

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1

QUESTION:

With reference to Page 3 of the QFES Service Delivery Statement, which lists a key priority of the department as incorporating technological solutions that enable effective and timely decision making –

Could the Minister please explain how QFES is using technology to meet the contemporary needs of the community?

ANSWER:

Strategy 2030 was developed as part of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' (QFES) commitment towards continuous improvement and being able to prepare for the evolving landscape of emergency services, to be agile, responsive and sustainable and ensure public value continues to be delivered over the longer-term.

Motivated by Strategy 2030, QFES also embarked on a Digital Transformation Program to embrace new ways of thinking and working using digital, social, mobile and emerging technologies.

Some key digital initiatives already underway include:

- A multi-agency project to examine the data requirements for disaster management and establish standards and systems data sharing.
- A proof-of-concept project to establish an 'Operational Centre of Excellence' incorporating leading-edge digital infrastructure.
- A proof of concept to provide a dedicated secure mobile network or state-wide Mission Critical communication capabilities, to enable QFES staff, volunteers and associates to work from anywhere, anytime.
- A project to facilitate the use of 'bring-your-own-devices' as a secure and reliable method to mobilise and dispatch Rural Fire Service (RFS) and State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers.
- A Common Operating Picture – which is a shared and connected framework of credible data, analytics and imagery to support joint tactical, operational and strategic decision making across participating government, non-government and community partners.

QFES may direct additional funds to the Digital Transformation Program based on requirements and business cases identified and developed during the Program.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 2

QUESTION:

Minister, Page 8 of the SDS references the Department's capital program. What will the budget mean in regard to new and replacement vehicles and equipment for our Fire and Rescue Service and Rural Fire Service?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services 2019-20 vehicle capital program includes \$50.02 million for the purchase of new and replacement fire and rescue and rural fire appliances.

The fire and rescue program of work will deliver a number of significant projects, including \$18 million for seven combined aerial pumping appliances and three telescopic platforms, significantly modernising the existing aerial appliance fleet with world class capability. A further \$20 million is allocated for 63 replacement pumping appliances and \$7.7 million for support vehicles, urban tankers and rescue tenders.

The rural fire program of work will deliver two tankers, 13 medium attack appliances and 10 light attack appliances totalling \$4.3 million.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 3

QUESTION:

With reference to page 4 of the SDS which highlights QFES continuing to work in collaboration with local governments across Queensland to operate an effective SES. Could the Minister please explain how QFES plans to deal with LGAQ resolution 56 "that the LGAQ lobby the Queensland Government to wholly fund the SES from existing funds received from the Emergency Management Levy, with appropriate budget allocation and governance arrangements?"

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question

The Palaszczuk Government recognises and is extremely grateful for the efforts of the emergency management volunteers who work to protect the Queensland community.

The State Emergency Service (SES) is funded by state and local government, sponsors and community donations.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) is working with the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) to consider the implications of a transition as outlined in LGAQ's Resolution 56.

On 11 March 2019, former Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Commissioner Katarina Carroll, Mike Wassing in his role as Deputy Commissioner and I met with Mayor Jamieson, President of the LGAQ. We had a positive discussion where it was agreed that we would continue to explore what might be done.

QFES has also been developing Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) that are signed by the SES and local governments.

These MOUs establish a collaborative approach between QFES and local councils for the management and support of the SES and detail the current responsibilities for funding and support arrangements.

This ensures the delivery of an effective emergency service which contributes to a safer, more resilient community.

As at 30 June 2019, 58 out of 75 councils have a signed MOU.

In addition, QFES representatives met with LGAQ Policy Advocacy Council on 28 June 2019 and confirmed QFES' intent to continue to progress Motion 56 and to play a bigger role in the funding, management and governance of the SES.

This is a complex issue and the current shared responsibilities have been in place for many years. However, this Government is committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure an effective SES for all Queenslanders.

The Queensland Government greatly appreciates and recognises the valued partnership with local councils regarding the SES as well as disaster management operations.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 4

QUESTION:

With reference to page 5 of the SDS which highlights QFES implementation of the Accelerated Rural Fire Service Fleet Program. Could the Minister please advise:

- a) the total number of Rural Fire Brigades
- b) how many of these brigades are Primary Producer Brigades
- c) the number of these Rural Fire Brigades (excluding Primary Producer Brigades) who have a truck
- d) the number of these who have a station to house their truck?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question

The Queensland Government recognises and is greatly appreciative of the efforts of the Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers who are integral to effective fire management, mitigation and emergency response in Queensland.

This Government has provided a significant investment in the RFS with new appliances, capital works and other resources.

There are 1,403 Rural Fire Brigades (RFBs), across Queensland.

Brigade Classification	Number
iZone Brigade (urban-rural interface)	162
Village Brigade (a small populated community with a structural fire and/or bushfire risk)	173
Rural Brigade	318
Primary Producer Brigade (PPB)	741
Special Service Delivery Brigade (eg. industry, resorts and mines)	9

As at 30 June 2019, there are 559 RFBs (excluding PPBs) who have an appliance/s and of these, 487 have a station to house their appliance/s.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 5

QUESTION:

Page 16 of the SDS states that during 2019–20 the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management will facilitate knowledge sharing across the sector through a statewide network of disaster management officers. Can the Minister explain the purpose of the statewide network and how it will help keep Queensland communities safe?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to ensuring the best possible disaster management arrangements are in place in Queensland.

In support of this commitment, the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management (the Office) has developed a network of disaster management officers from councils across the state.

Work to develop the network commenced five years ago with the purpose of connecting disaster management practitioners from councils across Queensland to share knowledge and resources; develop skills; learn from the experience of others; and identify and develop best practice disaster management arrangements.

This initiative is the first statewide network of disaster management practitioners from councils ever developed in Australia.

The network operates through an online platform, regular teleconferences and an annual three-day forum.

As of July 2019, the network has 112 members from 58 councils across the state, representing about 75 percent of Queensland's councils.

Network members, councils and their communities benefit from:

- facilitation and strengthening of relationships between councils
- enhancing individual members' skills and knowledge
- sharing valuable information and resources
- empowering network members to achieve important community outcomes such as collaborative strategies to address commonly experienced issues and
- driving sector access to coal-face staff from up to 58 individual councils when seeking collaboration on statewide initiatives.

The fourth annual network forum was held in early May 2019. This forum attracted 68 representatives from local councils across the State.

The network has also supported the engagement of local councils in key initiatives of the Office such as the recent refresh of the Emergency Management Assurance Framework and Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland, the ongoing program of capability reviews and current work to develop a sector-wide lessons management program.

Local perspectives and expertise form a critical part of the collective knowledge that underpins the State's disaster management arrangements.

Notably, the network won the Leadership Category at the 2017 Premier's Awards for Excellence.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 6

QUESTION:

Page 17 of the SDS refers to the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management conducting an annual capability review of a disaster district in Queensland. Has a capability review been conducted in the last 12 months, and if so, what were the findings?

ANSWER:

A capability review of the Mount Isa Disaster District was started in the past 12 months. It was suspended in December 2018 due to the emergent reviews of the bushfires and monsoonal floods in Queensland.

The Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management (the Office) has a legislated function under the *Disaster Management Act 2003* to work with entities performing emergency services, departments and the community to identify and improve disaster management capabilities.

A series of district and local capability reviews form part of the Office's planned program of work. These reviews provide a high level of assurance about disaster management capability, measured against the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland.

Annual capability reviews do not assess past performance, but rather focus on strengths and areas for development in the context of the anticipated future risk environment for Queensland communities. The outcome is an integrated improvement strategy for the district, developed as part of the review process.

The Office commenced the Mount Isa Disaster District Capability Review in the 2018–19 financial year, focussing on the Mount Isa District Disaster Management Group and local disaster management groups in Boulia, Burke, Carpentaria, Cloncurry, Diamantina, Doomadgee, McKinlay, Mount Isa, and Mornington Island.

The Mount Isa Disaster District makes up more than 21 percent of Queensland's geographic size.

The Mount Isa Disaster District Capability Review follows the comprehensive Townsville Disaster District Capability Review that was undertaken in the 2017–18 financial year.

At that time, the Townsville Disaster District was assessed as 'highly effective', demonstrating many examples of good practice that would benefit Queensland's disaster management sector. The monsoon trough rainfall and flood event earlier this year validated the findings of the Townsville Disaster District Capability Review.

The Mount Isa Disaster District Capability Review was suspended in December 2018. This enabled the Office to redirect its efforts towards reviewing the 2018 Queensland bushfires, and subsequently the 2019 monsoon trough rainfall and flood event that affected much of North Queensland, including some councils already involved in the Mount Isa Disaster District Capability Review.

The capability of the district and local disaster management groups was tested during the rainfall and flooding events of early 2019, with many communities experiencing record breaking flooding, periods of isolation and devastating loss of cattle and infrastructure.

The Office intends to progress the Mount Isa Disaster District Capability Review now that the 2019 Monsoon Trough Rainfall and Flood Review is complete. The district and local groups will be able to draw on experience and learnings from their preparedness, response, relief and recovery efforts in the monsoon trough event to provide further evidence of their disaster management capability.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 7

QUESTION:

With reference to page 5 of the SDS, which highlights QFES focusing on improving community safety awareness and knowledge in relation to bushfire safety. How does QFES prepare our communities for bushfire season?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) is actively preparing for the 2019 bushfire season.

Bushfire preparedness is a shared responsibility in Queensland, primarily resting with landowners and land managers for hazard reduction.

Activities such as hazard reduction burning are highly dependent on weather conditions, which is why QFES and its partners use multiple methods to treat bushfire risk.

QFES prevention and mitigation planning is further underpinned by the Area Fire Management Groups (AFMG) that are used to foster relationships with key land managers to work cohesively on mitigation activities. The planning work of the AFMGs informs mitigation activities during the Operation Cool Burn (OCB) period.

While bushfire mitigation is done year-round, it has an emphasis during the OCB period, which this year started on 1 April 2019 and should run through to 31 August 2019, depending on weather conditions.

In preparation for bushfire season, QFES continues to plan, exercise and engage with landowners and occupiers, local government and land management agencies. QFES also develops and reviews State and Regional Operational Plans and Air Operations Plans for the bushfire season.

QFES actively assesses Bushfire Preparedness Levels against local and regional risks and makes use of predictive tools such as fire behaviour simulations.

These activities are supported by mainstream and social media campaigns to support targeted activities and heighten community awareness of bushfires and the need to prepare for the upcoming season.

QFES delivers an annual Bushfire Safety campaign from August to October, the traditional early bushfire season in Queensland. A \$400,000 2019-20 bushfire safety campaign will prompt residents to visit QFES' new online mapping tool where residents can check their neighbourhood's potential exposure to bushfire. As users discover the widespread potential for bushfires to threaten properties state wide, they will be prompted to complete their household Bushfire Survival Plan.

QFES actively engages with the community to take steps to minimise the impacts of any bushfires through simple actions such as cleaning gutters, mowing lawns and preparing a bushfire survival plan. Bushfire Survival Plans can easily be prepared by following the simple links prominently displayed on the Rural Fire Service website.

Between 9 April to 17 July 2019, QFES issued 14 media releases on bushfire season preparation and awareness resulting in 171 media articles across print, radio and television. Three hundred and forty social media posts have also been published in this period, relating to bushfire season preparation and awareness messaging. Messaging posted on Facebook had a reach of more than 3.2 million.

QFES also provides educational resources for teachers to facilitate learning on programs such as Bushfire and Fire Education, Safehome, SafeSpace and StormSafe, in Queensland schools.

The report by the Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM) into last year's bushfire event has been tabled. This Government has accepted either in principle or in full all IGEM recommendations. One of the Review's key finding was that the way our emergency workers, communities and councils came together was exceptional.

Further to the IGEM review, QFES initiated a comprehensive debriefing program to capture the considerable learnings for bushfire management. This program has provided QFES with many valuable insights across multiple layers and QFES will continue to work through the learning and opportunities for improvement to inform the 2019 bushfire season.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 8

QUESTION:

Would the minister please advise the number of both (a) rural and (b) urban appliances delivered during the following years 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, and proposed for 2019/20?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

Since the start of the 2012-13 financial year, 390 new rural fire and 254 new fire and rescue appliances have been delivered.

These numbers can be further broken down to:

- 33 rural fire and 28 fire and rescue in 2012-13
- 25 rural fire and 21 fire and rescue during 2013-14
- 42 rural fire and 39 fire and rescue in 2014-15
- 53 rural fire and 41 fire and rescue during 2015-16
- 53 rural fire and 28 fire and rescue in 2016-17
- 65 rural fire and 47 fire and rescue in 2017-18
- 119 rural fire and 50 fire and rescue during the 2018-19 financial year.

Fleet scheduled for delivery during the 2019-20 financial year are 25 rural fire appliances, 34 fire and rescue appliances, seven combined aerial pumping appliances and three aerial ladder Platforms. The total 2019-20 QFES fleet budget is \$50.02 million.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 9

QUESTION:

Page 3 of the SDS refers to QFES Keeping communities safe by designing and delivering services according to local risk and community need. Can the Minister please advise if the Blue Water Review Working Group has made a decision on the future of marine rescue in Queensland.

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government recognises the enormity of the efforts of volunteers who protect our Queensland community.

That is why financial support is provided to about 3,500 volunteers through service agreements with the Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland (VMRAQ) and the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association (AVCGA).

A review of volunteer bluewater marine rescue services in Queensland was announced during the 2018 Estimates hearing.

The review report was released on 16 January 2019 and as a result, the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Commissioner, established a Working Group, to provide recommendations for the improvement of bluewater marine rescue services in Queensland. The working group consists of blue water rescue volunteers, Queensland Water Police, Maritime Safety Queensland, Queensland Recreational Boating Council, Surf Life Saving Queensland and Queensland Ambulance Service.

The Working Group has formed a vision for the future of the volunteer marine rescue sector and recommendations are currently being considered by QFES which will provide advice to the Government.

The Working Group has held six engagement sessions with volunteers around the state.

The Working Group aims to have an Implementation Plan finalised by November 2019.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 10

QUESTION:

With reference to page 4 of the SDS which highlights QFES continuing to enhance volunteer operational capability. Can the Minister please advise the equipment and services provided to Volunteers to keep Queenslanders safe.

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government recognises the enormity of the efforts of the volunteers who work to protect our Queensland communities.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) acknowledges the crucial role its volunteer workforce provides in delivering our vision of a connected and capable Queensland in the face of emergencies and disasters.

There are about 33,000 Rural Fire Services (RFS) and 5,300 State Emergency Services (SES) volunteers throughout Queensland. QFES supports both services through the provision of vehicles, funds, training, equipment and protective clothing, insurance and an overarching policy framework, that ensures the QFES workforce, both paid and volunteer, are provided with relevant information in relation to policies, related standards, procedures, work instructions and tools.

Rural Fire Service:

In 2019-20, the total RFS budget is \$39.1 million and in 2018-19, was \$38.7 million.

As part of the Palaszczuk Government's commitment to frontline service delivery, the government provided a capital injection to accelerate the rural appliance build program. This replaced 65 RFS vehicles during 2017-18 and 119 RFS vehicles in 2018-19.

Since 1 July 2016, QFES has been providing up to \$3.8 million a year in support of RFS asset registered vehicles through the RFS fuel and maintenance funding.

This fuel and maintenance funding initiative includes vehicle servicing, annual safety inspections, repairs (other than insurance claims) and fuel requirements for RFS asset registered vehicles.

Vehicle maintenance ensure RFS appliances are ready when they are needed for front-line firefighting.

As another boost to our rural fire brigades, in 2018-19, QFES provided \$3.1 million in protective clothing and equipment, \$780,000 in plant and equipment and \$250,000 in radio equipment.

QFES also provided \$600,000 in 2018-19 for 76 slip-on units to improve firefighting capability for Rural Fire Brigades (RFBs) and \$357,000 in RFS grants for station construction, improvements and operational equipment.

In 2019-20, QFES is rolling out P3 masks to 590 RFBs over five years. This commitment of \$2 million a year is providing yet another layer of protection for our volunteers.

State Emergency Service:

In 2019-20, the SES budget is \$20 million and in 2018-19 it was \$19.6 million.

Funds provided to the SES in 2018-19 included:

- \$2.61 million for personal protective and operational equipment.
- \$712,000 to acquire and maintain facilities, vehicles and flood boats.
- \$2.06 million (made up of \$1.65 million from the Local Government Subsidy and \$411,000 from the SES Non-Recurrent Subsidy Program) in subsidies to local governments, to support the operation of their SES groups.
- \$426,212 for the management and delivery of training to SES volunteer members.

This Government is also investing \$4.25 million in 2019-20 to transition SES to the Government Wireless Network (GWN) in South-East Queensland, to support volunteers and local government and improve emergency responses.

QFES provides a range of support for QFES members and volunteers, to promote mental health and wellbeing, including peer support and counselling services for QFES.

QFES' volunteer training is considered world class and includes eLearning and traditional face-to-face learning.

Volunteer Marine Rescue Support Package:

In addition to support provided by QFES to RFS and SES volunteers, QFES also financially supports approximately 35,000 marine rescue and surf life saving volunteers through the Volunteer Marine Rescue Support Package (VMRSP).

Under the VMRSP, QFES has Service Agreements with Surf Life Saving Queensland, Royal Life Saving Society Queensland, the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association and the Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland, which will provide a total of \$9.1 million in 2019-20, for the provision blue water and white-

water services, including swim and survive programs, water safety programs, white water rescue and helicopter support, and blue water search and rescue capabilities.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 11

QUESTION:

In relation to page 4 of the SDS, under “staffing” can the Minister outline:

- a) the number of FTE frontline staff employed in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019;
- b) the number of FTE ‘support’ staff employed in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019;
- c) the number of FTE ‘media’ staff employed in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019?

ANSWER:

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) employs staff for a range of roles, including firefighters, emergency management experts, scientists, building fire safety engineers, communication officers, finance personnel, and staff welfare officers.

The below information is provided by financial year, as this is how QFES generally reports on staffing figures. The breakdown of QFES full-time equivalent (FTE) staff by year (as at 30 June) since 2016-17 is as follows:

2018-19

Frontline FTE*	2,786.85
Frontline Enabler (Support)	539.3
Media	11.70

2017-18

Frontline FTE*	2,747.63
Frontline Enabler (Support)	474.29
Media	11.70

2016-17

Frontline FTE*	2,780.63
Frontline Enabler (Support)	444.40
Media	8.10

* Auxiliary staff are 0.1 of an FTE.

Note: FTE expressed to two decimal places corresponds to the number of hours worked in relation to a position's full-time equivalent. For example, 0.63 represents 25 hours worked in a 40-hour full-time equivalent, due to flexible or part-time arrangements.

It should be noted that the QFES's FTE staffing figures are subject to ongoing fluctuation on account of attrition and recruitment.

I am advised that the increase in frontline enabler FTEs is primarily due to Machinery of Government changes which resulted in the transition of staff from the Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) to QFES. As a result of the Review of the PSBA, a total of 146 staff transitioned from the PSBA to QFES in 2016-2017.

In 2017, the Palaszczuk Government committed to providing an additional 100 firefighters over four years, from 2018-19 to 2021-22. The benefit of this election commitment is reflected in the increase in Frontline FTE figures in 2018-19 compared to the 2017-18 financial year.

While figures are included back to 2016 in order to address this Question on Notice in its entirety, reliable figures are only available from 2017-18. With the multiple changes to the Public Safety Business Agency in the earlier part of the decade, it has been impossible to ascertain consistent, usable figures relating to front-line and non-front line FTEs until 2017-18 due to changing methodologies of FTE allocations to that point.

The following table provides a breakdown of the workforce profile:

Workforce Profile	Description
Frontline	Staff who directly deliver QFES services to Queensland communities, including firefighting, emergency management, communications, risk mitigation, etc.
Frontline Enabler	Staff who contribute to frontline service delivery via provision of business or corporate support. It should be noted that a significant number of these staff adopt a frontline role in the event of a heightened activation.
Media	Includes Media Officers, Senior Media Officers, Media Supervisors and Media Managers.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 12

QUESTION:

With reference to page 4 of the SDS, under “staffing” can the Minister please outline the following figures in relation to QFES in 2018/19:

- a) The overall number of complaints (bullying/sexual harassment etc.) specifically breaking down figures between urban, rural fire and SES
- b) The number of overall actions taken in response to these complaints
- c) Total number of hours taken off work (both with pay and without) as a result of these bullying/harassment actions?

ANSWER:

- a) The overall number of complaints (bullying/sexual harassment etc.) specifically breaking down figures between urban, rural fire and SES**

The number of complaints recorded in the Complaints Management System for 2018-19 was 351 and there were 360 allegations (some complaints contain numerous allegations).

Allegations are assessed using the Crime and Corruption Commission – Allegations and Subtypes. Below is a breakdown of all allegations by type.

There were only five alleged complaints of bullying and harassment. Three were substantiated.

Complaint Category	2018-19 Number of Complaints
Administrative Decision Complaint	17
Breach of Privacy Complaint	2
CaPE Category 1	107
CaPE Category 2	90
CaPE Category 3	43
Complaint against the Commissioner	1
Corrupt Conduct	15
Customer Complaint	21
General Public Complaint	55
Grand Total	351

Breakdown by Division	2018-19 Number of Complaints
Readiness and Response Services (RRS) – Fire and Rescue Services (FRS)	173
Emergency Management, Volunteerism and Community Resilience (EMVCR) – Rural Fire Service (RFS)	87
EMVCR – State Emergency Service (SES)	58
Strategy and Corporate Services (SCS)	21
Other	12
Grand Total	351

b) The number of overall actions taken in response to these complaints

The table below categorises the data based on the Nexus Complaints Management module. These categories are Discontinued, Not Substantiated, Not Yet Determined and Substantiated.

Allegations	2018-19 Count of Allegation Number
Discontinued	17
Administrative Decision Complaint	2
CaPE Category 1	5
CaPE Category 2	4
CaPE Category 3	3
Customer Complaint	1
General Public Complaint	2
Not Substantiated	119
Administrative Decision Complaint	5
CaPE Category 1	42
CaPE Category 2	37
CaPE Category 3	12
Corrupt Conduct	15
Customer Complaint	7
General Public Complaint	1
Not Yet Determined	109
Administrative Decision Complaint	2
CaPE Category 1	25
CaPE Category 2	41
CaPE Category 3	22
Corrupt Conduct	16
Customer Complaint	2
General Public Complaint	1
Substantiated	115
Administrative Decision Complaint	1
CaPE Category 1	53

CaPE Category 2	40
CaPE Category 3	13
Corrupt Conduct	1
Customer Complaint	4
General Public Complaint	3
Grand Total	360

c) Total number of hours taken off work (both with pay and without) as a result of these bullying/harassment actions?

The number of hours taken off work as a result of these bullying/harassment actions cannot be quantified and isn't recorded in the Complaints Management System.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 13

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the SDS in relation to QFES's role in conducting "effective prevention"— will the Minister advise the following (reported separately for 2015 to 2019):

- a) The total number of Hazard Reduction Burns operations carried out by QFES
- b) The number of permits to light fire approved by fire wardens
- c) The number of permits made to light fires by fire wardens
- d) The average time between application and approval of fire lighting permits

ANSWER:

I thank the member for the question.

a) The total number of Hazard Reduction Burns operations carried out by QFES

The role of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) is to work with partners and the community to provide leadership and support in the shared responsibility of preparation for and prevention of bushfires.

Undertaking hazard reduction to reduce fuel loads is the responsibility of the landholder.

It is not QFES' responsibility to undertake hazard reduction burns. However, QFES does play a role in assisting landholders complete hazard reduction burning activity when requested to do so.

- b) The number of permits to light fire approved by fire wardens**
- c) The number of permits made to light fires by fire wardens**
- d) The average time between application and approval of fire lighting permits**

Because the vast majority of these permits are for remote and regional parts of Queensland, they are usually processed manually, which means the information is not held centrally. QFES is looking into an electronic permitting system.

QFES does however, capture data that relate to Permits to Light Fire that are activated. This data is captured when the permit holder contacts Firecom prior to

lighting their fire. For the calendar years 2015 to 2019, QFES advises data relating to total Permit to Light Fire activations reported was:

Calendar Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019- to 30 June
Total number of Permit to Light Fire - Activated	28,655	27,907	26,178	27,005	10,569

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 14

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the SDS, under the departmental overview of the “Rural Fire Service”, can the minister outline the following in relation to the operation of Rural Fire Brigades in Queensland between and including 2015 and 2019 (reported separately):

- a) The total number of rural fire fighters utilised by QFES
- b) The total number of hours that rural fire fighters were used for each of these years
- c) The total number of rural fire stations in Queensland?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

a) The total number of rural fire fighters utilised by QFES

The Palaszczuk Government recognises and greatly appreciates the efforts of the Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers who are essential to fire management, mitigation and emergency response in Queensland. These volunteers selflessly gift their time and life skills to protect life and property and prevent and fight fire across remote and regional Queensland.

As at 30 June 2019, there are approximately a total of 33,000 RFS volunteers, which covers every rank and position within a Rural Brigade.

Brigade numbers fluctuate and are fluid due to the data verification, people moving on, transitioning to other roles, economic sustainability, social economics of the community and work-life balance.

For the financial years 2014-15 to 2018-19, the number of RFS volunteers with rural fire-fighter rank are:

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
RFS volunteers with rural firefighter rank	13,966	13,877	13,938	13,944	13,184

NB: To be granted the status of Firefighter and to wear the firefighter rank markings, members must complete Firefighter Minimal Skills (FMS) training.

b) The total number of hours that rural fire fighters were used for each of these years

I am advised by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) that the total number of hours for rural fire-fighters attending incidents is currently not recorded.

QFES is currently undergoing a digital transformation, which aims to move QFES into a digital future ready state where users, technology and information gathering are better aligned.

c) The total number of rural fire stations in Queensland

The total number of rural fire brigades with a station is:

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Number of brigades with stations	433	434	464	480	487

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 15

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the SDS, under QFES's requirement to manage staffing, volunteers and operational communications between emergency service groups, can the Minister outline the following in relation to management and operation of Human Capital Management Solution (Nexus):

- a) the number of days in which the Nexus program has not been operating at its full intended functionality since going 'live' in August 2018;
- b) The number of training certificates currently on the system that have not been able to be printed and provided to recipients;
- c) Any additional costs incurred by the department since outlined in QON No. 1239;
- d) Are there any plans to change or update the existing Nexus programs and if so, what timelines are expected?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

- a) The number of days in which the Nexus program has not been operating at its full intended functionality since going 'live' in August 2018**

The Nexus program as it is still being rolled out. The department continues to work closely with the vendor to address matters that have arisen.

- b) The number of training certificates currently on the system that have not been able to be printed and provided to recipients**

Nexus is working to address this issue. The specific number has not been determined.

- c) Any additional costs incurred by the department since outlined in QON No. 1239**

The answer to Question on Notice No. 1239, which was tabled on 19 October 2018, states that \$16.056 million had been expended. An additional \$43,000 has been spent as at 30 June 2019.

- d) Are there any plans to change or update the existing Nexus programs and if so, what timelines are expected?**

QFES is taking a 'continuous improvement' approach to Nexus and will work with the vendor as each module is rolled out, the next being the performance, goals and workplace health and safety modules.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 16

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the SDS, under the departmental overview of the “State Emergency Service (SES)”, can the minister outline the following in relation to the operation of SES groups in Queensland between and including 2015 and 2019 (reported separately):

- a) The total number of SES volunteers
- b) The total number of SES groups
- c) The names of SES groups that ceased operations.

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

- a) **the total number of SES volunteers**
- b) **the total number of SES groups**

	Total number of Active SES Members	Total Number of SES Groups
2014-15	5,900	316
2015-16	6,200	311
2016-17	5,600	309
2017-18	5,600	301
2018-19	5,300	297

State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers consist of Active, Applicant, Probation and Reserve volunteer members. SES quote only the active member numbers, as these members have completed their probationary period and regularly attend training activities, maintain their skills and are available for operational response. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) is committed to maintaining service delivery to effected communities irrespective of SES member numbers.

QFES regularly undertake audits of membership records and group functions to ensure records accurately reflect capability within the service. The most recent audit commenced in early 2019, which attributed to a decrease in the 2018-19 figure. As a volunteer organisation, SES experiences ongoing fluctuations in volunteer numbers, which may be attributed to a number of factors such as leave of absences and change of membership status.

- c) **The names of SES groups that ceased operations**

The creation, maintenance and closure of SES Groups is a joint responsibility between local councils and QFES.

There are many considerations in the decision to close an SES Group. A Group may be closed if it no longer meets the minimum requirements for a functional Group. Groups may be amalgamated where a Group/s no longer meets the minimum requirements for a functional Group in their own right, or where it is in the best interests of operational service delivery.

The closure or amalgamation of a Group does not affect community service delivery.

Since November 2015, the SES has recorded a total of 19 SES Groups which have ceased operations. These groups include:

- Hungerford SES Group, (November 2015)
- Adavale SES Group, Quilpie (December 2015)
- Augathella SES Group, Roma (August 2015)
- Morven SES Group, Roma (December 2015)
- Begonia SES Group, Roma (September 2016)
- Etna Creek SES Group, Capricornia (December 2016)
- Collinsville SES Group, Mackay (July 2017)
- Farleigh SES Group, Mackay (July 2017)
- Northern Beaches SES Group, Mackay (July 2017)
- Walkerston SES Group, Mackay (July 2017)
- Louisa Creek SES Group, Mackay (July 2017)
- Eungella SES Group, Mackay (August 2017)
- Finch Hatton SES Group, Mackay (August 2017)
- Yelarbon SES Group, Toowoomba (November 2017)
- Opalton SES Group, Longreach (January 2018)
- Kumbia SES Group, Caloundra (September 2018)
- Coppabella SES Group, Mackay (October 2018)
- Boobyjan SES Group, Gympie (November 2018)
- Laura SES Group, Cooktown (May 2019)

Since July 2014, the SES has recorded five newly established Groups. These Groups include:

- Far Northern Region (FNR) Operations SES Group, Cairns (March 2019)
- Redlands SES Group, Redland City (June 2015)
- Rolleston (Emergency Service Unit), Central Highlands (August 2015)
- Tambo (Emergency Service Unit), Blackall-Tambo (August 2015)
- Toowoomba Region SES Group, Toowoomba (January 2018)

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 17

QUESTION:

With reference to page 5 of the SDS can the Minister outline the following in relation to inspecting and approving fire safety of buildings with combustible cladding between 2015 and 2019:

- a) The overall number of inspections undertaken
- b) The number of building passes on first inspection
- c) The number of these buildings that are still not approved
- d) The average number of inspections conducted before buildings are approved.

ANSWER:

Between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2019, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Building Cladding Support Unit has identified and conducted Operational Risk Audits (ORA) in relation to the presence of non-compliant building products (cladding) at 251 inspections in Queensland.

The intent of the ORA is not to pass or fail a building that is identified as containing non-compliant building products (cladding).

Rather, QFES has adopted a risk allocation method, which encompasses three risk categories, being high, medium and low. ORA inspections are conducted once on a building to determine the risk allocation category.

A high or medium risk allocation may result in QFES providing an upgraded predetermined response to the building. This upgraded response is determined on a case-by-case basis, based on building occupancy, type and quantity of the non-compliant building product and the fire safety systems installed within the building. The upgraded response remains in place until the building owner remediates the building to a compliant standard.

As a result of the 251 inspections undertaken by QFES, 81 buildings identified as potentially containing non-compliant building products (cladding) have an upgraded response in place.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 18

QUESTION:

With reference to page 18 of the SDS, can the Minister provide a cost and page count of the 2018 Queensland Bushfires Review and 2019 Monsoon Trough Rainfall and Flood Review (reported separately by review)?

ANSWER:

The Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM) was tasked by the Government to undertake two key reviews in 2018–19 in response to disaster events in Queensland:

- 2018 Queensland Bushfires Review
- 2019 Monsoon Trough Rainfall and Flood Review.

Both reviews included a community survey to capture public opinion and travel to affected areas to enable consultation with key stakeholders.

To inform the 2018 Queensland Bushfires Review, the IGEM engaged the services of a nationally recognised research centre to explain the science behind the events and lessons from Australia and overseas.

To inform the 2019 Monsoon Trough Rainfall and Flood Review, the IGEM engaged an independent external firm with hydrology and flood management expertise.

Both reviews are complete.

The estimated actual cost and page count for each review is as follows:

Review title	Estimated actual cost of review ¹	Page count ²
2018 Queensland Bushfires Review	\$532,110	178
2019 Monsoon Trough Rainfall and Flood Review	\$432,840	188

Notes:

¹ Estimated actual cost to complete the 2018 Queensland Bushfires Review (31 May 2019) and the 2019 Monsoon Trough Rainfall and Flood Review (17 June 2019).

² Page count includes front and back cover of review report. Independent work to inform the review as identified in the report appendices is not included in the page count.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 19

QUESTION:

In recent weeks Central Queensland residents have been receiving notification letters indicating they will be charged multiple Emergency Services Levies on their local rates notices pertaining to a single street address. Can the Minister provide a time frame as to when the extra charges will be withdrawn and confirm the systems used to calculate these levies will be corrected?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* (the Act), requires the owners of prescribed properties in Queensland to contribute to the provision of emergency services by means of a levy, collected via local government rates notices.

Each local government must assess the properties in its area and apply the appropriate levy to each separately titled property (lot).

The Emergency Management Levy (EML) is assessed by the relevant local government, in this case Rockhampton Regional Council (RRC). Properties in Mount Morgan are located in the Mount Morgan Class C levy district boundary.

An EML audit was recently conducted on the RRC levy files, which required Council to review the classifications of each property. RRC adjusted any records that were not in accordance with the Act or the *Fire and Emergency Services Regulation 2011*.

The property owners affected by the audit adjustments were notified by RRC. Any adjustments made are effective from 1 July 2019 but will not be back dated to previous financial years.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) has conducted an examination of the legislation and its impact and has also obtained legal advice on what options are available to address the issues you raise.

The legal advice obtained states that the Act does not provide any ability to amend, waive or make any changes to either the statutory levy class or the statutory levy category. It is a binding formula that is legislated by parliament and local authorities and QFES is bound by this.

The Act does not provide an exemption to the EML where a person owns multiple lots. The only exception is for contiguous lots used as bona-fide farm land and owned by the same owner, which attract a single levy.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minister for Fire and Emergency Services ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 20

QUESTION:

Given the extraordinary benefit that fixed wing water bombing from the Finch Hatton emergency airfield delivered during the November 2018 bushfires, can the Minister explain;

- a) Why the State Government is unwilling to contribute financially; given these fires burned across significant state reserves?
- b) Why the State Government is seeking to divest responsibility onto Local Government and other stakeholders?

ANSWER:

I thank the member for this question.

I am advised by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) that fixed wing water bombing is not a regular occurrence for the Finch Hatton Area and QFES has only utilised this facility once in the last 30 years.

QFES generally relies upon rotary aircraft, due to the close proximity of the Teemurra and Eungella dams.

The site on which the airfield is located is not set aside for public purposes and is privately owned.

QFES does not provide funding to create improvements on privately owned land.

As part of the preparation and planning for disasters and emergencies across Queensland, Local Disaster Management Groups (LDMGs) identify suitable locations including existing airfields, either private or commercial, for the use of both rotary and fixed wing aircraft.