

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

**2017–18 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS**



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE  
TAKEN AT PERTH  
WEDNESDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2017**

**SESSION FOUR  
DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**Members**

**Hon Alanna Clohesy (Chair)  
Hon Tjorn Sibma (Deputy Chair)  
Hon Diane Evers  
Hon Aaron Stonehouse  
Hon Colin Tincknell**

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**Hearing commenced at 6.31 pm**

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON**

**Minister Representing the Minister for Emergency Services, examined:**

**Mr DARREN KLEMM**

**Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, examined:**

**Mr LLOYD BAILEY**

**Deputy Commissioner, Operations, examined:**

**Mr STEPHEN FEWSTER**

**Deputy Commissioner, Capability, examined:**

**Ms GEORGINA CAMARDA**

**Chief Finance Officer, examined:**

**Mr FRANK PASQUALE**

**Executive Director, Corporate Services, examined:**

**Ms SUZANNE PATERSON**

**Executive Director, Governance and Strategy, examined:**

**Mr TOM PALMER**

**Chief of Staff, Minister for Emergency Services, examined:**

**Miss MIA ONORATO-SARTORI**

**Senior Policy Adviser, Minister for Emergency Services, examined:**

**The CHAIR:** On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I would like to welcome you to today's hearing. I am going to ask each of the witnesses if they can confirm that they have read, understood and signed a document headed "Information for Witnesses"?

**The WITNESSES:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** It is essential that all your testimony before the committee is complete and truthful to the best of your knowledge. This hearing is being recorded by Hansard and a transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. It is also being broadcast live on Parliament's website. The hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private. If you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question. Agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting the committee to scrutinise the budget papers, and the committee values your assistance with this.

Would the minister like to make a brief opening statement?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** No, thank you.

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**The CHAIR:** We will start with committee members.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** My first question is on page 327. At the bottom are the controlled grants and subsidies. My question relates to the last item in the list, “Volunteer Marine Rescue Service”. I am curious—the numbers for last year, this year and ongoing are quite variable throughout the time. I am wondering what items are included in that that would make it vary from \$6 million down to \$1 million then back up to \$3 million and \$4 million.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I thank the member for the question. I might ask Mr Pasquale, who is the executive director of corporate services, to answer that question.

**Mr PASQUALE:** The funding that is represented in the grants table is, like you say, quite variable. As you referred, the numbers in the volunteer marine rescue grants program vary from one year to the next. What it funds is the hull replacement program for the boats for the VMRS. The program is based on a life-cycle arrangement. The boats are replaced at different times. Therefore, you might have more boats being replaced in one year as opposed to the next year.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** How many boats would this cover, do you think—as an estimate?

**Mr PASQUALE:** I do not have the exact number on me. I know that it is many. If that level of detail is required, I am happy to source that information.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** I do not need it. I was just curious if it was 20, 50 or 200.

**Mr PASQUALE:** There is in the order of—do not quote the exact number—36 units, I think. Most units have one or more boats. I have just been advised that it is 69 boats.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** Great. Thank you.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** You said that you did not want to be quoted.

**The CHAIR:** About 69 boats—is that what you said?

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** My next question is on page 328 on the statement of financial position. There seems to be little planned for asset replacement upgrades with the steadily falling property, plant and equipment. If you look at that, it is at \$400 million and it drops quite steadily after that. I am just wondering: is that part of the planned reduction? Is it just depreciation? Will there be other plant and equipment added in a later budget?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Thank you, member, for the question. I understand that the initial uplift in 2017–18 reflects the completion of the Vincent CFRS and the commencement of the Cockburn CFRS. The decrease across the remaining forward estimates period reflects the depreciation of existing assets and the limited investment in the asset investment program. Perhaps I can ask Mr Pasquale to elaborate if he has anything else to add.

**Mr PASQUALE:** That was a very good response, minister. There is not really much more to add.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** That makes sense. My next question is that there has been a lot of talk about a rural fire service. I notice that it is mentioned at page 320 and that you are looking into it this year. I did not see anything in the budget, though, specifically. If it turns out that you wanted to set one up, would you be able to set it up in this financial year?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Obviously, member, you would be aware that the state government is committed to improving fire management, including rural fire management. There have been a couple of conversations and debates in this place about it over the last little while. There is obviously a range of complexities involved in trying to prevent and fight bushfires as well as a range of options for a rural fire service. The state government is still considering all options. There are a number of proposals that have been put forward. We want to be thorough in our approach to the consideration

of those. In relation to how quickly it could happen, I might ask the commissioner if he can add to that part of the question.

**Mr KLEMM:** On a hypothetical basis, it really depends on what form it is going to take. Without batting it back to the minister, that is a matter for government. What I can say from a DFES point of view is that we stand ready to implement whatever form the rural fire service takes. We stand ready to implement it once the government decides what it is going to be.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The minister has been undertaking a range of consultations over the past few months. He has been speaking with key stakeholders including volunteers throughout Western Australia. He is in the process of considering that range of views on the form that a rural fire service will take. It is still under active consideration and the final decision has not been made by government, but the minister is making this issue a priority. Over the past few months, too, the minister has had a range of summits, including a bushfire mitigation summit, which was an election commitment. That was held in Mandurah in June, and a number of members in this place and the other place attended. The minister has been consulting widely, but a decision is yet to be made.

[6.40 pm]

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** Do you have no set time for when you expect that decision to be made?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** No. I do not have that information in front of me here. Obviously, it is a political question, so it is not for my advisers here to answer. I am happy to take the question away to the minister. All I can say is that it is under active consideration and it is a very important issue for the McGowan Labor government. Consultation is happening, and the minister is trying to work through those issues at the moment.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** While we are on the rural fire service, I thought I would ask: has the government done any modelling on the projected costs of creating an RFS?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The short answer is no. A draft report was put out by the ERA some time ago that put the cost at approximately \$400 million. That was the ERA's view of it. Obviously, that was a draft report. The ERA is doing further work and I believe it is going to put out a final report in the coming weeks or over the next month or so. No, we do not have any costings. The only figure we have at the moment is that ERA figure. I guess, as the member would be aware, that it would really depend on where the government lands—what a rural fire service looks like, and what is included in it—and that will then obviously need to be costed. It is kind of a case of how long is a piece of string. It is a very important issue. I am not trying to move away or resile from that. But, depending on what the final ERA report looks like, that will indicate what it will cost.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** If that modelling has not been done, how can the government possibly say—the minister has been quoted on this quite a few times—that we cannot afford an independent RFS? If the modelling has not been done, how can the government really have that information?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I cannot really comment on what the minister has said, because I do not have that stuff in front of me. The only figure I have to hand is that ERA figure. In the ERA's draft report from a few months ago, it talks about \$400 million. I think the minister was referring to, I guess, a comparable Victorian CFA model. Obviously, the Victorian model is there and people know what it is like. I think in Victoria that model is expensive. I think the minister might have been referring to if we copy that, it would be an expensive exercise, and could we afford that. As I have said, the minister has been consulting on the issue. He is looking at the issue very closely and hopefully will have a decision in the not too distant future.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** My next question is a fairly long one. I refer to budget paper No 2, volume 1, page 320, "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency". The third dot point refers to the ESL. Could the

minister please provide a breakdown of the total ESL collected per local government authority for the year 2016–17 and the forecast for 2017–18?

**The CHAIR:** That is the emergency services levy, and you want information provided about how much is being collected by local government area?

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Yes. That is the first part of my question.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will ask Mr Pasquale to answer the question, certainly with the information he has available.

**Mr PASQUALE:** We do not have that level of detail available this evening, but we do publish on the DFES website an array of information in regard to the emergency services levy in terms of collections and grant allocations. I am happy to provide that level of detail.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am happy with Mr Pasquale's suggestion. I just make the point that in this place, we never refer members to websites. We are always very happy to ensure that they get the information available. Honourable member, we will certainly provide what we can by way of supplementary information.

**The CHAIR:** So, ESL by LGA is D1.

[*Supplementary Information No D1.*]

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** I imagine some of this will need to go on notice as well. Would the minister please provide a complete account of how the ESL was allocated in the last financial year, broken down by service—that is, CSRS, FFRS, VSS, VBFB, VMRS, DFES, admin, SES, and others?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will ask Mr Pasquale to respond to that question.

**Mr PASQUALE:** You will note that the service outcomes that are defined in the *Budget Statements* are not on that basis. By “services” you are referring to, I guess, stakeholder groups and the services that are part of DFES. DFES operations are structured on a kind of multi-hazard approach. That is not articulated in the *Budget Statements* to that level of detail. That is not something we would have on hand or available with that level of detail.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Can we possibly get that level of detail later?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Member, because we do not measure or collect the data in the way that you have asked for us to provide it, it would take a significant bit of work to do it. I will ask Mr Pasquale to advise what possibly could be provided by way of supplementary that might be helpful to you. It will not go all the way. I think it will be quite significant work. I ask Mr Pasquale to suggest what information may be available.

**Mr PASQUALE:** What we could do is look at all the direct costs associated with those particular services that you referenced and allocate those directly. But not all programs are broken down by service. Corporate overheads, for example, and other programs that support all those different services are not articulated and broken down to each of those services. So if we could limit it to the direct costs, that would be something that we are able to produce.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** They will, as clearly as they possibly can, allocate that to direct costs rather than the list of services and programs that you read out. They will do the best that they can.

[*Supplementary Information No D2.*]

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**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** On the same issue that we have just addressed, I think the commissioner wants to make a point. If you are okay with that, Madam Chair, it is supplementary information to the answer that has been provided.

**Mr KLEMM:** I want to elaborate a little, if I may. Although Mr Pasquale and DFES will provide the information that you requested, I want to explain that it may not end up being a fair representation of where all of the ESL is spent. The example I give is that a new truck for the State Emergency Service might be far cheaper to purchase than a new truck for the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service. We might buy and fabricate five trucks for the SES and five trucks for the VFRS, as an example, and one will add up to \$500 000 more than the other one, even though if you are not looking at the dollars, both services are getting five trucks. I guess further to that when we talk about corporate costs—what Frank is referring to—there is a broad range of things and that could be training. We have costs associated with developing training packages and those training packages may be used just for career firefighters or they might be used for career firefighters and State Emergency Service volunteers, and so the costs are not broken down across all the different services. I wanted to get that matter on the record.

[6.50 pm]

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** The other one I would not mind information to would be to provide a complete account on how the ESL was allocated in the last financial year. Once again, it states here that broken down by expense type salaries, new appliances, PPE, cleaning vehicles—the list goes on. I will submit that online and maybe we can get some more detail later.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Okay.

**The CHAIR:** We can do that.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I would like to go to budget paper No 3 page 138. There is some new spending in 2017–18, some \$3.7 million for bushfire risk management plans. I assume this is an extension of the existing program, which largely arose, I think, from a recommendation from one of the Keelty reviews. I think it might have been the Perth hills inquiry. I wonder what this \$3.7 million will achieve in terms of additional local governments that will be exposed to this planning process and why there is not an ongoing effort throughout the forward estimates in this regard?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Confirming, member, that you referred to that \$3.7 million in 2017–18. I think you asked what that is for and also why there is no corresponding allocation in the out years?

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Yes. This program has been in place for a number of years, I think, through the Office of Bushfire Risk Management. I would like to know whether this is an extension of number of local governments that will be engaging in this process and what happens in the forward estimates, because there do not seem to be any spending changes in the forward estimates—that does not mean there is not any money in the forward estimates.

**Mr KLEMM:** If I understand the question correctly, so far the funding has been allocated to 16 local governments and the proposal in the out years for the additional 12 months of funding that has been provided is to pick up another 14 local governments.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** So that at the end of this financial year, after that \$3.7 million, we will have done 30 local governments?

**Mr KLEMM:** I would have to check that.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** If I can ask Deputy Commissioner Fewster to answer that.

**Mr FEWSTER:** The continuation of the funding allows us to move from local government areas into new areas. The Commissioner has mentioned 11 local governments that will now be able to

introduce bushfire risk management planning into their processes. We have another 14 that have expressed an interest in participating in the program, although they will not have the same direct staff support that we can provide using these amounts of money. I have available the bushfire risk management statistics for what that first funding allocation was able to do in terms of the number of assessments that were completed. Our expectation would be, for example, that the local governments that have been included as the first would come up with a similar number of assessments.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Perhaps to save time could I take on notice the number of local governments that have completed the bushfire risk management planning process and the local governments that will complete it with the funding that is available this financial year.

**Mr FEWSTER:** The number that have completed currently is 15. The funding will allow us to move into the 11. The caution here is that simply participating in the program does not necessarily mean that you will end up with an endorsed bushfire risk management plan in your local government area. Certainly, one of the original 16 has not yet had an endorsed plan come through that process.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** How are we tracking then? I think Keelty identified 20-odd high-risk local governments and I think the state government's response to the Keelty recommendations was to add another half dozen to that list. How are we tracking them to satisfying what the state government deems are high-priority local governments?

**Mr FEWSTER:** The original list has been amended a number of times. You may recall that there was a pilot program in place in the first instance and there were four local governments recorded. We have now added 16, which is the 20 you referred to earlier on. That 20 have not ended up producing out of this current program 20 plans. The original four produced plans. The second 16 produced 14. The next allocation we would hope would produce another 11. There is support going into those other communities, but there is not an expectation that that will produce the same number of plans. The plans are quite detailed and, for example, the number of assets assessed in that last 15 was 1 153. Each of those 1 153 ended up being included in a bushfire risk management plan.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I think earlier on you asked for the names or which councils?

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I can put that on notice after the hearing.

Since uniforms have been the hot topic today, I thought I might go to uniforms. I understand the level 2 PPC for fire and rescue service firefighters both volunteer and career is reaching end life. Where is the department at in terms of replacement options? Is there funding in this budget to provide for level 2 PPC replacement?

**The CHAIR:** Minister, when you are considering your answer, could you please explain what PPC is to some of us less enlightened.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** PPC is personal protective clothing. I might ask Deputy Commissioner Fewster to answer that question.

**Mr FEWSTER:** I think there are two parts to the question. The first is the fact that it is coming to the end of its life. That is not entirely accurate. There is a project underway at the moment that is looking at the type of PPC that we provide for firefighters. It is agnostic in terms of the firefighter—whether they are a volunteer or a career person. It is about the level of PPC that people are being provided. That project is only in its early stages at this point. It is called the ensemble project. It will look at a range of ensemble, not just level 2 PPC. The funding aspect has not been addressed at this point because we are not at that point in the project, although the department obviously has a cyclic replacement budget for PPC–PPE but that is not to say that that cyclic funding program will be sufficient to replace the equipment across the state.

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[7.00 pm]

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Just to confirm, it is early stages in terms of reviewing the level 2 offering and there is no funding in this budget for replacement, apart from maintenance of the current level 2 offering.

**Mr KLEMM:** The ensemble project is underway. It will arrive at a new set of equipment. We are funded each year to do replacement on fair wear and tear. The status of each piece of PPC that a firefighter wears for level 2 is varied. Firefighters generally have two sets of PPC in the level 2 area. One set might get worn quite regularly and the other set might not get worn very often in terms of getting dry-cleaned and one thing and another. It all comes down to how a new ensemble would be implemented. We will not know that until we arrive at the point when we know what the new ensemble is going to be.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I would like to go to the asset investment program on page 325 of budget paper No 2. There is quite a considerable flatlining or reduction in the asset investment program across the forward estimates, say, for this budget year. Is there a reasonable explanation for that? Have we reached a point in the cycle in which all our fire stations and fire appliances and the like are fit for purpose and we do not need to replace anything or upgrade anything or is there some other reason?

**Mr PASQUALE:** The funding for our fleet in particular has been regularly supported. Our fleet programs, as you will see, are continuously funded in the out years. In terms of our land and building programs, that is not the case, as the budget papers demonstrate. I guess the life cycles of those happen at different times. We have lots of trucks and there is probably a more even spread of when those occur. With buildings, there are obviously a lot less and they have a lot longer life. Typically, the buildings might have a life cycle of between 30 and 50 years. In terms of new funding, Cockburn fire station is the only new fire station planned and scheduled in the forward estimates.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I ask two small questions in relation to the asset investment program. First, there does not seem to be any funding this year in the forward estimates for GPA replacement. Is that because they are all up to spec? Second, volunteer fire and rescue service stations are the responsibility of the department. What is the program for replacing and/or upgrading those? I think many of them were probably past their use-by date about a decade ago.

**Mr PASQUALE:** From memory, there were two questions. The first question was about the GPA program. You are correct in your assumption that that program is basically coming to a close. It is almost complete. I understand that three appliances remain to be replaced. That will see that program over this life cycle complete. That is not to say when they are up for renewal again. Obviously, in the out years that are not present here, they will appear again, providing funding is approved. I think the second question was about the volunteer fire and rescue service building fire station replacement program. It is no different from our career program in the way we look at those in terms of their life cycle and seek to have those replaced when they come up. Obviously, given the current fiscal environment, we are reviewing those replacement programs.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** On that point, for each VFRS station in the state, when was the last building condition audit conducted, and can you provide that BCA? Can you also tell me which volunteer fire and rescue service brigades are housed in stations not owned or maintained by the state?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Given the level of detail that would be required to answer that question, we will have to take it on notice. It might take some time to do, so we will endeavour to provide it as part of this process. We will certainly provide it, and provide it as quickly as possible.

[*Supplementary Information No D3.*]

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**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Is the planning that the department undertakes for assessing risk but also response figures to emergencies in its planning for future fire stations, whether they be volunteer or career stations, a formal process? Is it done annually? Is that what informs submissions to the ERC in terms of budget submissions? A question that quite regularly gets asked at estimates is: where will the next fire stations be built based on that risk profile?

**Mr FEWSTER:** There is a process in place. We have an annual process where each of the regions reviews the changing risk in the region. The change is then subjected to some analysis internally within the department; for example, if it is a residential area, whether there is a need to extend or contract. We then have a process that identifies the types of risks that exist in that area and the most appropriate response. That then informs our building program. It also informs our ESL collection, for example.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I think a previous estimates hearing was informed that the top three priorities for the department were Vasse, Broome and I think a Pilbara location—either Port Hedland or Karratha. Has that changed?

**Mr FEWSTER:** I cannot recall what our previous asset management plan directed as the highest priorities but the priorities will change on the basis of the circumstances that exist when we do the assessment. That is not to say that they have changed. I do not recall what they were last time around. The process identifies the risks that are attendant today and how we are then going to address those in terms of asset development.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Subject to budget funding, what are those funding priorities that are identified in your asset management plan today?

[7.10 pm]

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I have just been advised that the strategic plans are cabinet-in-confidence; therefore, we cannot provide that information to the committee this evening.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** It is funny that the committee has been provided with this information before, but it is now cabinet-in-confidence.

**The CHAIR:** You have exceeded your time. I am not rushing to close that off.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Before you move on, could I perhaps put that on notice as a supplementary question?

**The CHAIR:** The information has been asked for and the minister has indicated that it is unable to be provided because it is cabinet-in-confidence. Do you want to put it on notice again?

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Yes, please.

**The CHAIR:** I suspect that the member probably wants that in writing.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** If the member wants to submit that question through the portal, we might see whether we can get a more fulsome answer. I am not taking it as supplementary now, because the advice I have been given is that it is cabinet-in-confidence. However, if you want to place the question through the process that members can put further questions on, I will certainly endeavour to provide what we can.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I can do that, but, with respect, minister, it is not up to you whether you accept my question as supplementary information.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I believe it is.

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

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**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I think the minister has to agree to provide the information.

**The CHAIR:** If the information is unable to be provided, we cannot take it as supplementary information.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I do not think so. But the minister before us is not the minister, so the minister is in a representative capacity.

**The CHAIR:** So, you do not want to seek the information as a question after the hearing?

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I can, but I think it can also be taken as supplementary information.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I guess, member, that the answer I have provided is that the strategic plan is cabinet-in-confidence, so that is the answer for this evening. I am not willing to provide supplementary information. That is the answer I have given. But if you read between the lines, if you submit the question through the process that the committee is submitting questions through after the fact, I will certainly endeavour to see what can be provided by way of an answer to that question. I am not being painful. I am trying to be helpful here, because the answer is the answer. Submit through that system and we will endeavour to see what we can provide you with by way of an answer.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** I refer page 320 of budget paper No 2, volume 1. The first dot point under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” states —

Funding has been secured for 2017–18 to continue with the bushfire risk management planning process, which will enable the Department to continue to work with priority local governments to include bushfire treatment and mitigation strategies into their bushfire risk management plans.

The minister touched on this before, but not quite down the line of the priority. Which local governments are considered priority local governments and what are the criteria to be considered a priority local government?

**Mr FEWSTER:** There is a range of considerations in terms of the priority. We have a term we call “community engagement focus area”, so we have areas that have a focus of community engagement, which is based on our ability to effect change in that area from a community perspective and our ability to resource that. We have a bushfire risk management planning process that is based on local governments’ ability and capacity to develop their own bush fire risk management plans and where they sit in the context of some of those communities for the community engagement focus area. We determine then by agreement with the local governments concerned where the next lot of priorities will be. You will recall, I think, that there was originally a list of local governments that found themselves in bushfire-prone areas, and, in essence, that is the list of local governments for priority. We will work through them.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** If I can just elaborate on that, I might just let the member know of the local governments that are involved. There is an additional \$3.7 million in this year’s budget to further support the 15 priority local governments that have completed their bushfire risk management plans. Those local governments are Beverley, Chittering, Irwin, Carnamah, Northampton, Boddington, West Arthur, Woodanilling, Jerramungup, Ravensthorpe, Augusta–Margaret River, Nannup, Boyup Brook, Donnybrook, Balingup and Bridgetown–Greenbushes. There is also money here to support an 11 additional local governments in the development of their bushfire risk management plans. Those 11 that are developing those plans are Toodyay, York, Northam, Dandaragan, Carew, Wagin, Harvey, Denmark, Busselton, Gingin and Manjimup. Further, there is some money as part of that \$3.7 million that will provide support to 14 local governments that have expressed an interest in developing bushfire risk management plans. Those 14 are the

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City of Armadale, the Shire of Capel, the City of Cockburn, the Shire of Collie, the Shire of Gosnells, the City of Joondalup, the Shire of Kalamunda, the City of Karratha, the City of Mandurah, the Shire of Mundaring, the City of Rockingham, the Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale, the City of Swan and the City of Wanneroo.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** Are they approached by Fire and Emergency Services or do they approach Fire and Emergency Services first?

**Mr FEWSTER:** It is a combination of both. There are a number of shires that have approached the department looking to be involved in the program, particularly in the third group that the minister listed. There are shires in there that have the capacity to do their own bushfire risk management planning, for example; however, they wish to subject their bushfire risk management plan to the rigour of the process. Others, through the department approach, have said that this is an area where we expect that there will be benefit in supporting the local government in developing a bushfire risk management plan. The bushfire risk management planning is a very, very complex process and I indicated earlier the number of risk assessments that need to be done to develop a bushfire risk management plan. The number is in the thousands and each of the assets in the local government area would need to be assessed separately, so it is a big undertaking and there will be some concern amongst local governments that it is too much for them to handle without support from DFES and that conversation informs our decisions about which local government we are going into.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Further to the answer, the commissioner wanted to raise one other point.

**Mr KLEMM:** I just wanted to specifically mention the Shire of Denmark. They are receiving direct assistance in the development and implementation of their plan through the provision of a dedicated bushfire risk management officer and bushfire risk planning coordinator, and that is in recognition of the significant risks that exist in that shire.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** Can the local government use that funding from that? I have two figures here on one page—I presume they are the same. One is \$3.7 million and the other one is \$3.657 million, so \$23 000 went somewhere. Are they still allowed to use that funding for having a risk management coordinator?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Member, I apologise; I found it difficult to hear that question. Do you mind just repeating it again? I got bits of it.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** The first bit was a bit of a preamble between the two volumes. One was \$3.7 million and the other one for the same bushfire risk management planning was \$3.657 million. That is a \$23 000 difference and I just wondered about that. Obviously, one figure has been bolstered up. I basically wanted to know whether those local governments could use that funding from that \$3.657 million to continue to have a bushfire risk management coordinator. I believe some of the shires have somebody on their books for that.

[7.20 pm]

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I believe that is a rounding issue; however, I will ask Deputy Commissioner Fewster to answer the question.

**Mr FEWSTER:** The shires that originally had a bushfire risk management coordinator and who have now developed their plans will not receive those resources. Those resources will be moved into the other local government areas. There are some circumstances where the coordinator will work across local government boundaries to ensure that the work that was done is put into practice. The intention is that, as we go forward with the program, the bushfire risk management coordination function that is done currently in the local government will extend across multiple local governments and, indeed, the original 15. There were local governments sharing bushfire risk

management coordinators. We found that worked in some cases and in other cases has not worked. The intention is that we will move those people, but there will be some reach back into the local government to support the local government that they have come from.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** On page 319, line 8 is the “Transfer of Staff from the Office of Bushfire Risk Management to the Office of Emergency Management”. How many staff will be part of this transfer or is it the lot?

**Mr KLEMM:** On 26 June 2017, cabinet approved the transfer of 2.5 FTEs from OBRM through to OEM.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I refer the minister to page 327 of budget paper No 2, volume 1. At the bottom of that page, you will see a reference to the volunteer fuel card. I cross-reference that with page 225 of budget paper No 3, which is the royalties for regions expenditure, which is the volunteer fuel card for regional areas. My first question along these lines is: can we now confirm that both the regional volunteer fuel card and the metropolitan volunteer fuel card—the first coming from royalties for regions and the second from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services—are now both capped at \$1 000 when they were previously \$2 000?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** It is certainly my understanding that both are capped at the \$1 000 figure.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I understand the Premier and the minister have said that, but we did not understand whether it was for both groups of people. That being the case at \$1 000 for each group, the total budget for both metropolitan and regional emergency volunteers is now capped at \$1 million for regional and just under \$1 million for metropolitan, working towards \$1 million. Given that the vast majority of volunteers come from regional areas and the biggest number comes from the volunteer bush fire brigades, is there a budget imbalance in terms of how much will be expended over the coming year based on 80 per cent, roughly, of the volunteers coming from a regional area with one cap of \$1 million and the remaining 20 per cent from the metropolitan area also with a cap of \$1 million in that budget?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Member, it is my understanding that the money in the royalties for regions line item is totally for regional Western Australia. In relation to the money in the department’s line item—the non-royalties for regions dollars—it is my understanding that that money is for both metropolitan and regional Western Australia, so it can be used for both. I will make the point, too, that the previous government funded this initiative only until 2019. We have made the decision to continue the funding, albeit the amount is now \$1 000.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** You have my sympathies because neither portfolio is actually yours, so I offer my sympathies in that regard. Minister, can I then ask, I guess in the same vein: given there is an imbalance of the numbers, is there an expectation that once we reach the \$1 million cap, emergency volunteers will simply be cut off at that particular point, particularly given that the absolute expenditure for the 2016–17 year was \$3.2 million for the regional fund and \$1.9 million for the metropolitan fund?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Thank you for the question. It is a political issue; a political decision has been made, so I cannot ask my advisers to comment on the issue.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** That is fine.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** If you are okay, I ask that we take that question on notice and we will provide a supplementary answer from the minister himself in relation to that. It is not appropriate for the advisers to respond to it. I think the minister needs to respond to it.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** That is quite reasonable, Madam Chair.

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**The CHAIR:** Honourable member, can I get a summary of what you want.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Once the cap is reached in both the metropolitan and regional budget, at that point will no more funds be expended to volunteers?

*[Supplementary Information No D4.]*

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** At what point was that budgetary decision made? It was in the budget papers; questions were asked. Again, I apologise via you rather than your department, so it is a little unfair to put you on the spot —

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am in the hot seat, member —

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Unfortunately; that is why you get the big dollars, as the minister.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** — so do not feel sorry for me.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Can you tell us at what point the decision was made to limit both accounts to \$1 million and at what point the \$1 000 limit on an individual unit and brigade or group was established in terms of time frame?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I understand it has been a very recent decision. In terms of what day and when, I will have to take that on notice. I know that the Premier spoke about it yesterday on the radio and the minister put out a press release yesterday about it. In relation to when the decision was made, I will take that question on notice.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Either on notice or supplementary information; whichever is easier for you.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will provide it as supplementary information.

*[Supplementary Information No D5.]*

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I note the minister's media release of last night in which he unfortunately suggests—I will get the exact wording so I have not made any mistakes—that the “financial management and use of card need to be addressed”, which is a direct quote, and it needs to make sure there is appropriate oversight, and says again that the card was not implemented correctly. Can you advise us, minister, what examples the government has of the card being implemented incorrectly, where there was inadequate oversight and where the government feels that the financial management and use of the card was not adequate and, ultimately then, who is responsible—hopefully nobody with you—for that management issue?

[7.30 pm]

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** It is my understanding that there were issues concerning the previous government's design of the scheme, so it was not about volunteers misusing the card.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** It was designed by DFES.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Member, if you want to ask me a question or make a comment, do it through the Chair. I am trying to give the answer to this member. The advice I have been given is that the concern relates to the design of the scheme, regardless of who designed it. The design of the scheme was done under the previous government. It is not about volunteers. It relates to the scheme design itself.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Can the minister be specific about where there are issues with the design of the scheme, apart from the fact that it was used to a point of \$3.2 million for regional volunteers and \$1.9 million for metropolitan volunteers, which I think most members would think is a reasonable investment of government resources? Can the minister point to some specific issues of where there are concerns with the use of this card and if it was—let us put it in a very simple

question. Was it inappropriately used, and can the government provide evidence, if necessary by supplementary information, of that misuse?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Thanks for the further question. It is my understanding that many volunteers have told Minister Logan on his visits to their organisations that a single card cannot be easily shared among, often, dozens of volunteer members. That was the major concern about the design. If that does not answer your question and you want further information, I am happy to take it away and provide a more fulsome answer by way of supplementary information.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Can I suggest to the minister that if the issue was that the card was not easily shared, the most likely outcome would be that it would reduce expenditure on the card, not increase it. If the card is difficult to pass around, there would be less expenditure on it.

**The CHAIR:** Thanks, honourable member. The purpose of these hearings is to ask questions, rather than provide advice to the minister, although I am sure he is very grateful.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I am just trying my best to make his life easier, but I take your advice, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** I have no doubt you are doing that right now, but in there I thought I heard a question on notice.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I am absolutely happy if that can be provided. Would the minister like me to put it on notice or is he happy to provide it as supplementary information?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I have been advised that Mr Pasquale might be able to give some information in relation to the financials, so let Mr Pasquale comment, and if you have a further question that warrants something being taken on notice or supplementary information, we can deal with it then.

**Mr PASQUALE:** In listening to you repeat the figure of \$1.9 million, I think you are referring, if I can just clarify, to the figure under “Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies” at page 327 of the DFES budget estimates. Is that correct?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Yes, page 327, volunteer fuel card, the 2016 estimated actual, which given that we are in October 2017 must be relatively close to what would come out as an actual in the future; so, yes, absolutely right.

**Mr PASQUALE:** I just want to confirm that you are referencing that figure as the metropolitan component. Have I understood that correctly?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** My reading of the DFES website says that DFES provides the metropolitan volunteer fuel card, and royalties for regions under the royalties for regions website provides the regional volunteer fuel card.

**Mr PASQUALE:** From a funding perspective, that is correct—that is, the funding source of the volunteer fuel card. I need to clarify those issues, because there is a bit of confusion there. I think your first comments were referring to DRD royalties for regions funding. That is correct. The funding that you were referring to from DRD reflects the royalties for regions funding for the country component of the volunteer fuel card. DFES is the administrator of the fuel card scheme, so the figures that you are referring to in the “Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies” table of the budget estimates is actually the grant component for both country and metro.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** But that is a separate body of money from the royalties for regions component.

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**Mr PASQUALE:** It is the same funding source. It comes from royalties for regions to DFES to administer, and this is the expenditure side, and we then report against the income that we receive from royalties for regions and the CA appropriation that we receive to do the metro component, and this is then the expenditure against that whole program for both country and metro.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** So are you suggesting that \$3.2 million from royalties for regions is funding the entire volunteer fuel card?

**Mr PASQUALE:** No.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I will have to come back to you. What is the total funding from all government sources for the volunteer fuel card?

**Mr PASQUALE:** As the budget estimates stand now, notwithstanding the recent announcement by the Premier, as I understand it, the total funding from both sources is \$7.9 million from its inception. Originally, it commenced in 2014–15 with some planning moneys and it was going to go for four years from 2015–16 to 2018–19. The break-up of that \$7.9 million is made up of \$7.3 million or \$7.4 million from royalties for regions over the four years in the order of about \$1.8 million a year. The consolidated fund for four years was in the order of \$140 000 a year for the metro.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Did royalties for regions funding then go to any volunteer fuel card funding for the metropolitan area?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The answer is no.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** We can assume from that that over that period of time—we are talking about a four-year period—only \$140 000 from the consolidated fund is effectively going into the metropolitan volunteer fuel card. So the entire \$7.3 million or \$7.4 million—I am happy to accept that that is near enough—for the royalties for regions funding is going entirely to the regional volunteer fuel card. That would suggest, minister, that although I was saying there is potentially an 80–20 split, it looks more like an 98–2 per cent split to regional areas.

**The CHAIR:** Is that a question there?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Minister, in terms of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services volunteer fuel card funding, can we perhaps by supplementary information, if you do not have it to hand, get that divided into metropolitan and rural emergency services?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will ask Mr Pasquale to respond. I put on the record that there are approximately 900 brigades in Western Australia, and 70 of those are in the metropolitan area. So, it is a tiny percentage. But I will ask Mr Pasquale to respond further.

**Mr PASQUALE:** In terms of the total number of eligible brigades, groups or units across all the different volunteer services, including St John's, in regional parts of Western Australia, in accordance with the DRD boundaries, there are 825 eligible brigades, groups or units, and in the metro area there are 108 eligible brigades, groups or units. That is a total of 933, and I am led to believe that the percentage split is around 11 per cent for metro and the balance for regional.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Would that reflect in the distribution of the DFES component of the volunteer fuel card?

**Mr PASQUALE:** Again, we administer the whole scheme, both the regional component and the metro component, for not only DFES volunteers but also bushfire volunteers and St John Ambulance volunteers.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Was the member asking whether approximately 11 per cent of the money out of the DFES budget goes to the metropolitan area and 89 or 90 per cent goes to regional WA?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Out of the DFES budget specifically, yes.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Do we have those figures at hand? I will ask Mr Pasquale to provide more information, please.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** You have my sympathies, minister.

**Mr PASQUALE:** Sorry if I was not clear, but the 108 brigades that are eligible in the metro is the funding that DFES received from the state under the consolidated account, if that is what you are asking.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Yes.

**Mr PASQUALE:** The money from royalties for regions that DFES received to administer the program is the money that pays for the 825 eligible brigades, groups or units in the regions.

[7.40 pm]

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Can we then assume that the \$140 000 in the consolidated fund that you mentioned before is split between the 108 units in the metropolitan area?

**Mr PASQUALE:** Correct.

**Hon COLIN de GRUSSA:** Continuing on the theme of the volunteer emergency services fuel card, at page 327 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, looking again at the expenditure items under “Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies”, we are looking at \$900 000-odd over 2017–18 through to 2019–20. On the other side of the equation, on that same page, in the “Income Statement”, the income for “Royalties for Regions Fund: Regional Community Services Fund” is \$1.152 million. Is the difference between that and the expenditure on the volunteer fuel card attributable to the administrative costs for that card?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** So that I can be clear in my mind, the member was referring to the “Income Statement” and the “Royalties for Regions Fund: Regional Community Services Fund” figure of \$1.152 million for 2018–19, and the question was about the \$908 000 in the 2018–19 year?

**Hon COLIN de GRUSSA:** Is the difference between the two figures attributable to an administrative cost?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will ask Ms Camarda to answer that question.

**Ms CAMARDA:** Correct. The additional costs are associated with the cost of the card, because it costs about \$50 to purchase the card per brigade, and also graphic design and postage mail-out, as well as a fuel card part-time project manager and an administration assistant to administer the scheme throughout the cycle.

**Hon COLIN de GRUSSA:** Further on that, can you give me the FTE allocation on that administrative side?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will go back to Ms Camarda—I think she partly answered that, but if she could make it clear. I think two staff are involved, both part time, but Ms Camarda might be able to provide a fulsome response.

**Ms CAMARDA:** The scheme provided for a 0.5 level 6 FTE and a 0.25 level 4 FTE each year for the duration of the scheme, for the four years.

**Hon COLIN de GRUSSA:** So for those staff and that administration expense, is there a separate expense for the administration costs of the metro version of that fuel card or is this funding being used for the administration of all the cards?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** It is my understanding that the staff administer the whole scheme.

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**Hon COLIN de GRUSSA:** We have talked about the 0.5 FTE and the 0.25 FTE. So, there is no additional FTE allocation above that? That is it? Okay. Thank you. We have discussed the change to the value of the cards. Given we are in October and are nearly at bushfire season, have brigades been notified of that change? What will happen with the cards that are already in existence? When is this change likely to come into effect?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** It is my understanding that brigades have been advised of the delay. In relation to the announcement yesterday, that information is currently being disseminated to brigades.

**Hon COLIN de GRUSSA:** Is there a start date for the new value of card?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** That part of the announcement is yet to be made.

**Hon COLIN de GRUSSA:** I asked a question in the house in September and the answer provided indicated that a review was being undertaken into this card. Were there any terms of reference for that review? Was that review into the fuel card conducted by the department?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** It is my understanding the government undertook a review of the whole royalties for regions' expenditure, not necessarily the card itself. I think the answer referred to that holistic review of RforR spending, not particularly this card.

**Hon COLIN de GRUSSA:** To be clear, there was no review by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services for the card, just the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development? I take that as answered. Thank you.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will answer that for Hansard, because *Hansard* cannot show nods of heads. For the purposes of *Hansard*, it is my understanding that, yes, the review that was undertaken was a review of the RforR program and not a review by DFES of the card.

**Hon COLIN de GRUSSA:** I refer to budget paper No 2, page 324, and the heading "Asset Investment Program". I have had queries from brigade members, in particular in the Esperance area and others, regarding the future fleet program that has been talked about over some time. They are having some issues with the current fleet of vehicles in terms of their emissions systems, tyre equipment and all sorts of things that have been provided but are not satisfactory for use down there. Where are we at with that program, what progress is being made, and how will the determination of a provider for those vehicles be worked out?

**Mr PASQUALE:** There are multiple parts to that question. I am not sure I am qualified to talk about the suitability of appliances, because that is probably more an operational matter. In relation to the latter question or query around the procurement process, that is subject to a procurement process at the moment. Future fleet has been in the marketplace for a reasonable amount of time. We are at a stage where there has been a preferred vendor selection as part of the evaluation process, but no decisions have been made at this stage. In accordance with the State Supply Commission guidelines, I cannot really divulge much more at this stage, other than we are still in a process and the process is not closed.

**Hon COLIN de GRUSSA:** Further to that, in relation to the fit-out of those vehicles, I understand that in the past a couple of Western Australian businesses have done that. It was my understanding that that has changed. Can that be confirmed? My understanding is that the contract was awarded to an eastern states company.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will ask the commissioner to answer that question.

**Mr KLEMM:** As per Mr Pasquale's answer, it is still inside the tender process, so we are unable to speak about that at this time.

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**Hon COLIN de GRUSSA:** Was the tender open to Western Australian businesses, though? Can you confirm that or not? Was it open to all businesses?

**Mr KLEMM:** Yes.

[7.50 pm]

**Hon COLIN de GRUSSA:** Okay; thank you.

**Hon LAURIE GRAHAM:** Minister, I refer to budget paper No 2, volume 1, page 325, the heading “Asset Investment Program” and the line item for computer-aided dispatch system; the first item at the top of the page. Can the minister explain the key components of the replacement program, its progress to date and when the Western Australian community can expect to benefit from it?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** My notes state, before I hand over to somebody else to give a more fulsome response, that this relates to a replacement of the current dispatch system, which has reached its end of life. The current CAD system will be replaced by a contemporary, highly reliable and fit for purpose CAD system to ensure that DFES can continue to deliver an effective 000 service to the community. I think Deputy Commissioner Fewster can probably give a more fulsome response and get to the nitty-gritty of the answer.

**Mr FEWSTER:** The government has committed more than \$18 million to the replacement of the CAD system—computer-aided dispatch system. Our current system has reached the end of its life. We will spend more than \$12 million of that in financial year 2017–18. It will be replaced with a system that is currently in use with Western Australian police. The project will also see the replacement of our current mobile data terminals in the career fire and rescue appliances. MDTs, as they are termed, transmit data between the CAD system and the appliance. The benefits include the collaboration that is going on between the Western Australian police and the department in the delivery of that project. We have taken the people that were involved in the delivery of the project at police and brought them into DFES. They are part of the project office that is delivering the CAD system. A benefit of that was that we did not have to retrain a whole lot of people to deliver this type of system. We have learnt from the police delivery of the system. We have not needed to invest the money in the work to assess the market for the CAD system. We have gone straight to the system that was in use by the police. We did that in a way that was compliant with state supply requirements. It is a technically very challenging area and a complex ICT project. A benefit has been our ability to learn and grow from what police have done before us. Some of the other benefits include a reduction in the implementation of ongoing support costs associated with running the CAD system because a level of duplication has been removed by the sharing of the service system. That provides additional 24/7 support for us. DFES did not have a FTE allocation for 24/7 CAD support; police did. We are now sharing that. The ICT environment that is delivering CAD is part of the police ICT environment, so we have not had to create an ICT environment to manage the system. We are just using the Western Australia Police infrastructure. The quality of the service and the information that is available to our crews will increase and that improves the service that is available to members of the Western Australian community. It leads to an ability to share information across the two CAD systems if we need to. It is not something that we do as a matter of course, but we will be able to do that much more effectively going forward because we will be on the same system. It also provides better capability to capture and deal with our 000 calls, being a newer system. The relationship with the MDT system means that our MDT will now be directly connected to CAD and that is not the case at the moment. That will allow a range of improvements in terms of what is available to the crews inside the vehicles. The system that we are using, which is a redo or a copy of the police system, means we will introduce the CAD system without taking it offline at any point. We will introduce it in a rolling program and that means that we will have a CAD system that is being

rolled out and tested in a region before we lose our existing FCAD. That was a service that was managed through the police process. It works seamlessly so we do not suffer that risk of introducing a completely different integration arrangement.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Deputy Commissioner, do we have a time line for the new system?

**Mr FEWSTER:** The system will be in place during 2018—before the fire season in 2018. We will be doing the rollout midyear but, of course, it is a project and it has contingency both in time and in dollars.

**Hon LAURIE GRAHAM:** With the downturn in volunteerism in the regions, I refer to an item on page 320 and the heading “Relationship to Government Goals” and the desired outcomes that state “minimised impact from emergencies through timely and effective response.” I ask the minister to comment on DFES’s strategies to support its volunteers.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I might ask the commissioner to respond to that one, if you do not mind, commissioner.

**Mr KLEMM:** DFES has a volunteer sustainability strategy, which has been under development over the last couple of years following significant consultation with the various volunteer services. There are various parts to the volunteer sustainability strategy, which are in various stages of implementation. The member makes the very good point that volunteering is arguably in decline, perhaps in conjunction with a decline in the population in rural areas, which DFES is very cognisant of and responding to those risks. We have various programs as part of the strategy that are based around us providing various tools to volunteers to be able to reach into and, as leaders in their community, utilise those tools to improve volunteering in their particular community, no matter where they are in the state.

**The CHAIR:** Hon Pierre Yang.

**Hon PIERRE YANG:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for the purpose of full disclosure, I advise you and the minister that I am a volunteer member of Gosnells unit of the state emergency service. I understand that this position would not affect my ability to put a question or two?

**The CHAIR:** No, of course not. Thank you for your disclosure.

**Hon PIERRE YANG:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I refer to page 325 of budget paper No 2 under “fire crew protection”. May I please ask if you could explain the progress of the future fleet and fire crew protection?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I take the opportunity to congratulate you on your volunteerism. I know you are busy in all sorts of things in the community, but this is a very important one. Deputy Commissioner Fewster, can I ask if you are happy to respond to that question?

**Mr FEWSTER:** I think there were two parts of the question. One related to crew protection, and the other to the future fleet?

**Hon PIERRE YANG:** Yes.

**Mr FEWSTER:** The crew protection project is delivering a best-practice crew protection suite for our appliances that are in the high bushfire areas. It includes the installation or retrofitting, depending on the age of the vehicle, of: burnover blankets; radiant heat curtains, which are the drop-down curtains around the cab that protect the crew where the glass components of the cab are; an in-cab air system, which is a small device that provides people with air when the vehicle is subjected to a burnover; a deluge system which, as it sounds, deluges the vehicle if it is activated; some critical component lagging; and automatic vehicle location systems.

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[8.00 pm]

If I start with the automatic vehicle location system, because it is the simplest, the AVL installation is a piece of equipment that provides a button on the dashboard of a vehicle which indicates to our communications centre that the vehicle is under duress. It does some other things in terms of reporting back to our comcen information concerning the vehicle's current location, and some other information like speed and the like. The AVL installation has now been included in more than 1 400 vehicles around the state; that is including State Emergency Service vehicles. It is also going to include some other parts of the fleet. The rollout of the project for AVL also includes 400 AVL units which are portable. Those units are used by people like machinery operators or vehicles that are not part of the fleet so as we can have an understanding of where those vehicles are at a particular point in time as well.

If I go back to the rest of the crew protection program, stage 1 was completed in 2016. It included the installation of 3 700 burnover blankets and radiant heat shields in 981 appliances. At the end of June this year, there were 311 existing appliances that had been retrofitted, and 130 new-build appliances that were brought into service already with the complete crew protection system. Stage 2 is currently underway. It is delivering the in-cab air and the deluge systems and critical component lagging to 667 appliances located in the high-risk areas, and 469 of those have been completed. The remaining 198 appliances will be completed by June 2018, next year. We have a budget submission seeking approval and funding to expend an additional \$8.65 million on compliances to complete the remainder of the vehicles in June 2018. There are 667 of those.

In terms of the future fleet program, I think we have already answered the procurement parts of that project so I will not re-cover those, Chair, if you are happy with that. The light tanker part of future fleet is in the market at the moment and being assessed. The heavy vehicles we have talked about are under a procurement process at the moment, and we have another program that will go to market shortly which is about seeking innovation in the fleet.

**Hon PIERRE YANG:** On the same page, I refer to the line item "Plant and Equipment Works—CFRS Radio Equipment Replacement". Minister, can you please explain how this program will better respond to incidents, and why is it better than the previous equipment?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sorry, member; I apologise. Just confirming that you referring to page 325, and asking in relation to —

**Hon PIERRE YANG:** Under "New Works".

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Yes, so under "New Works" is the item "Plant and Equipment Works—CFRS Radio Equipment Replacement? That is the line item?

**Hon PIERRE YANG:** Yes.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** And that is \$2.5 million. I might ask the commissioner to respond.

**Mr KLEMM:** The CFRS radio equipment replacement program refers to our UHF radios, which are used inside structures and tunnels and the like. They are not radios that we use at a bushfire incident, so they are more for the built environment. This is just part of our, I guess, improvement of our equipment, particularly as it relates to the various tunnels and the Forrestfield—Airport Link and the like that we have ahead of us and making sure that our crews can respond with the latest equipment and be safe doing it.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** I refer the minister to volume 1 of budget paper No 2 and page 327. This is the area of details of controlled grants and subsidies. Is Surf Life Saving WA the only non-government group that received funding from DFES in the years listed; and, if not, please provide a

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breakdown by group name of the total amount provided to each for each of the years listed, with a brief explanation of what the funding was for?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** It is page 327 and the details of controlled grants and subsidies. The question related to Surf Life Saving WA, and whether it was the only agency getting funding from DFES; and, if not, which were the other agencies and what was the breakdown. I will ask Mr Pasquale to respond to that.

**Mr PASQUALE:** It was a very long question, so I might probe you to clarify a few components. But I think the first part that I understood was the Surf Life Saving component, and you are wanting to know, within the details of controlled grants, whether they are the only entity or recipient of grants from DFES that are not government, I think?

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Yes; was it the only non-government group that received funding?

**Mr PASQUALE:** If you bear with me, I might just quickly go through them to clarify them off the top of my head. The bushfire risk management planning process are grants to local governments for the bushfire risk management planning process. Fire crew protection is the cost of crew protection that is being spent on local government vehicles that DFES grant under the local government grants scheme, so that is going to local government. The Geraldton Volunteer Marine Rescue Group, I suggest, is not a government entity. They are a separate entity in their own right, but obviously a service under the auspices of DFES. The local government community emergency services managers is a local government scheme where community emergency services managers are funded on a grant arrangement for local government. The local government grants scheme is the capital and operating grants paid to local governments for bush fire brigades and SES units. The other grants are minor grants paid for a variety of reasons. I would need to kind of go into detail, but my notes here say they are mainly related to providing costs and support to volunteers for things like travel to competitions and training, and operating subsidies paid to volunteers and their representative associations. Then there is Surf Life Saving, and we have spoken about the volunteer fuel card to the various volunteer brigades, groups and units, including St John. The volunteer marine rescue service is the grants for the volunteer and rescue service groups. Hopefully, that has probably been an easier way to articulate that.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Yes, thank you. I refer to page 321 of volume 1 of budget paper No 2 regarding the service summary. Item 4 is in regard to frontline services. Could you please specify all that is included in this line item?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** This time I might ask Ms Camarda, the CFO, to answer that question.

[8.10 pm]

**Ms CAMARDA:** The costs allocated to frontline services are the direct costs. First of all, we allocate direct costs for frontline services, which include a number of direct costs—CFRS station operating costs, other regional centres, state operations and Air Desk. There are a number of direct costs related to frontline services that we can provide if required. We also allocate the corporate overhead on a proportionate basis to frontline services.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** I refer to page 322 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, and “Community Awareness, Education and Information Services”. Could you please explain the details of the “Less income” line item?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Let me start off with this and then if you need further information, I will go back to one of the advisers. I am advised that income includes revenues from the ESL, fees and charges, including direct brigade alarm, commonwealth grants and then other revenue allocated in proportion to expenditure. Is that enough for you or do you want further information?

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**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** I am happy with that. I refer to page 323 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, and “Training and Organisational Resourcing Services”, and the line item “Average Cost per Participant to Deliver Pathways Training”. How many individuals participated in the pathways training for each year listed? Some of this could be quite onerous, so I am happy to take this on notice. I have some follow-up questions to that.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** If the member is okay with that, we will take that question on notice. There is probably a bit of work that needs to be done to put that list together. We will provide that by way of supplementary.

*[Supplementary Information No D6.]*

**The CHAIR:** When you say “each year listed”, which years do you mean? Do you mean 2015–16 and 2016–17?

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Yes; through the budget period.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Just clarifying, was that for 2015–16 and 2016–17? Ms Paterson has indicated that she might have some information at hand, so we might be able to provide it to you now.

**Ms PATERSON:** I can provide you with some information for 17 August 2017. It is broken down by service. The number of pathways registered volunteers from the VFRS is 1 851; from the VFES, there are 473; from the SES, there are 1 519; and from the VMRS, there are 460 volunteers registered.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Does that suffice?

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Yes, very much so. I will put the second part of the question on notice. I will read it out. I think it is too long. Could you please provide a breakdown of the number of participants in each of the listed years by service type—that is CFRS, VFRS and SES?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I think Ms Paterson has answered that question for the current financial year. I think that is the same question. We can certainly provide that answer for 2015–16 and then obviously this year is already on the record from what the member just asked a few minutes ago. Am I correct, honourable member?

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Yes, you are right.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** By way of supplementary, we are able to provide that breakdown, I understand, for the year 2015–16, and we will provide that by way of supplementary information.

*[Supplementary Information No D7.]*

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** I refer to page 327 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, and “Income Statement”. What were the top 10 largest expenditures in the line item “Other expenses” for each of the years listed?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Perhaps I can answer it this way and then you can tell me if you need more information. The other expenses include—these are the major ones—interest to the Western Australian Treasury Corporation, workers’ compensation premiums, operating leases for motor vehicles, advertising, audit fees and a range of small minor expenses. A fair bit of work needs to go into getting the top 10. I am hoping that might suffice as an answer.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** That is a good answer. Thank you.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** On page 321 under “Explanation of Significant Movements”, note 1 at the bottom of the page states —

Following a 2016–17 audit finding, the methodology for determining the number of community Bushfire Ready Groups established has been revised ...

What was the methodology change?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Member, thank you for the question. I will ask Ms Paterson to provide a response to that question.

**Ms PATERSON:** I cannot provide that exact detail here. I would need to take that on notice or take it as a supplementary question and provide you with that answer if you are comfortable with that. There is a fairly detailed definition around volunteers, how the group is formed and the number of people in the group, from memory. To give you the correct answer, I would need to go back to the audit finding.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** I thought it might have been simpler than that.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** If the member wants that, I am happy to provide that information by way of supplementary.

*[Supplementary Information No D8.]*

**Hon KEN BASTON:** I refer to page 322 and “Community Awareness, Education and Information Services”. How much of this funding is allocated to remote communities for fire control in the education programs, particularly in the Kimberley and Pilbara, bearing in mind the large bushfires that have been burning for weeks in the Fitzroy area, Leopold Downs and Fairfield, which I believe have been burnt. I believe they were deliberately lit. What funding are we putting into that and does it come under that?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Member, that might be a difficult answer for us to give you. If you are okay, we will endeavour to answer it by way of supplementary, but it will involve a fair bit of work. I think we have a minimal number of officers in that region who would deal with the issue. Maybe I will ask the commissioner to speak to the issue a bit more broadly.

[8.20 pm]

**Mr KLEMM:** To provide some context, we have got officers in Kununurra, Broome, Karratha and Port Hedland in terms of the Pilbara and the Kimberley, and they do a whole range of tasks for us. To break that down to perhaps the amount of funding spent on remote Indigenous communities, for example, is probably going to be a bit difficult for us. In terms of dedicated community awareness programs, it also could be difficult for us to define how much of a person’s day is spent on community engagement in a certain remote area. We could try to put a figure around how much is spent on community engagement in the Pilbara and the Kimberley in a holistic sense if that would suit the question.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** Yes, that would be fine. I guess my main query of the minister was that we were putting funding into that, because it has been a big issue up there for many years.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** If I can generally address the fire issue in the Kimberley, obviously the member and I share an electorate, so I share an interest in this issue and indeed this area with him. As members know, and certainly we know, the Kimberley has been experiencing a difficult fire season. It is obviously hot all year around in that region, but certainly from June to September it is typically dry, and the positioning of the high-pressure systems can bring gusty south-easterly winds, which make conditions ideal for bushfires. I think from 1 July this year to date, the region has had approximately 350 landscape fires, with approximately 4.3 million hectares burnt. There were 390 community warnings and alerts issued by both DFES and Parks and Wildlife. I understand that over the last few weeks, DFES has deployed eight additional staff from other regions in support of the recent fire operations up there; and, if and when required, additional staff and volunteers can

be requested. I am also advised that additionally, four light tankers and one 3.4 rural tanker have been supplied from Perth as contingency planning for the Kadjina fire. So, there is certainly effort going into it and the agency is certainly treating this with the importance that it should. In terms of how much money spent, it will be difficult to provide that information to the member, so I will not provide it, because we cannot. However, I will say again that the agency is treating the Kimberley fires appropriately and with the importance with which they should be treated.

**The CHAIR:** Member, are you comfortable with that?

**Hon KEN BASTON:** Yes, I am happy with that. I guess it is the educational process that funding needs to go into.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The commissioner has also indicated that he is happy to provide more of an answer.

**Mr KLEMM:** If I could just add to the minister's comments around resourcing, particularly from a response point of view, what we do and have done for a number of years is that we send additional fire appliances to the Kimberley and the Pilbara as part of bolstering their response capability during their bushfire season. That is, at a minimum, four by four of 3.4 tankers, which spend the northern summer in the Pilbara and the Kimberley and then the southern bushfire season down in the south west. Fires are currently occurring in the Pilbara, and we have sent both career and volunteer crews from the south west of the state up there, and they are working as we speak.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will just add that the minister with responsibility for this portfolio will obviously see a copy of the transcript over the next few weeks, and I will certainly impress upon him your views, which I share, on the need for more money to be spent in remote Aboriginal communities and in the areas of community awareness, education and information services. If you are happy with that, he will see the transcript, and I will raise it with him, too.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** Thank you, minister.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Minister, in relation to local emergency management planning and funding, I think it is a very good investment. Every local emergency management arrangement that you manage to upgrade from the cut and paste—which is quite frequent in local governments—to do something far better, is very worthwhile, so you are to be commended for that, but we will move on.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, honourable member. One very quick question, and I will be going to another member after you.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I will. Thank you for your guidance, Madam Chair. I refer to page 325 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, and the south west emergency rescue helicopter service. The minister may need to provide additional information. Can we have an indication of the usage of the service and when a decision might be made by government about the continuation of that service, given that its budget is only in the forward estimates, as it was in the previous budget, I might add, or only to the next financial year?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The new rescue helicopter base at Bunbury airport was officially opened on 14 December 2016. The purpose-built facility houses the state's second RAC rescue helicopter, which has flown more than 330 missions, including training exercises, since it commenced operations in February this year from a temporary base. That is 330. Hopefully that answers that part of the question. The new base was funded through royalties for regions. Some minor capital expenditure will complete the facility in 2017–18. The member is very correct in pointing out that there is one year of funding in this budget, as there was in last year's budget, so this government is continuing with the process undertaken by the last government. I understand from the member and



certainly from people in the south west that it is a very important service, and we will endeavour to make sure that there is money in next year's budget for this important service, too.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** So is the minister suggesting that May next year might bring the answer?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Certainly; that is probably a more appropriate time to get a more fulsome response.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** We have heard from the Treasurer that there is a whole-of-government review on the way in relation to fleet-owned and leased aircraft by the state government. Given that the department is a significant lessor of rotary and fixed-wing aircraft, can the minister tell me who is undertaking this review and what the department's involvement in it has been to date?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** That issue is being considered by government at the moment. It has been considered by a part of government that I probably should not speak about in terms of the decision-making. The decision is under active consideration. I note DFES has done some work and has prepared some work to provide to the central agencies. But in terms of the process and who is undertaking it, it is probably a question that needs to go to the Treasurer tomorrow, so I look forward to answering that question in that session tomorrow afternoon.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Is it Treasury or is it the Department of the Premier and Cabinet that is conducting the review?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** My understanding is that it is Treasury. If I am wrong tomorrow, I will certainly undertake to provide the member with a response. If the member is not here tomorrow, I will provide him with a response.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I will be here.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Good; I will provide you with a response.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I am seeing you more than my family at the moment, minister!

**The CHAIR:** As are we all, member!

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** It is under active consideration by the government at the moment.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** How many of the department's senior officers fall within the senior executive service?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The number is 12.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Given the government's commitment to reduce the senior executive service by 20 per cent, who is not coming in on Monday?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** You are stumping me this late in the evening, member! There are 12 SES at the moment. In terms of the decision to be made, it is a machinery-of-government decision and it has not been made yet; it will be made down the track.

**The CHAIR:** That concludes this hearing for tonight. On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your attendance today. The committee will forward a transcript of evidence, which includes the questions you have taken on notice highlighted on the transcript, within seven days of the hearing. Responses to these questions are requested to be provided within 10 working days of receipt of the questions. Should you be unable to meet this due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible before the due date. The advice is to include specific reasons as to why the due date cannot be met. If members have any unasked questions, I ask them to submit these via the new electronic lodging system on the POWAnet site by 12 noon on Monday, 23 October 2017. Once again, I thank you for your attendance today.

**Hearing concluded at 8.30 pm**

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