

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 897

asked on Tuesday, 21 August 2018

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**MR E SORENSEN** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, MINES AND ENERGY (HON DR A LYNHAM)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise how many new extension officer FTE positions have been directly created as a result of the vegetation management laws to work with farmers as they continue to implement the new vegetation management laws passed earlier this year?

ANSWER:

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

Every region of Queensland has local vegetation management staff (a total of 63 across the state) who talk to landholders every day about how the laws relate to their specific situation.

The department's 'Veg Hub' call centre has been physically located in Charleville since December 2017, providing telephone advice to up to 180 landholders each week.

The five highly trained Veg Hub staff are supported by up to 23 officers around the state who are able to be called upon to deal with landholder telephone and email queries if required.

Between March and the end of July 2018, the Veg Hub took over 2600 calls about vegetation management.

In the period from March until the end of July, departmental officers attended over 30 field days and information sessions around the state addressing the vegetation reforms. Rural media have highlighted that landholders are appreciative of the opportunity to listen to and discuss the explanation behind the changes first hand.

Many of these face-to-face extension events have been field days and landholder workshops organised by external entities, such as Agforce and Regional Natural Resource Management Groups. This is a collaborative model which the department actively promotes and supports.

The department has 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 has delivered these services by prioritising existing departmental resources.

I would encourage any landholder concerned about vegetation management on their property to make contact with departmental officers to understand how the new laws support sustainable farming practices.

We continue to monitor departmental workloads to ensure adequate resourcing has been provided to do this important work.