

## Question on Notice

No. 1425

Asked on Tuesday, 14 November 2023

**MR S KNUTH** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS (HON L LINARD)—

### QUESTION:

With reference to a fire lit by QPWS last month, despite a Cape-wide total fire ban, which escaped and burnt out hundreds of thousands of hectares of private property near Lakeland Downs—

Will the Minister hold her department to account and (a) launch an official investigation into why this fire was lit by QPWS so late in the year, when the region is so dry, (b) force changes to departmental policy to ensure in future that fires are not lit late in the year during dry weather conditions and (c) compensate land owners who lost half their property due to the fire?

### ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Lakeland Downs complex of bushfires was a consequence of multiple sources of fire. The Department of Environment and Science's (the department) planned burn was only one of several known and suspected ignition sources in the area. The Lakeland Downs complex of bushfires was managed by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services.

The department commenced a planned burn on 10 October 2023 at Mount Windsor National Park. This planned burn was implemented before any fire bans were in place and when conditions locally were suitable, including local rainfall.

- (a) The department has clear processes for reviewing planned burns and bushfires. Any breach of containment by planned burns is treated very seriously. This fire is the subject of a review by an officer with significant fire knowledge who was not involved in the process.
- (b) Findings and any recommendations from the review will be considered and inform any potential changes to policy or operational practice. In preparation for the 2023 bushfire season and beyond, the Australian and New Zealand National Council for fire and emergency services (AFAC) has already conducted a strategic review of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Prescribed Burning. The recommendations are being implemented and ensure that burn planning, standards, delivery and risk management is leading practice.
- (c) Subject to the findings of an investigation, the department has an established procedure for compensating landowners.