

# **FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AUTHORITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA BILL**

## *Second Reading*

**MR DAY** (Darling Range - Minister for Emergency Services) [12.12 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read for a second time.

This Bill seeks to improve the coordination and planning of our State's emergency services through the establishment of the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia. This initiative is designed to achieve an improvement in the delivery of services to the community and to more than 20 000 emergency services volunteers and over 1 000 frontline staff throughout Western Australia; a more effective and coherent framework for policy development and implementation; and a coordinated approach to planning and management matters across emergency services agencies.

The establishment of the authority will consolidate under one board and chief executive officer the following entities -

the Bush Fires Board - a statutory authority established under the Bush Fires Act;

the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board - a statutory authority established under the Fire Brigades Act;

the Department of Fire and Emergency Services - a department originally established under the name of the Western Australian State Emergency Service.

The Bill will establish the authority, and provide it with functions and powers relating to the provision and management of emergency services. The provisions of the Bill include the following matters -

establishment of the authority as a body corporate, which may sue or be sued, and as an agent of the Crown;

establishment of a board of management with a maximum of 10 board members. This will include three members representing emergency services volunteers, and one member representing local government authorities. Although these four members of the board will have a representative basis to their appointment, it is essential, in order to ensure the success of the new structure, that all members consider the needs of the organisation as a whole in their deliberations. The FESA Board will replace the Bush Fires Board and the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board.

Functions and Powers of the Authority: These relate to the provision and management of emergency services vested in the Authority under the "umbrella" of emergency services Acts. This includes the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia Bill 1998, the Bush Fires Act 1954 and the Fire Brigades Act 1942.

Administrative matters, including constitution and proceedings of the board; appointment of chief executive officer and staff; financial provisions, including establishment of accounts, sources of funds, expenditure, investments, borrowings, and the application of the Financial Administration and Audit Act; establishment

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of consultative committees to provide advice to the board and chief executive officer; and savings and transitional matters.

Protection from liability for acts done in good faith in performing functions under the emergency services Acts.

It is important to note that no jobs will be lost as a result of the consolidation of emergency services agencies. Any savings achieved through the establishment and utilisation of common resources will be used to increase service provision by the new authority.

This Bill has been drafted following a great deal of consideration and consultation regarding an appropriate framework for the management and coordination of emergency services in this State.

The Bill represents the first stage in a process that will see Western Australia provided with comprehensive emergency services legislation to underpin the work undertaken by emergency services staff and volunteers in assisting the community in times of crisis. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cunningham.