

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 2218

asked on Tuesday, 29 November 2016

DR ROWAN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise the hours of use in 2014-15 and 2015-16 of the Crocodile Management Vessels based in the Cairns region?

ANSWER:

I am advised that the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) used six Crocodile Management Vessels (CMVs) in North Queensland during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 financial years. CMVs are normally based at the EHP facilities in each of Townsville, Innisfail or Cairns.

I'm advised that the Crocodile Management Program maintains a 24/7 response capability in its areas of operation and that, from each of these bases, at least one CMV will ordinarily be available for deployment at all times.

Given the Member's interest in the Crocodile Management Program, he may wish to note that the principal role of the CMV assets is to enable targeted operations to locate reported crocodiles, to capture crocodiles, and to set and check crocodile traps.

The goal of these targeted operations is to confirm, locate and remove any suspected 'crocodile of concern', or any crocodile that triggers the automatic removal required under the applicable local Crocodile Management Plan.

There have been more crocodiles removed from North Queensland waters in 2016 than in the last five years and, as at 19 December 2016, this includes 53 crocodiles which have been removed from the Cairns area during 2016.

Better funding, targeting and management of the Crocodile Management Program and its CMV assets has seen the responsiveness of the Program increase sharply across the North Queensland.

In 2014, EHP delivered only 151 of these targeted operations in response to reported crocodile sightings. As at 19 December 2016, EHP has delivered 373 of these operations during 2016.

EHP is able to properly plan and deliver a robust Crocodile Management Program because the Palaszczuk Government committed extra funding of \$5.8 million over three years for enhanced crocodile management.

This investment in the crocodile management program includes permanent ongoing funding for 10 wildlife officer positions within EHP - and these positions are specifically for crocodile management.

Funding for these wildlife officers had been due to end on 30 June 2016, because the former LNP Government had not made a commitment to permanently fund these critical frontline service roles.

The Palaszczuk Government's investment is delivering stronger protection for the local community after the neglect and indifference of the LNP.