

ENVIRONMENT — UNPLANNED FIRES

1467. Hon Dr Brad Pettitt to the parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Environment:

- (1) On how many occasions has the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) attended unplanned fire events over the last two years?
- (2) On how many of these occasions was equipment that could have been deployed to attend unplanned fire events otherwise engaged with prescribed burning activities?
- (3) What is the average response time for attending unplanned fires that are detected on DBCA managed lands for each of the following assets when they have been requested of deployed:
 - (a) observation vehicles;
 - (b) light fire units and trucks;
 - (c) heavy equipment such as bulldozers and wheel loaders; and
 - (d) aerial fire fighters?
- (4) Will the Minister provide a breakdown of firefighting and response equipment maintained or available for use by DBCA in each of the districts, with specifications and locations?
- (5) Will the Minister provide records of the utilisation of each of these assets for prescribed burning operations including times/dates of deployment and standby periods over the past 24 months?
- (6) Will the Minister provide records of the availability of each of these assets to respond to unplanned fire events over the same period?

Hon Darren West replied:

- (1) The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) attended a combined total of 1021 unplanned fire events over the period 2020/21 and 2021/22, of which 245 occurred on lands not managed by DBCA.
- (2) DBCA does not maintain data for this scenario. Most of DBCA's resources are available for response to unplanned fire events when they occur outside of the spring and autumn periods, when the department is implementing its prescribed burning program.
- (3) DBCA does not maintain data on average response times for equipment as it varies depending on the day of the week and the time of the request. Dependent on the forecast fire risk, DBCA will maintain a predetermined number of resources, including personnel and plant and equipment on-call for immediate deployment. Aerial firefighting resources are constrained by available daylight hours and prevailing weather conditions on any given day.
- (4) Given the level of agency resourcing required to source and provide potentially relevant information, it is not considered to be a reasonable use of government resources. I am happy to arrange a briefing by DBCA for the Honourable Member.
- (5) DBCA does not maintain this type of data.
- (6) DBCA does not maintain this type of data and considers most of its resources to be available when planning a response to an unplanned fire with the exception of the minimum resources that may be required to ensure burn security of current active prescribed burns.