

Question on Notice
No. 771
Asked on 16 July 2020

MR L MILLAR ASKED MINISTER FOR FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARTNERSHIPS (HON C CRAWFORD)—

QUESTION:

Will the minister outline the following in relation to the operation of State Emergency Service (SES) groups in Queensland between and including 2014-15 to 2019-20 (reported separately) the (a) total number of SES volunteers, (b) total number of SES groups and (c) names of SES groups that ceased operations?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question:

Our State Emergency Service (SES) Volunteers are highly valued and their dedication to helping Queenslanders in their hour of need is inspiring.

QFES provides a range of support to SES volunteers and groups across the state including training and funding for PPE, equipment and facilities.

SES volunteers consist of Active, Applicant, Probation and Reserve volunteer members. Up to 30 June 2020, only active volunteer numbers are quoted, as this represents members who have completed their probationary period and regularly attend training activities, maintain their skills and are available for operational response.

I am advised by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) periodic audits of membership records and group functions are undertaken to ensure records are accurate. Since 2018-19, SES State Office have actively conducted audits of Volunteer Information Management System (VIMS) to ensure data is a true reflection of volunteer membership.

Changes in SES membership figures can be attributed to a number of factors such as leave, transfer of membership and change of membership status.

There are many considerations in the decision to close or amalgamate a SES Group, including if it no longer meets the minimum requirements for a functional Group (i.e. minimum of 6 Active members and 1 allocated operational response function e.g. Search & Rescue, Storm Damage Ops, Flood Boat Response etc.). 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.

Prior to any application for closure or amalgamation being submitted, appropriate consultation with local government, local community and QFES is undertaken and documented as an attachment to the closure application. The closure or amalgamation of a Group does not affect the community as strategies for future service delivery are discussed during the consultation stage. The closure or amalgamation of a Group requires

the endorsement of the respective Local Government and the approval of the QFES Commissioner or delegate.

(a) total approximate number of active State Emergency Service volunteers

Year	Number
2014-15	5,900
2015-16	6,200
2016-17	5,600
2017-18	5,600
2018-19	5,300
2019-20	5,000

(b) total number of SES groups

- Two SES Groups have amalgamated between and including 2014-15 to 2019-20.
- Five new SES Groups have formed between and including 2014-15 to 2019-20.

Year	Number
2014-15	316
2015-16	311
2016-17	309
2017-18	301
2018-19	297
2019-20	296

(c) names of SES groups that ceased operations

Number	SES Group
1 *	Yuleba Creek SES Group, Roma
2 *	Hungerford SES Group, Paroo
3 *	Adavale SES Group, Quilpie
4 *	Augathella SES Group, Roma
5 *	Morven SES Group, Roma
6	Begonia SES Group, Roma
7	Etna Creek SES Group, Capricornia
8	Collinsville SES Group, Mackay
9	Farleigh SES Group, Mackay
10	Northern Beaches SES Group, Mackay
11	Walkerston SES Group, Mackay
12	Louisa Creek SES Group, Mackay
13	Eungella SES Group, Mackay
14	Finch Hatton SES Group, Mackay
15	Yelarbon SES Group, Toowoomba
16	Opalton SES Group, Longreach
17	Kumbia SES Group, Caloundra
18	Coppabella SES Group, Mackay
19	Boobyjan SES Group, Gympie
20	Laura SES Group, Cooktown

* These groups had ceased operations prior to 2012 however were inadvertently reactivated during migration to the Volunteer Information Management System (VIMS) in 2012.