



Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022 **ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

Asked by Mr James Milligan MLA on 3 November 2022: Mr Wayne Phillips, A/g Commissioner took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard [uncorrected] proof transcript 3 November 2022 [PAGE 77]

In relation to:

MR MILLIGAN: Yes, thank you chair. Just to confirm, the fire danger rating system is a part of the Australian warning system? Recommendation 13.3 of the commission called for all states and territories to urgently deliver and implement this system for all hazards, so according to the JACS annual report of far, the AWS has yet to be implemented for all hazards such as floods, storms, extreme heat and severe weather, so why has the government not implemented this for all conditions?

Mr Gentleman: We have certainly implemented an all hazards approach to ESA and I mentioned earlier our work both across the RFS and SES in storm season and of course, training our staff and volunteers for an all hazards approach has occurred as well. We have also moved our bushfire council to now an all hazards council so that they are able to give us detailed advice on all hazards that we will see across the territory that emergency services would be involved or ESA would be involved in. So we have moved that way. In regard to the reporting on floods, the floods and other incidences, we are doing that through our broadcast system, so through our social pages and through our media responses as well.

MR MILLIGAN: And is this in line with the AWS and the suggestions on handling and broadcasting events?

Mr Gentleman: I might ask Mr Phillips.

Mr Phillips: Thanks, minister. In regards to the actual AWS implementation of the ESA, I will take that on notice and get you some more details.

MR MILLIGAN: Excellent, thank you. Thank you, chair.

Mick Gentleman MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS)

The AFRDS describes the potential level of danger a community could face should a fire start. Fire danger ratings are used before a fire starts. The ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) has been part of a national project to update the AFDRS, including developing the public facing signage and the science behind the ratings. The new AFDRS has fewer levels and uses logical colours and terms to improve people's comprehension of both the system and their personal risk. A nationally consistent system is expected to improve cross-border operations and interstate sharing of firefighting resources. Additionally, consistency will reduce confusion for international and interstate travellers, and for those living in border regions.

Australian Warning System (AWS)

The AWS provides information about what to do during a hazard. AWS is used to understand what danger the community are in and what they need to do to stay safe once a hazard has occurred. The new AWS aims to provide nationally consistent warnings, information, and calls-to-action to the community in the event of any hazard. This is separate to the work undertaken on the AFDRS, however, some of the wording within the standardised AWS messaging for bushfire has been updated to reflect the changes to the AFDRS. While the bushfire AWS messaging has been implemented, work is currently ongoing between emergency services agencies across Australia on the implementation of a new AWS for all other hazards, including storm, flood, and hazmat. The bushfire AWS messaging will be used as a guide to inform the AWS messaging for all other hazards in future. Nationally, AWS messaging for all hazards other than bushfire will be rolled out in a staged approach across each jurisdiction.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature:



Date: 15/11/2022

By the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Mick Gentleman MLA