

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 1105**  
**Asked on 13 September 2023**

**MR M BOOTHMAN** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR POLICE AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (HON M RYAN)—

**QUESTION:**

With reference to locals having vivid memories of the 2019 bushfire season and the enormous impact this had in the Gold Coast Hinterland—

Will the Minister inform residents (a) why Bush Fire Condition Warning Signage was removed without community consultation and (b) when the Minister will commit to replacing this important signage in the Theodore Electorate nestled in the Gold Coast Hinterland?

**ANSWER:**

The implementation of the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) is a key recommendation of the Bushfire Royal Commission and is a national project that has been developed and implemented in phases since 2016. The AFDRS project was overseen by a Program Board with jurisdictional and national representation and was jointly funded by the Australian Government and each state and territory.

The new system was rolled out on 1 September 2022 with each jurisdiction working closely together with the national implementation project team lead by AFAC, the National Council for Fire and Emergency Services.

With the introduction of the nationally consistent AFDRS, it was critical that Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) removed fire danger rating (FDR) signs which displayed information that aligned with the previous fire danger rating system that is no longer in place.

This decision was made by the subject matter experts in QFES, as it should be.

I am advised that QFES conducted community and stakeholder education and awareness programs in 2022 and again in 2023 ahead of the bushfire season to ensure the public had a good understanding of the changes and the benefits of the new system. This included an advertising campaign which used a television commercial, digital advertising, radio, social media, catch-up TV and billboards. In addition, key stakeholders, including critical service providers and all 77 Councils in Queensland received information about the AFDRS, and a factsheet explaining the sign removal process and the need for new sign installation.

The new electronic FDR signage is a significant improvement on the previous system and will enhance safety and understanding by providing automatic updates on a daily basis, delivering accurate and timely advice to the community, without the need to manually adjust the signs.

QFES advises that the ability for the signs to be updated automatically is critical in a fast-changing environment, especially during high-risk periods.

The experts at QFES advise that to replace the previous manual signs with new manual signs would be detrimental to community confidence in the ratings shown, as under the previous system there were examples, in some areas, of the signs not being kept up to date to reflect conditions.

Further, I am advised that many of the old signs around the state were damaged and unusable or illegible due to age and, of course, the old signs were now out of date because they displayed the old FDR information, which is now incorrect.

QFES has advised that the site selection criteria for the new electronic signs sought to achieve the highest impact and benefit for the whole community.

Regional personnel used their local knowledge and bushfire management expertise to determine the locations for the new signs including, identifying sites of high traffic flow.

I am advised that in the Gold Coast Hinterland region, the new and improved electronic FDR signs are installed and operating at the intersections of Beaudesert-Nerang Road and Beechmont Road; Nerang-Murwillumbah Road and Beechmont Road; and Beaudesert Beenleigh Road.

The FDR signs are only one avenue for the community to be informed. The primary point of information for members of the public to check the fire danger rating for their area at any time is the QFES or Bureau of Meteorology websites. Further, during periods of heightened fire danger, QFES issues key safety and preparation information to the community via social media, the QFES website and local radio.

In addition to the electronic signs, QFES has other arrangements in place to warn the community including the use of the temporary signage in high risk-locations and digital road signage.