

BUSHFIRES — BODDINGTON AND NORTHCLIFFE — KURTIS McDERMOTT

Statement by Member for Collie–Preston

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston) [12.57 pm]: The recent Boddington and Northcliffe bushfires were among the worst Western Australia has ever seen, and the stories of the devastation inflicted on families, businesses and whole communities are heartbreaking. With so many of these tragedies we are able to find positives among the distress in the human stories that come out of our communities when so much hardship is thrust upon ordinary people. One such story—I am sure it is one of many—is the efforts of Collie’s Kurtis McDermott, who went above and beyond the call of duty to fight the week-long threat to homes and businesses. All our firefighters, those working in air support and other volunteers, did a wonderful job under trying conditions, as they always do, but Kurtis’ efforts struck me as particularly enduring and commendable. Kurtis worked at his permanent job during the week and when his long shifts ended, he continued to give to the cause. Kurtis worked on a volunteer basis, utilising his skills in mechanics to service fire trucks and other vehicles on the front line. His efforts were crucial to ensure those on shift were working with reliable equipment—a critical factor in such a dangerous field. Anyone from Collie in the south west knows the weight placed on the value of volunteers in our town; they are the backbone of the community and Kurtis’ efforts reflect this. On behalf of the people of my electorate—not only those affected by the bushfires, but everyone in the south west—I commend Kurtis and the volunteers who assisted in these efforts.