppose it is wrong, and if Hon Rick Mazza is prepared to accept the answer on the basis that I am doing my best with the information that has been provided to me, I will give him an answer.

Several members interjected.

**Hon Peter Collier:** It is a valid point—an absolutely valid point.

**Hon Sue Ellery:** Nothing has changed.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order, members!

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! I would actually like to get to an answer. The Attorney General.

**Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN:** The information that I have been provided with, and it is apparently based on information from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services —

**Hon Helen Morton:** Did you check with them?

**Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN:** I have not had the opportunity to do so, no. But, as I say, I have no reason to suppose that the information is not accurate and provided in good faith. The answer is as follows —

Several members interjected.

**Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN:** Sorry. I thought I was delivering the answer, Mr President. I will start again. The answer is as follows —

- (1) (a) The cost of DFES responding to the Northcliffe fire is \$2.4 million, comprising \$1.1 million recorded by logistics officers and \$1.3 million incurred by aviation services. In relation to the level of detail required for the response costs of the Boddington incident, DFES is unable to provide this information in the time requested, and I therefore ask the member to place this question on notice. With regard to the Department of Parks and Wildlife, this question needs to be asked of the Department of Parks and Wildlife. With regard to firefighters from the eastern states, this question needs to be asked of the Department of Parks and Wildlife as it was directing the deployment of interstate firefighters.

- (b) DFES does not currently have the ability to accurately quantify the value of volunteer resources provided by bush fire brigade volunteers for these events. This is due in part to the fact that local government manages the volunteer bush fire brigades, and because the various backgrounds of volunteers affects the opportunity cost of their volunteering.
  - (c) DFES suggests that the Forest Products Commission and Department of Parks and Wildlife may be able to provide a response.
  - (d) DFES suggests that this question would need to be directed to the agencies that lost infrastructure.
  - (e) DFES suggests that the Insurance Council of Australia may be able to provide a response.
- (2) Each individual agency or department would need to be contacted to provide costs or estimates. There is no agency or department that has the responsibility for tracking the overall costs to the community of devastating bushfires.