

Question on Notice
No. 448
Asked on 15 April 2008

MR WENDT asked the Minister for Emergency Services (MR ROBERTS) -

QUESTION:

With reference to his recent media announcement that 96.2 per cent of Queensland households now had at least one smoke alarm fitted, which I understand is an increase of almost 10 per cent from November 2006—

Would he advise what other measures the Government is taking to help keep Queenslanders safe from the threat of fire in their homes?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government provides a number of fire safety initiatives aimed at protecting Queenslanders and their homes from the threat of fire.

As part of the updated smoke alarms laws, a financial assistance scheme is now available to eligible deaf and hearing impaired people whose level of hearing loss may prevent them from hearing a standard smoke alarm.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has a partnership with Duracell Batteries for the 'Don't Be a Fool' campaign which encourages Queenslanders to change their smoke alarm battery on April 1 each year. This annual campaign includes media advertising, statewide media editorial, competitions and visits by firefighters to local Bunnings Hardware outlets to provide fire safety advice to the public.

Fire safety advice is also available 365 days a year through Queensland Fire and Rescue's flagship Safeshome program. Safeshome offers all Queensland householders the opportunity to have a free home visit from their local fire crew, who will advise them on fire safety issues such as placement of smoke alarms, fire safety hazards and developing a fire evacuation plan. Anyone wanting to arrange a free visit should call Smart Services Queensland on 1300 369 003.

There is also a Safeshome Fire Education Centre, at Petrie on Brisbane's north side, which is a fully interactive fire safety demonstration house that uses practical demonstrations to show what happens during a fire, the common causes of fire, and what people can do to better protect themselves and their homes. This program is further backed by mobile Kitchen Fire Simulators which show how to manage kitchen fires and prevent common mistakes such as pouring water on fires caused by cooking oil.

Another community program is Bushfire Prepared Communities which provides advice and assistance to enable householders to better protect themselves and their properties against the threat of bushfire and is accessible via Smart Services Queensland on 1300 369 003.

The Queensland Government also recognises that fire safety starts early and has recently revamped its popular Fire Education program for Year One children by creating a new Big Book, a Teacher's Resource Manual and DVD package. The program continues to include the popular fire fighter and fire truck visits and Blazer mascot.

Another successful school initiative is the Fight Fire Fascination Program, which aims to stop children setting fire to property. This program sees trained firefighters visiting children and their families in their homes to promote an awareness of fire safety.

Queensland Fire and Rescue Service also supports other programs aimed at trying to intervene in situations where children are at risk of starting fires, such as the Juvenile Arson Offenders Program and Youth Justice Conferencing. These are delivered in conjunction with the Department of Communities and the Queensland Police Service.

It is not just young people who are targeted by community safety activities. Seniors' Fire Ed is delivered by volunteer, retired firefighters to people of their own age, and provides information about smoke alarms, home evacuation plans, home security devices, and fire hazards around the home.

Indigenous and multicultural members of the community receive specialised support and advice through several educational initiatives aimed at reaching those at risk and priority groups. These focus on fire safety issues of particular relevance to people from Indigenous and migrant backgrounds.

Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has a serious and ongoing commitment to make sure that people in Queensland have access to the best possible fire safety information and prevention methods.