

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1467

asked on Thursday, 18 October 2018

MR N DAMETTO ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, MINES AND ENERGY (HON DR A LYNHAM)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the new vegetation management laws which Queenslanders have found to be difficult to decipher—

Will the Minister organise and fund information, question and answer events in rural Queensland through the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy to help landholders understand their obligations and responsibilities so they can better manage their land?

ANSWER:

Since the introduction of the vegetation management reforms in March 2018, the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy has monitored and managed its staffing to focus on delivering a comprehensive education campaign of stakeholder engagement and high-quality customer services.

Departmental staff members have met all requests and invitations to attend landholder field days and information sessions to explain how the vegetation management laws apply. Since March 2018, departmental staff members have attended more than 35 field days and information sessions around the state addressing the vegetation reforms..

Many of these face-to-face extension events have been field days and landholder workshops organised by non-government entities, such as Agforce and natural resource management groups. Landholder feedback in relation to extension activities, such as workshops and field days is that landholders prefer events where their peer networks are involved. Therefore, the preferred model for such events is to support activities by stakeholders and industry groups.

The 'Veg Hub' call centre, which has been physically located in Charleville since December 2017, is also providing expert, professional and timely advice to up to 180 landholders each week with 4300 calls received since March 2018.

The five highly trained Veg Hub staff are supported by officers around the state who are able to be called upon to deal with landholder telephone and email queries if required.

Of course, some landholders prefer to be able to go into their regional office and talk face-to-face, look over a map or get an explanation of a code or guideline with a vegetation management officer. The efficiencies delivered by the Veg Hub have freed up regional staff to spend more time in face-to-face discussions and appointments.

The department has also run a 'mythbuster' series of social media posts and advertisements in rural newspapers to ensure the facts are clear, and has also published guides to the accepted development vegetation clearing codes.

The department will continue to monitor how the current arrangements are working to ensure they are meeting the needs of landholders across the state.

I would encourage any landholder concerned about vegetation management on their property to contact the Veg Hub on 135 834.