



Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by Ms Leanne Castley MLA:

Reference: Hearing on 23 November 2023, Annual Report of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate

In relation to: Bushfire preparedness

- 1) What Fire Hazard Reduction work has occurred at the Gungaharra Grasslands Nature Reserve over the last 12 months?
- 2) Has there been selective grazing in the area in preparation for this fire season?
- 3) Is there a PCS ranger rostered to regularly manage the Gungaharra Grasslands Nature Reserve?
- 4) Have PCS Rangers previously refused to hold hazard reduction burns?
- 5) What interaction has occurred between RFS about hazard reduction burns?

Mr Mick Gentleman MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

- 1) In both the 2022-23 and 2023-24 Bushfire Operations Plan, cattle grazing and trail slashing were conducted in Gungaharra Grasslands Nature Reserve. These are implemented as seasonal conditions dictate.
- 2) Gungaharra Grasslands Nature Reserve has cattle grazing as the prescribed fuel reduction method. The cattle have been in place since July 2023 and are being rotated through designated paddocks.
- 3) All reserves in the Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) estate, including Gungaharra Grasslands, have an allocated Ranger to coordinate management. If this Ranger is absent, management is defaulted to the Senior Ranger for Canberra Nature Park North who oversees all reserves in the area.
- 4) PCS Rangers recognise the need for and benefit of hazard reduction burns. PCS Rangers play a key role in supporting the PCS Fire Management unit in the planning and delivery of hazard reduction burns that achieve the balance of hazard reduction and conservation objections. Once a burn is planned the decision to hold a prescribed burn is generally based on an order of priority with other prescribed burns and seasonal conditions.

- 5) As the land custodian PCS has responsibility for fuel management, including prescribed burns, for the ACT's parks and reserves. PCS and the Rural Fire Service (RFS) meet regularly to discuss upcoming prescribed burns and the RFS is consulted during the establishment of the annual Bushfire Operations Plan. In the case of a bushfire occurring at Gungaharra, the ACT's standard bushfire response procedures will apply as managed by the Emergency Services Agency. The initial response could be tasked to ACT Fire & Rescue, the ACT Rural Fire Service Unit or PCS resources.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature:



Date: 7/12/2023

By the Minister for Planning and Land Management, Mr Mick Gentleman MLA