

PRESCRIBED BURNS BETWEEN 1999 AND 2009

729. Hon NIGEL HALLETT to the Minister for Environment:

Further to question on notice 692 of 2 June 2009, can the minister please advise —

- (1) Did the former Department of Conservation and Land Management provide evidence to the fire review panel that the target for prescribed burning was 200 000 hectares per annum?
- (2) Has the fire management program received an extra \$3 million per annum over the next three years?
- (3) Have all “fit, young CALM staff” participated in prescribed burning operations?
- (4) Has grazing been considered to reduce fuel loads; and, if not, why not?
- (5) Does the Department of Environment and Conservation have sufficient trained personnel to undertake two shifts on any fire in any region?
- (6) Does DEC have rolling-funding arrangements for prescribed burning; and, if so, over what period?
- (7) Have the recommendations for local government and for the Bush Fires Act been put in place?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. Before I answer the question, I want to place on record the good work that the department does with respect to prescribed burning, and the fact that, last week, five members of the department went to Canada to help with the fires there.

- (1) Yes. The CALM submission stated that it is estimated that this strategic approach to the prescribed burning program will enable the overall burn program in the forest region to be set at about 200 000 hectares per annum.
- (2) From 1994, CALM’s budget for fire management was increased by \$1.5 million per annum on an ongoing basis through internal relocation. There have been further increases to the fire management budget since that time.
- (3) No. However, the majority of the Department of Environment and Conservation’s regional staff do participate in the prescribed burning program.
- (4) Yes. However, I am advised that grazing is not applied in native forests as this method of fuel reduction is not compatible with protecting conservation values in these areas. Additionally, native forests generally have limited grassy fuels that contribute to the overall fire hazard.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) No. DEC has an annual budget for all fire management activities, including the planning and implementation of prescribed burn programs in all regions.
- (7) The recommendations relating to local government and the Bush Fires Act are outside DEC’s responsibility. This question should be referred to the Minister for Emergency Services.