

Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services

Minister for Women

Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence

Minister for Corrections

Minister for Gaming Reform

Member for Murrumbidgee

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**Questions on Notice Paper No 7****16 May 2025****Question No. 457****MR BRADDOCK:** To ask the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services —

1. Given that the draft Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (version 5) identifies that “Bushfires are ignited by either natural or human causes. On average, 93% of all bushfires in the ACT are human caused, either by carelessness or arson. 70-80% of all human-caused bushfires are ignited by arson or by children playing with fire. This highlights the importance of the ACT Government and ACT Policing’s ongoing arson reduction programs”, what educational programs exist in ACT’s schools, and in particular primary schools, to help children understand the risks of playing with fire and the dangers of bushfire, with a view to establishing a lifelong understanding of positive and safe attitudes to fire.

MARISA PATERSON MLA - The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:

The ACT Emergency Services Agency, which includes the ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS) and ACT Fire & Rescue (ACTF&R), facilitate school visits on fire education, tailored to the request of the school.

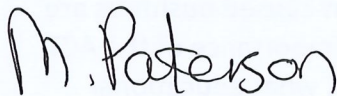
The ACTRFS has various programs to educate school aged students on bushfire risk and preparedness, tailored to their age. This includes:

- Scenario based learning – what to do in an emergency by simulating the disaster (to create a survival plan), how to pack an emergency kit.
- Fire demonstration – burn table that visually showcases to students, fire behaviour and how a protected property can withstand a fire versus an unprepared property (model scale).
- Presentations – fire behaviour, the dangers of playing with fire, the role of the ACTRFS.

The ACTF&R Fire Education Program is designed to ensure Canberra's children are equipped with the skills and knowledge around basic fire safety. The program is delivered to kindergarten classes in the ACT when requested by the school and is also available online at <https://esa.act.gov.au/be-emergency-ready-resources-plans/educational-resources/fire-ed-program>. The information is for the use of teachers, caregivers, families, and children. The ACTF&R Fire Education Program and its messaging is linked to the Australian Curriculum. The educational video, worksheets, and activities are designed to ensure children feel confident, safe, and prepared in the event of a fire emergency.

The ACTF&R Juvenile Fire Awareness and Intervention Program (JFAIP) targets individuals and juveniles with fire-setting tendencies, or in some cases more severe arson charges. The program is fire education based but may incorporate elements of social and fire skill building, behaviour modification in relation to fire, and self-esteem development. The program utilises specially trained firefighters as program facilitators, and either encourages or requires the participation of the young person's parents. The program maintains links with the mental health services and the criminal justice system. The program accepts referrals from youth/children's courts, ACT Policing, school operations, or other areas. The JFAIP is an important strategy for preventing arson, including bushfire arson, among young people who have shown an unhealthy interest in fire.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Marisa Paterson MLA
Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services

Date: 5/6/25

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This response required 1hrs 20mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$156.92