

Question on Notice
No. 1551
Asked on 31 October 2018

MR L MILLAR ASKED THE MINISTER FOR FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (HON C CRAWFORD)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister outline, in relation to plans to legally recognise the status of Queensland's rural fire brigades, (a) the date this process has/or is to formally commence, (b) the final date by which this will be delivered and (c) any barriers that may impede the State Government in delivering Queensland's rural fire brigades the legal status they deserve?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

- (a) Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and Queensland's Rural Fire Brigades (RFBs) are governed by and legally recognised by several pieces of legislation. The *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* clearly outlines the establishment, rules, functions, powers, and property of an RFB.

For financial purposes, RFBs are considered an unincorporated association under the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, unless it is or becomes incorporated under the *Associations Incorporations Act 1981*.

To gain a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of this legal status, the Rural Fire Service (RFS) in conjunction with the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ) established a RFB Legal Status Review Project working group in October 2017. Between December 2017 and March 2018, the RFS and RFBAQ undertook consultation with brigades across the state, generating conversation and gathering feedback on this issue.

- (b) The Project Report was finalised and approved on 15 August 2018. A project summary was released to RFS staff, volunteers, and the RFBAQ in October 2018. The general outcome from consultation with brigades was that they are comfortable working within the existing legal framework, however modifications to some QFES policies and procedures may provide additional support and clarity regarding the brigade legal status.
- (c) The Legal Status Project Report findings have been provided to a recently established legislation review team within QFES.

The purpose of the legislative review is to identify opportunities for amendment to portfolio legislation to support QFES in building a modern and sustainable service, equipped to meet current and emerging needs. The review will be conducted over a 12 month period. The Project Report findings will form an important part of the work considered as part of the legislative review. The review will include opportunities for stakeholder consultation.