

Question on Notice

No. 221

Asked on Thursday, 17 March 2022

MR A PERRETT 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 Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) staff who have been laid off, redirected to other tasks, resigned, on forced leave, suspended, or at risk of suspension because they have not met the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination deadlines—

Will the Minister advise (a) the number of QPWS staff and frontline rangers (reported separately by State and the Gympie region), (b) the percentage of total frontline rangers this represents and (c) how this shortfall is being replaced?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

I am advised by the Department of Environment and Science that the COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements – Policy and Procedure (the Policy) was issued on 27 January 2022. I am further advised that the Policy requires all in-scope employees to have provided evidence of at least a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 8 February 2022 and evidence of a second dose by 8 March 2022 (unless a delay or exemption applies).

I am advised that the overwhelming majority of departmental employees (2624.53 full-time equivalents (FTE)) have provided evidence of vaccination as required by the Policy.

I am advised that, as at 4:00pm, Thursday 14 April 2022, there were:

- 10 Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P) employees (including eight rangers) currently suspended on vaccine-related matters
- nine QPWS&P employees (including eight rangers) that have been dismissed following a process on vaccine-related matters
- no employees that have been forced to take leave.

None of these employees are or were based in the Gympie region.

I am further advised that employees are not required to advise of reasons for resignation.

The total number of rangers suspended or dismissed on vaccine-related matters represented 1.83 per cent of the total ranger FTEs.

The department works to fill any vacancy, through a merit-based recruitment process, as soon as practicable.