

Question on Notice

No. 134

Asked on Thursday, 6 February 2020

MR S KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND MINISTER FOR THE ARTS (HON L ENOCH)—

QUESTION:

With reference to community complaints about poor management of state parks in the Far North Queensland region and feral pests and ongoing bushfires—

Will the Minister commit to a complete review of control burning practices in consultation with farmers and indigenous leaders, plus an easing of vegetation management laws, which are making recognised fire management practices impossible for local land-owners?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for the question.

For many years, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) has been planning and managing fire and pests in partnership with First Nations peoples across Queensland's diverse protected areas and forest estate. The Department of Environment and Science (the department) takes its obligations in this regard very seriously. Fire and pest management will continue to be a high priority for QPWS and our First Nations partners.

In preparation for the 2019 fire season, QPWS treated more than 1 million hectares of estate through planned burns - the largest area covered for the last six years.

Between 1 September 2019 and 31 January 2020, more than 8,000 bushfires were reported across Queensland. Less than two per cent of these bushfires (approximately 133) originated in National Parks and State Forests.

As part of Operation Cool Burn, QPWS has already commenced prescribed burning activities in certain parts of the State in preparation for this year's fire season.

A systematic review is undertaken annually across all aspects of the department's fire management functional areas, in order to ensure the continuous improvement of strategic operational and safety aspects of the QPWS fire management program. In addition, QPWS is involved in the 2019 Bushfire Review, undertaken by the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management. This review aims to consolidate recommendations from the *2018 Queensland Bushfires Review* and to identify best practice and opportunities for improvement.

Administration of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy.