

**Hansard**  
**Legislative Assembly Budget Estimates Committee B**  
**1 June 2010**

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I refer to "Major Spending Changes" on page 493 of the *Budget Statements* in reference to employment of additional firefighters. Can the minister explain how many additional firefighters FESA will recruit and where will they be located?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** There are various aspects here. Obviously our government recognises how vital it is for FESA to be well resourced and how the roles and the delivery of emergency services in both metropolitan and regional areas have expanded significantly. These increased demands have occurred due to a number of factors and have not been accompanied by an appropriate increase in career firefighter numbers.

The government has approved a \$128 million package over the next four years. As part of this package we are investing nearly \$27 million to increase the number of career firefighters by an additional 102 personnel. We are looking at 102 extra personnel in that area. FESA will recruit an additional 22 in year one; 26 in year two; 25 in year three; and 29 in year four. The staff will be allocated to operations, specialist and technical areas in regional WA, and training. We are covering the whole spectrum of WA, including training.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** What is the attrition rate? The minister said he expects 25 additional firefighters—what has the attrition rate been like in recent times? I know we suffered substantially during the boom. During the global financial crisis people have probably been trying to get back into the service; or are there any trends that might be significant?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I am advised that we are very much below the average attrition. It seems that most people who want to become firefighters stay firefighters. The attrition rate is less than three per cent, which is commendable.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** It used to be zero once.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Just to clarify: if there is any attrition, then we hold additional scores, additional training and take on a few more recruits.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** The figures the minister is stating are actually 25 "additional"?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The minister answered a question in relation to career firefighters. With respect to community fire managers and community emergency service officers; could the minister also give the number of additional officers who will be employed in each year?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I anticipated this question. The answer is 20 over three years.