



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

QON No. 15

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT, AND CITY SERVICES
JO CLAY MLA (CHAIR), SUZANNE ORR MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), MARK PARTON MLA

Inquiry into referred 2019–20 Annual and Financial Reports and Budget Estimates 2020-21
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by Jo Clay:

EPSDD BUDGET P. 12 and 172

In relation to: Traditional Custodians

Strategic Indicator 2.2 is to “respect and enable Traditional Custodians’ aspirations and build capacity to Care for Country together”.

Can you please set out how you will incorporate cultural practices and knowledge across all areas of the Directorate?

Have we set up a program to make sure our Ngunnawal Rangers or Traditional Custodians are using their skills to manage our waterways and water catchments, as well as our land? How are we tracking the success of that?

Will we do more cool cultural burns? Are we measuring their effectiveness at reducing fire risk and managing habitat? What sort of data are we tracking and reporting? Are we using cool cultural burns on rural landholder land as well as public land?

What are the other alternatives to weed management?

MINISTER STEEL: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:—

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) has established the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee. This Committee operates in line with principles of free, prior and informed consent and supports EPSDD in the codesign of initiatives that occur on Country, by providing advice, guidance, direction, and decision-making on environmental and land management programs and activities.

The Committee have been working with EPSDD and together have established the Ngunnawal EPSDD Action Plan as part of the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Agreement. The Directorate-wide action plan outlines how EPSDD will continue to work with the Ngunnawal people to acknowledge, respect and build their capacity to Care for Country. This will be reported on annually.

It is through this process, the development of our reconciliation action plan and embedding in legislation and policy Traditional Custodian rights and responsibilities that EPSDD is incorporating cultural practices and knowledge across all areas of the Directorate.



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An example that demonstrates this is the co-design the Molonglo Special Purpose Reserve which has been given the Ngunnawal name of Namarag which means 'wattle'. The design of this precinct has been developed to conserve important areas and provide visitor experiences with a focus on celebrating Ngunnawal culture and practices. Namarag will be a place within the urban landscape for Ngunnawal people to implement cultural practices, share knowledge, hold gatherings and ceremonies and teach their future generations as well as providing opportunities for Ngunnawal cultural tourism supporting their economic development and participation.

All fire management activities including prescribed burning are undertaken in accordance with the annual Bushfire Operations Plan (BOP). The BOP includes cultural burns undertaken at specific locations within the ACT including Jerrabomberra Wetlands, Gubur Dhaura, Pierces Creek and in the Aboriginal Fire Management Zone at Tidbinbilla. EPSDD continues to work with the Traditional Custodians to incorporate their knowledge into practice. All burns undertaken are monitored for their effectiveness in meeting the objectives of reducing risk to life and property and conserving the environment.

The Bushfire Operations Plan relates to land managed by EPSDD and Transport Canberra and City Services and does not include rural lands.

Effective weed management relies on using a range of techniques. Chemical control is the primary technique, however other approaches or combination of approaches includes steam treatments, slashing, grazing, burning, biological and physical removal. The most effective approach will depend on the objectives of the weed management program.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport, and City Services

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Steel', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Date: 11/3/21

By the Acting Minister for Planning and Land Management, Chris Steel