

**Question on Notice
No. 707
Asked on 16 October 2013**

MR CHOAT asked the Minister for Police and Community Safety (MR DEMPSEY) -

QUESTION:

What is the Government doing to ensure Queensland communities, such as those in the electorate of Ipswich West, are prepared for disasters like bushfires and flooding?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) launched 'Operation Cool Burn' in May 2013, placing an emphasis on community education for bushfire preparation. QFRS has also proactively assisted land owners and occupiers to plan and implement hazard mitigation for the 2013 bushfire season.

An Emergency Services Day was held at Limestone Park in Ipswich on 19 October 2013 and representatives from the emergency services participated with displays of the latest equipment and used the community engagement opportunity to reinforce the importance of preparation and planning.

Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) staff and volunteers across the Ipswich Area have undertaken community education activities. The Volunteer Community Educators have been actively promoting the "Prepare. Act. Survive" message throughout the Ipswich Area.

RFSQ staff and volunteers have also been assisting private land owners and occupiers carry out hazard mitigation on their properties as every landholder, whether they are private, commercial or a government agency, is responsible for managing the risk of fire on their own land. Local Fire Wardens provide ongoing advice to landowners regarding mitigation strategies, burn plans and the safe use of fire through the Permit to Light Fire System.

I encourage all land owners and occupiers to contact their local QFRS station, Rural Fire Brigade or Firewarden for information on bushfire preparedness, hazard mitigation, or to apply for a permit to light fire.

The Ipswich District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) and Ipswich Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) are prepared for bushfire and flooding events in Ipswich and surrounding areas. In cooperation with the Queensland Police Service (QPS), EMQ and local government, the annual review of the Ipswich DDMG and Ipswich LDMG has been completed. The reviews are used to determine the preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery levels for Ipswich and surrounding district. Components of the plans have been tested through exercises over the past year.

The Ipswich State Emergency Service (SES) Unit is also prepared for disaster and flooding events within the West Ipswich electorate. The Ipswich SES Unit consists of four groups: Marburg, Rosewood, Goonda and Ipswich, totalling over 150 trained SES members. The Ipswich SES Unit has numerous trained flood boat operators and five operational flood boats. The Unit provides valuable assistance to QFRS, QPS and the Queensland Ambulance Service during any disasters and EMQ can activate SES Units from Gold Coast, Logan, Scenic Rim and Somerset to assist as required.

The Get Ready Queensland Campaign, launched by the Premier on 11 September 2013, will see Queensland become Australia's most resilient state. The Get Ready Queensland initiative will harness the skills, knowledge and tenacity of individuals, businesses, councils, not-for-profit organisations and community groups, to ensure the whole community plays its part in preparing for disasters.

The Ipswich City Council recently used a \$14,000 grant from the Queensland Government on a specially designed campaign to promote the Get Ready preparedness and resilience message.