

**Question on Notice  
No. 1010  
Asked on 7 August 2007**

MS DARLING asked the Minister for Emergency Services (MR ROBERTS) -

QUESTION:

Will he explain the benefits of the Prepare, Stay and Defend or Go Early program?

ANSWER:

The Prepare, Stay and Defend or Go Early program has been introduced into Queensland with the co-operation of the Queensland Police Service and is based on research by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and other fire authorities.

The Program is similar to that adopted successfully in other states and territories around Australia and is designed to enhance community safety throughout Queensland by assisting householders in making a decision about staying and defending their property or going early when there is a fire in the area.

Bushfire is a natural occurrence and one of nature's most devastating forces. Within Queensland, more and more people are making a lifestyle choice to live in and near bushland, in semi-rural and urban residential estates on the outskirts of cities and towns. It is these areas that are the most prone to bushfire.

Therefore, people living in these areas need to decide to either plan to stay and defend their properties, or go early.

Research has shown that with proper preparation, many buildings can be successfully defended from bushfire. If people decide to remain and defend adequately prepared homes, losses and community disruption can be reduced. If planning to go early, people must decide where they will go, how they will get there, and what trigger they will use to initiate their plan.

People who plan to go early must recognise that on days of very high or extreme fire danger, bushfires may break out nearby and spread at an alarming rate. Evacuation at the last minute ahead of a bushfire is dangerous. Smoke, noise, heat, flames, fire-fighting vehicles and panic all make fleeing in a vehicle or on foot dangerous. The risk of being overrun by fire is very real and has resulted in numerous fatalities. People caught in the open are likely to face severe and often fatal levels of radiant heat. In a bushfire, people are safer in houses than in cars, and safer in cars than in the open.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Bushfire Prepared Communities Program and website provides information to enable householders to competently make the decision to prepare, stay and defend or go early.

Although ideally people should make this decision themselves, there will be cases where ordered evacuation will be considered necessary. In these cases, the decision will be made by the Queensland Police Service in consultation with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, overriding individual choice in the interest of public safety.

Queenslanders can access further information on the Prepare, Stay and Defend or Go Early Program via the Fire Service's websites ([www.fire.qld.gov.au](http://www.fire.qld.gov.au) or [www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au](http://www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au)), which have detailed information and downloadable checklists. People can also obtain information by phoning the Department of Emergency Services on 1300 369 003 or by contacting their local urban or rural fire station.