



Speech by

**Hon. Kate Jones**

**MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE**

Hansard Tuesday, 27 October 2009

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Queensland Bushfires**

**Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (10.23 am): Our Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers have worked extremely hard during the past month fighting fires in and around our parks and forests, particularly in Central Queensland. This fire season has been the most severe that the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has experienced in five years.

In preparing for this year's fire season, since March this year we have carried out over 500 controlled burns covering an area of 780,000 hectares. A high level of cooperation exists between the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, rural fire brigade volunteers, other state agencies and local governments to ensure adequate responses are mounted to fire threats. This level of cooperation is a credit to all involved.

Our rangers alone have responded to more than 270 wildfires on or adjacent to national parks and state forests. Of these, more than 240 have occurred since 1 August, with the Mount Archer fire at Rockhampton being the most significant due to its proximity to town and surrounding rural residences. Forty staff worked a total of 2,300 hours on the Mount Archer fire this month. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for the hard work that they have been doing fighting this fire alongside the other agencies involved.

Leading up to the fire this season, staff carried out two significant planned burns in the Mount Archer National Park and State Forest covering over 700 hectares. Ten kilometres of fire controls were also maintained in August and September this year as part of our annual fire management regime. This is on top of a previous nine planned burns in the Mount Archer National Park and State Forest in recent years.

Contingency planning is in place to maintain our high levels of response as the fire season progresses. This involves coordinating the deployment of rangers as necessary to assist in areas with the greatest need or to manage fatigue during fires of extended duration.

Fire bans are currently in place for large parts of the state, and people planning to visit our parks and forests between now and Christmas should be very aware of any fire restrictions or park closures that may apply. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is maintaining a level of high alert to respond to fires as they occur across the remainder of this extremely difficult and challenging fire season.