

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009 – 2010**

NSW FIRE BRIGADES ADVICE

QUESTION:

Emergency Services – ceiling insulation fires

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Of the 26 fires that occurred as at September 2009 as a result of problems with ceiling insulation and down lights, how many more have occurred since then, and has anyone being injured or lost their house to the fire?

ANSWER:

As at 4 December 2009, there have been 33 additional ceiling fires.

There have been a number of people treated for smoke inhalation. No injuries have been recorded.

While a range of damage to houses has resulted from fires that have originated in ceiling insulation, no houses have been destroyed.

Steve Whan MP
Minister for Emergency Services

**BUDGET ESTIMATES – SUPPLEMENTARY HEARING
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

EMERGENCY NSW ADVICE

QUESTION:

Emergency Services – Expenditure on Floodplain Management in NSW

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Could you give me an understanding of how much the whole of government in New South Wales is spending on floodplain management in NSW this financial year?

ANSWER:

While I am not in a position to provide advice in relation to whole of government spending on floodplain management, I can advise that grants are available under the new Disaster Resilience Australia Package (formerly the Natural Disaster Mitigation Program). This is funded by the Commonwealth, State and local governments, generally on a dollar-for-dollar-for-dollar basis.

While 2009/10 funding committed for floodplain management measures through this new scheme will not be known until applications are called and assessed, the State Government contributed \$13.39 million for floodplain risk management over the six funding years of the NDMP.

Steve Whan MP
Minister for Emergency Services

**BUDGET ESTIMATES – SUPPLEMENTARY HEARING
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE ADVICE

QUESTION:

Emergency Services – Floodplain Management plans

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Can the SES provide me with information in relation to reports that the SES did on the ground after the floods in New South Wales, say, over the past year since January, and recommendations to government for floodplain management and flood mitigation works? Have there been any internal reports or recommendations for particular communities from divisional controllers in relation to better floodplain management into the future?

Mr TANNOS: This is post flood reports?

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Maybe not post flood reports; maybe things were done during or before the flood report from Ken Moroney that may have been sent to the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water or other agencies, or may even have been sent to local councils, such as Coffs Harbour, for example, given that they have just had two major storm events and there has been some recommendations in the community there for a number of years for better flood mitigations projects. Can you provide any reports to do with floodplain management in the region following the severe storm events that the North Coast has faced?

Mr TANNOS: I am happy to take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised that the State Emergency Service has not undertaken any investigation of or compiled any reports on floodplain management or flood mitigation issues in the areas affected by flooding in 2009. The SES has made no recommendations about these issues, which are outside the Service's jurisdiction.

Steve Whan MP
Minister for Emergency Services

**BUDGET ESTIMATES – SUPPLEMENTARY HEARING
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE ADVICE

QUESTION:

Emergency Services – Manly Hydraulics Laboratory

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: When I was at Port Macquarie last Friday during the last big event where Coffs Harbour got another half a metre of rain, I was in the SES control room and one of the volunteers pointed out to me that one of the gauges was not working and they had got a false reading in one of the rivers nearer Port Macquarie. So it is an ongoing problem.

What part will Manly laboratory—where a lot of the gauge work is done—play in that process?

Mr TANNOS: The hydrology?

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Yes, the hydraulics, which is through the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water?

Mr TANNOS: The simple answer is that I do not know. I would need to take that on notice.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Because their funding has remained pretty static too for the past 10 years.

Mr TANNOS: Again, that is through the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water.

ANSWER:

I am advised that the Manly Hydraulics Laboratory (MHL) is represented on the Water Level Gauge Working Group established by the State Emergency Service Commissioner.

Steve Whan MP
Minister for Emergency Services

BUDGET ESTIMATES – SUPPLEMENTARY HEARING

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE ADVICE

QUESTION:

Emergency Services – RFS attendance at Brooms Head public meeting

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: I have some questions for the RFS but I do not think there is any point in me going through them now. I will submit them in writing after the Committee hearing. One concern was that there was a meeting at Brooms Head last night, following the fire that nearly took out that town about six weeks ago. There was a public meeting called by the RFS fire captain to talk about that. I understand that no RFS paid staff attended that meeting and there were still genuine concerns raised about the fire trails and the lack of maintenance of the fire trails. I suppose you are not in a position to be able to comment about that, but if there has been a fire and the community is concerned about it should it not be government policy that representatives of respective organisations attend to hear what the community might have to say.

I will rephrase the question. What would be the normal practice if there is a community meeting after such an emergency event? Normally would salaried officers attend, particularly if it is a large meeting like that?

ANSWER:

No public meeting has been convened at Brooms Head by any RFS Officer. It is understood that a local community member organised a community meeting during the week of 16 November 2009. RFS officers from the District Office were not notified or invited to attend the meeting.

I understand the organiser of the public meeting was granted permission by the Clarence Valley Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC) to attend a Section 44 Debrief and general BFMC Meeting on November 19, 2009, as an Observer.

Steve Whan MP

Minister for Emergency Services