

Question on Notice
No. 474
Asked on 20 May 2020

MR L MILLAR ASKED MINISTER FOR FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARTNERSHIPS (HON C CRAWFORD) —

QUESTION:

With reference to Queensland's rural fire brigade volunteers and blue card requirements—

Will the Minister advise the number of (a) letters sent by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services in April to individual brigade members notifying them of their potential termination in relation to blue card requirements, (b) rural fire volunteers that successfully responded and acted within the stated 30 days, (c) rural fire volunteers that have been terminated as a result of this blue card requirement letter and (d) a breakdown into regional areas of those rural fire volunteers terminated as a result of blue card violations?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

Each Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) volunteer is valued. COVID-19 restrictions prevented QFES from having the opportunity to reach out to personnel for one-on-one conversations and guide them through the blue card application process. It is for these reasons that I announced an extension of the blue card application deadline for QFES staff and volunteers until after the 2020 bushfire season.

I am advised by QFES

- (a) At the end of April 2020, 4,721 letters were sent by QFES to individual Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers who were identified as having not yet applied for a blue card with QFES.
- (b) Individuals were provided with 30 days from the date of receipt of the letter to respond. Due to the impact of COVID-19 on the Australia Post network, the receipt of this letter was delayed and as at 20 May 2020 the 30-day period has not yet elapsed for any recipient of the letter.

However, so far, the response from those who have received the letter has been positive. 209 RFS volunteers have since applied for their blue card, and a further 82 have advised QFES they will apply.

- (c) & (d) No RFS volunteers, or any QFES staff or volunteers, have been terminated as a result of this letter.