

Question on Notice

No. 729

Asked on Thursday, 27 May 2021

MS S BOLTON ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND YOUTH AFFAIRS (HON M SCANLON)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the Cooloolo Recreation Area which is currently under an indefinite campfire ban which includes fires in drums, open containers and campfires in all areas except at Inskip Point—

Will the Minister provide a copy of the report on the 2019-20 K'gari (Fraser Island) bushfires and advise when this ban will be brought for consultation to local stakeholder groups?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Inspector-General Emergency Management's K'gari (Fraser Island) Bushfire Review Report 1: 2020-21 was released publicly on 27 May 2021 and is available online at <https://www.igem.qld.gov.au/kgari-bushfire-review>.

The Department of Environment and Science implements a number of measures to enhance visitor safety and protect and maintain the Cooloolo Recreation Area's significant natural and cultural values. This includes the recent introduction of zoning of the Teewah Beach campground; the introduction of automatic license plate technology; and the prohibition of open campfires. Only cooking and heating appliances that meet the specified requirements are still permitted while camping, unless a Queensland Fire and Emergency Services total fire ban is in place.

An indefinite prohibition on open campfires was implemented in the Cooloolo Recreation Area to reduce the risk of bushfires; protect critical habitat of native wildlife; enhance visitor safety from campfire related injuries, particularly small children; and reduce rubbish from non-combustible materials being burnt.

Fully enclosed cooking and heating appliances can still be used in camping areas that meet the following requirements:

- the appliance must use gas or manufactured fuel (heat beads, briquettes), manufactured fuel does not include timber or wood;
- it must be used only for cooking and/or heating;
- it must be a minimum of 20 centimetres off the ground and more than two metres from flammable materials, which includes vegetation;
- it must not have the potential to generate airborne embers, or possibly ignite nearby ground fuels;
- it must be fully self-contained (heat source enclosed and no exposed flame) and never left unattended when in use; and
- appliances that are not fully self-contained, such as braziers, are not permitted.

The department is currently undertaking a management planning process for the Cooloola Recreation Area. It is anticipated that a draft management plan will be released for public comment later in 2021 where stakeholder groups will be able to have their say on the management of the area.