



## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY 05<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2017

### ECONOMIC AND FINANCE COMMITTEE: EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY 2017-18

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Odenwalder:

That the 95 th report of the committee, entitled Emergency Services Levy 2017-18, be noted.

(Continued from 21 June 2017.)

**Mr PEDERICK ( Hammond ) ( 11:51 ):** I rise to speak to the Economic and Finance Committee's 95<sup>th</sup> report, entitled Emergency Services Levy 2017-18. I note that this levy intends to raise \$302 million, with the levy and other funds, which will go into emergency services around the state. That is \$10.3 million more than was required in 2016-17.

The breakdown of the \$302 million includes the estimated return from the emergency services levy, which is \$291.5 million. There are some minor revenues to the Community Emergency Services Fund of \$1.9 million, and the rest will be a run-down in the Community Emergency Services Fund to make up the \$302 million. In relation to the levy and how it is put against mobile property and fixed property, there will be approximately \$46.8 million raised from mobile levies, that is, registrations etc. on vehicles, and \$244.7 million raised from fixed property.

One of the concerns that continuously comes to me in my office is the amount people pay on their fixed property, and then they see all their registrations. Certainly, in the agricultural world people can have many items that they register, including farm equipment and utilities, etc., and they all have the mobile levy. They are concerned about always being hit up for a levy. I think the biggest concern that comes to me in my office is what happens when we have a major event, and I have spoken about this many times here before. As soon as there is a major event, the Treasurer sees it as an excuse to up the amount that, in his eyes, needs to be raised for emergency services.

I would have thought that it should all be budgeted in the forecast contingencies because that is exactly what emergency services are there for—those big events. They are there for the Sampson Flats, they are there for the Pineries and they are there when disasters happen in the South-East, as they have been over decades, and I think it is used as an excuse at times to add more money to the government coffers. Some of this money goes into facilities and trucks. I note that there are about 37 trucks coming on line in the next season, and that is a good thing, but other equipment is needed around these trucks, in particular, the brigade bases and the sheds to house these trucks.

On Sunday, the member for MacKillop, Nick McBride (the candidate for MacKillop) and I attended the opening of the new facilities for the Coonalpyn CFS brigade. They are great facilities, but the issue for me was that people started talking about getting a new site 14 years ago. They spoke both to me and the member for MacKillop. Even though Coonalpyn is in MacKillop, quite a few people just outside Coonalpyn, north of Coonalpyn, are in my electorate and connected to that station. Obviously, with me being a CFS member at Coomandook, we are connected as well, so I had connections both politically and as a CFS firefighter. People talked about getting a new site 14 years ago and it has taken that long to find land.

It was mentioned in some of the speeches on Sunday that you would think there was some available country at Coonalpyn. Certainly there was, but for different reasons the initial parcel of land could not be used. Eventually, they settled on some land, and from what I gather there was going to be some other work done—some old pine trees taken down—but they have ended up where they are. It is not quite as big as they expected, but they have a great facility that will easily house three trucks and some smaller vehicles and some equipment. They have a nice new base area with a little kitchen and a captain's room. It is something that is sorely needed for the situations they deal with down there with fire and also vehicle rescue on the Dukes Highway. Those volunteers see some horrendous incidents.

I do question why it took so long. It was also raised on the day that the powers that be wanted kerbing put outside the CFS land. As was said in the speeches: really? There is no other kerbing on the same street, so they managed to get around that one. People need to look at the different sites instead of having a one site fits all philosophy based on essentially a larger town or urban needs. However, they got there and they are thankful for that. Chief Officer, Greg Nettleton, and Dean Elliott, who has had a long association at Coonalpyn, were there, and Greg and Dean were honoured to be on the opening plaque for this new CFS facility.

**Mr Williams:** He got life membership.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Yes, he did. As the member for MacKillop just said, Dean was awarded life membership of the CFS on Sunday. In 2007, he was also the recipient of a Queen's Birthday award, the Australian Fire Service Medal. I want to go through some of the comments about him receiving that medal back in 2007:

Dean joined the Emergency Fire Service ... in 1961 as a firefighter with the Coonalpyn Brigade.

He was heavily involved in the formation of the Coonalpyn Downs EFS Association and became a Supervisor of Fire Control Officers in the Coonalpyn Downs area.

He oversaw the building of a joint EFS and ambulance station at Coonalpyn, including the purchase of several appliances for the Association.

When the EFS transformed into the Country Fire Service and the Coonalpyn Downs CFS Group was formed, Dean was elected Group Officer and held that position until 2004.

He also held the position of Group Equipment Officer between 1999 and 2004, [and he] was instrumental in developing Fire Prevention Committees and protocols, and was Chair of the Volunteer Fire Brigades Association, Murraylands Branch.

I seek leave to conclude my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.