

Question on Notice
No. 1460
Asked on 18 October 2018

MR D CRISAFULLI ASKED THE MINISTER FOR FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (HON C CRAWFORD)—

QUESTION:

With reference to Queensland's back burning practices— Will the Minister advise (reported separately for 2012 to 2018) the total (a) number of back burning operations carried out, (b) number of hectares covered in these back burning operations and (c) spend on preventative back burning operations?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

I am advised by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) that in Queensland, "back burning" is a tactic used in managing bushfires, however, for a planned burn, the term commonly used to reduce a bushfire hazard is Hazard Reduction Burn (HRB).

HRBs are the responsibility of the landowner and or occupier. QFES takes the role of coordinating and leading bushfire mitigation very seriously and actively assists many landowners in performing HRBs, especially through the Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteer brigades. QFES does not have data on the hectares covered for these burns however, the quantity of burns attended is recorded.

For the calendar years 2012 to 2018 (to 23 October 2018), the number of burns attended by QFES is:

YEAR	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (to 23/10/18.)
Permitted burns attended by QFES	2988	2751	3052	3187	2996	2510	2241

The number of burns attended varies from year-to-year. A major reason for this variation is climatic conditions. Dry conditions can reduce opportunities for burning and can also reduce fuel loads through reduced grass growth. In other years, it may be too wet to burn in many areas. Furthermore, in dry years, graziers may be reluctant to burn any grass they have as it may be critical stock feed.

In terms of cost, QFES considers such planned burning support to be business as usual and does not have separate line item figures. Additionally, it is not possible to quantify the value/spend of volunteer time which is a significant component of this work.

Since 2016–17, QFES has made a specific allocation for vehicle fuel and maintenance to help volunteer Rural Fire Brigades meet the operational costs of undertaking their work. This allocation supports all aspects of brigade operations including activities such as response to bushfires and education activities as well as HRBs.