

Question on Notice
No. 892
Asked on Thursday 26 May 2011

MS STONE asked the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (MR ROBERTS) -

QUESTION:

How is the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service assisting primary school children to be aware of the role they can play in community safety?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question and commend her interest in promoting community safety to young people. I am pleased to advise the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) has a strong focus on promoting fire safety to children and young people, with a suite of community education programs accessible through Queensland schools.

The well-known Fire Ed program was developed for children in prep to Year 3. Using the latest techniques of investigation, communication, participation and reflection, students are encouraged to develop an understanding of the key concepts of community, safety and responsibility. Teachers and local firefighters take children through two sessions which finishes with an inspection of an operational fire truck. Each year, more than 50,000 children participate in the program.

The new QFRS Safespace program is an integrated community safety education program, for children in Years 6 and 7. The program is based on four major concepts: characteristics of a community, hazards and safety issues in a community, services and infrastructure that support communities, and what it means to be a responsible citizen.

Students learn to support their community, think about situations and their responsibilities, and how to be part of the solution rather than the problem. While there is a strong QFRS focus, the program also contains references to the work of the Queensland Ambulance Service, the State Emergency Service and the Queensland Police Service. It is specifically designed for delivery by teachers.

Another recently introduced program is Bushfire Ed, which aims to promote a better understanding of bushfire to children in Years 6 and 7. This program has particular relevance to children who live in bushfire prone areas; whether they are in rural districts or in places where urban growth is pushing into bushland.

The program consists of a PowerPoint presentation that takes students through how a bushfire can start, how it spreads, and the specific dangers that make bushfire a major threat to property and life. It is delivered by local firefighters and students are encouraged to question and discuss all aspects of bushfire. Importantly, it shows how bushfire can affect a community, and the steps that can be taken to reduce the risk.

There is also an associated program, focusing on risk intervention, available outside Queensland schools. The Fight Fire Fascination program targets children and young people who have developed an unhealthy interest in fire. Sometimes, this can simply be playing and experimenting with fire, but can also include the more malicious activity of deliberately setting out to destroy property and threaten life. This education based program is designed to teach fire safety skills to children and young people in the three to 17 year age bracket.

Fight Fire Fascination, is based on the belief that children and young people can learn skills to remain safe from fire. This is achieved through a series of visits to the home by specially trained firefighters. The program has a high success rate with parents and carers reporting that nine out of 10 children who complete the program stop lighting fires. Each year, about 200 children and young people participate in the program.

These QFRS programs are part of an overall safety and awareness campaign to promote fire safety to the whole community and make Queensland a safer place.