

Question on Notice
No. 1254
Asked on 12 October 2023

MS S BOLTON ASKED THE MINISTER FOR POLICE AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (HON M RYAN) —

QUESTION:

With reference to the increase in lithium-ion battery fires, including recently in Central Queensland—

Will the Minister outline what action is being undertaken to reduce the risks, including specific training for urban fire fighters to combat these safely?

ANSWER:

The safety of the community and our firefighters is paramount.

That's why in July this year I raised the matter of lithium-ion batteries as an item to be considered by the National Emergency Management Ministers Meeting (NEMMM).

As a result, in August the NEMMM tasked the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) with considering further actions to ensure that appropriate and coordinated action is taken to mitigate potential risks posed by lithium-ion batteries to frontline emergency services and the community.

Consequently, on 3 November 2023 ANZEMC Members discussed the range of issues identified with Lithium-ion batteries, electric vehicles and safety considerations for emergency services workers and agreed to work with the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) to further consider these matters.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) has been contributing to national advocacy and continues to review the latest research to ensure its response remains contemporary, including participating in several research collaborations designed to provide a better understanding of the complex technical issues associated with lithium-ion battery fires.

I am advised that QFES proactively ensures firefighters have access to updated training resources and information, underpinned by the latest technical information as it becomes available.

Additionally, QFES is committed to educating the community and has dedicated webpages with safety information about both rechargeable lithium-ion batteries and powered devices, and electric vehicles. This includes proactively undertaking social media and traditional media activities, specifically in relation to rechargeable lithium-ion batteries.

QFES has also recently launched a new advertising campaign, to raise awareness about rechargeable lithium-ion batteries, to improve attitudes towards safety and encourage behavioural change around device charging, storage and disposal. The advertising features

digital and video content with media placement to run in the lead up to Christmas when it is likely many new rechargeable devices will be purchased.