

**Question on Notice
No. 1724
Asked on 12 November 2008**

MR MALONE asked the Minister for Emergency Services (MR ROBERTS)—

QUESTION:

Will he detail the number of permits and the individual and total areas included in pre and seasonal back-burning approved by the government for the coming 2008-09 fire season and for 2007-08 and 2006-07?

ANSWER:

With regard to individual landholders conducting burns, the Commissioner, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) has advised that the permit to light fire system is legislated under the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990. The decision to initiate hazard reduction through use of fire is ultimately a decision for landowners. There is a requirement for all landowners wanting to burn an area greater than two metres in any direction to obtain a permit to light fire.

The number of permits to light fire issued by Rural Operations in the 2006-2007, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 financial years to date (as at 14 November 2008), are as follows:

Region	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009 year to date
Central	1956	1600	600
North Coast	3020	2297	893
Brisbane	422	308	148
Far Northern	1175	1010	201
Northern	642	594	128
South East	1654	1439	349
South West	3849	1679	603

It is important for the Member for Mirani to be aware that during 2006-2007 much of the State was in drought, and in areas where there was more grass, the conditions were very dry and conducive to burns. Therefore, the number of permits was high.

The fire season in Queensland is normally from late winter to early summer however in 2007-2008, the fire season was effectively cut short due to rain and associated flooding in many areas of the State. Therefore, conditions were not conducive to fires and resulted in less number of permits.

Due to the early onset of the storm season in 2008-09 with significant rain periods, conditions have again not been conducive to fires and landholders have been reluctant to conduct burns, many of whom have opted instead to preserve and protect their land.

Further to this, it is worth noting that the figures above do not reflect the significant hazard reduction work undertaken by QFRS and Rural Operations staff and volunteers when assisting at hazard reduction burns as some can involve fuel reduction across many hundreds of hectares and burn for several days. In accordance with Section 66 of the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990*, agencies such as the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service do not require a permit to light fire which would not be captured in the data above.