



Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef,  
Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts

Your Ref: A454805  
Our Ref: CTS 16199/19

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11 JUL 2019

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 14 June 2019 regarding Parliamentary Petition No.3121-19 concerning the control of fire risks and invasive animal and plant species in Queensland national parks, State forests and other Queensland crown lands.

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Environment and Science (the department), is responsible for fire and pest management across approximately 13 million hectares of State controlled parks and forests.

The department prioritises fire and pest management activities to protect life, property and the environment. The impacts from damaging bushfires and invasive species are some of the biggest threats to natural values and the department is committed to being an effective land manager through approaches that are collaborative, sustainable and risk based. The department has obligations as a landholder under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* and the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990*. The department's Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) also has complementary obligations under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and the *Forestry Act 1959* with regards to its managed estate.

The department has developed and adopted an adaptive management framework that identifies key values and threats, and custodial responsibilities on its estate. The department focuses its effort and available funding to deliver activities such as fuel load reduction, maintenance of fire breaks and control of pest species. As an example of a key service output for fire management during 2017–18, the department delivered planned burns over an area of nearly 943,000 hectares, which was well above the target of 632,000 hectares, the largest area covered in five years.

The department recognises that a cooperative approach is the most effective way of achieving both fire and pest management objectives and that there are always opportunities to build on working relationships with neighbouring land owners and other stakeholders to enhance on-ground management. The department has a Good Neighbour Policy (<https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/policies/pdf/op-pk-crp-good-neighbour-policy.pdf>) and also actively collaborates through a number of key State and local fire and pest management groups/committees. These include the State Lands Pest Management Committee; the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative Oversight Group; the Queensland Dog Offensive Group; the Queensland Invasive Plants and Animals Committee; area fire management groups; local and district disaster management groups; and the State Inter-departmental Bushfire Committee, to achieve positive fire and pest management outcomes.

The 2018 bushfire season involved unprecedented fires that had devastating impacts on parks and communities across Queensland. The effects of a changing climate, such as the severe weather events that caused the 2018 bushfires are expected to become increasingly common.

During the November to December 2018 bushfire event, less than 10% of the estimated 1,250 fires to have occurred across Queensland originated on QPWS parks and forests, with the majority of these (over 70%) contained on the QPWS managed land.

To keep ahead of these environmental changes the Queensland Government has shown strong commitment to support bushfire management in our parks and forests by allocating additional funding of \$16 million over four years with \$2.6 million ongoing through the Queensland Budget 2019-20 (<https://budget.qld.gov.au/>) to enhance the department's fire management. This additional funding will expand on the existing fire management program to further minimise potential impacts of damaging bushfires.

I trust that this information has been of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



Leeanne Enoch MP

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