

Question on Notice

No. 295

Asked on Wednesday, 20 March 2024

MR S O'CONNOR ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

With reference to commercial activity permits granted to tourism operators—

Will the Minister provide (a) the number of permits approved by the State Government and (b) the income received by the State Government from those permits (reported separately by national park in which the permit was granted for and year) for the last five years and (c) the average number of days it takes for the department to process a permit application or alteration?

ANSWER:

- (a) As at 31 March 2024, the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (the department) issued 132 permits in this financial year. Permit numbers for previous years are published in the corresponding annual report on the administration of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, and can be located on the department's website at <https://www.des.qld.gov.au/our-department/corporate-docs#section-annual-reports>.
- (b) The income received by the department from commercial activity permits for the last five years is as follows:
- \$2.2 million received in 2019-20, from 347 permits.
 - \$0.3 million received in 2020-21, from 380 permits.
 - \$0.4 million received in 2021-22, from 380 permits.
 - \$1.5 million received in 2022-23, from 410 permits.
 - As at 31 March 2024, \$1.9 million has been received in 2023-24.

Lower levels of income between 2020 and 2023 was due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fees were either waived as part of the government's *Unite & Recover: Queensland's Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan* or reflect lower tourism patronage.

These income figures cannot be reported by park estate, as most commercial tourism operator permits allow operators to visit various national parks, conservation parks, State forests and recreation areas under a single permit.

- (c) The department currently takes an average of 46 days to process a commercial activity permit. The timeframe is variable depending on the complexity of the application and the completeness of information provided by the applicant.