



Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 **ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

Asked by Ms Leanne Castley MLA on: 23 November 2023 Minister Gentlemen took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard [uncorrected] proof transcript 23 November 2023 [PAGE 29]

In relation to:

MS CASTLEY: I have a specific question about the Gungaharra Grasslands nature reserve. I had a lovely elderly lady contact me, very concerned. She has lived there for many—she has backed onto that for many, many years. I just would love information. She said that this is the first year she has never noticed cattle. There has been no cattle out near her area, which is keeping the grass down for fire hazard reduction. I am just wondering if you can give me an update on that particular grassland.

Mr Gentleman: Yes. I do not have the information on Gungaharra particularly. We might have to take that on notice. It is probably more in my parks and conservation portfolio, but currently happy to get the answer for you.

MS CASTLEY: Sure. I will just put them all on notice, then. There are quite a few. She is very concerned.

Mr Gentleman: Yes.

THE CHAIR: So you have no coverage at all of that grassland area in this current portfolio?

Mr Gentleman: In a fire response we do, Mr Cain, but usually it would go through the portfolio of PCS. They manage rural services, as I have just mentioned, in strategic grazing, slashing and fuel reduction burns in our parkland areas.

MS CASTLEY: I do just have one follow-up. What interaction do the rangers have with the RFS?

Mr Gentleman: It is a continual interaction. RFS work with our PCS crews across the ACT in preparing for fuel load reduction, doing controlled burns and, of course, working with our rural service people at the same time in that strategic slashing and grazing area as well.

MS CASTLEY: Would the rangers be the one advising RFS, “No, do not do burns yet,” or “Can we wait”—how does that communication work?

Mr Gentleman: ESA are the controlling body in looking at fire preparedness for the ACT. They take advice from our Parks and Conservation people, as well as the Rural Fire Service, and work together to ensure we can provide that operational safety into the future.

MS CASTLEY: Okay. I will put that on notice, then.

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

The approach taken by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service to manage fire risk at Gungaharra Grasslands Nature Reserve is described in the Bushfire Operations Plan and has not changed from past years. Gungaharra Grasslands Nature Reserve is an Outer Asset Protection Zone. All fire mitigation work must meet the ACT Bushfire Management Standard.

The current Bushfire Operations Plan requires cattle grazing and trail slashing in Gungaharra Grasslands Nature Reserve. Trail slashing has been completed and cattle grazing has occurred since July 2023.

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

Signature:



Date: 1/12/2023

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