



Speech By  
**Hon. Leanne Linard**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGEES**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2023

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Bushfire Preparedness**

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (11.02 am): As many are aware and have seen in recent weeks, the 2023-24 bushfire season has commenced. Since the start of the season on 1 August, 128 bushfires have occurred on national parks and state forests. Current calculations indicate that more than 218,000 hectares of parks and forests have been burned in bushfires. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers have responded, in partnership with their colleagues from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and other partners. There are currently 18 active bushfires in our national parks and forests, all of which are within containment lines and are not considered to be immediate threats. One park, Carnarvon National Park, is currently partially closed because of bushfire activity.

The Department of Environment and Science is one of the largest land managers in Queensland, responsible for managing just over 13 million hectares of public parks and forests, or approximately 7½ per cent of Queensland. It has primary responsibility for managing fire on Queensland's parks and forests, as detailed in the Queensland Bushfire Plan. Fire management activities undertaken by the department are focused first and foremost on the protection of human life, as they are for all departments involved in bushfires and other emergency management. Fire management activities are also focused on reducing the risk of negative bushfire impacts on critical infrastructure, communities and park and forest values. This important mitigation work continues to increase in importance as a result of our changing climate.

It was pleasing to see the department's expertise in fire management recognised recently with five rangers deployed to assist with the Canadian wildfire emergency. The bushfires in Canada this year have been unprecedented in scale and impact, and we thank these Queensland rangers for their willingness to assist and their courage in doing so. Rangers work year-round to undertake prescribed burns and other hazard mitigation activities. For the majority of 2022-23 the La Nina weather pattern dominated, meaning conditions for burn operations were often unsuitable or resulted in less area burned. However, with effective planning and a change in weather patterns late in the season, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service continued to prioritise prescribed burning and other bushfire risk mitigation works in preparation for this bushfire period. I am pleased to advise that the QPWS not only met the planned burn target but exceeded it by 29,000 hectares. Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023 the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service completed 535 planned burns, totalling over 666,000 hectares. It also undertook bushfire reduction treatments totalling 960 hectares in protection zones where parks with highly flammable vegetation border urban communities.

In addition to direct hazard mitigation works, the department's broader fire management program includes: management and maintenance of an extensive road and fire line network; surveillance activities, including a fire camera network, satellite hotspot monitoring, and dedicated ground patrols during elevated risk periods; communication and education with visitors and occupiers of parks and

forests to ensure they are informed and safe from fire risks; maintaining a fleet of light and medium attack fire appliances; partnerships within Queensland's bushfire management groups, First Nations peoples, neighbours, stakeholders and adjacent communities; and, finally, maintaining training and experience for a workforce ready to fulfil the spectrum of roles from fire crew to incident leadership. This important work undertaken by the department in mitigating bushfire risk and responding to bushfires will be done in partnership with First Nations peoples consistent with all management activities on parks and forests in important recognition of their deep and enduring knowledge in managing country across Queensland.

Throughout the 2023 bushfire season the department will continue to work closely with, and support, our colleagues in the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Rural Fire Service to keep Queensland communities safe.