

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 14

05 December 2025

Question No. 768

Fiona Carrick MLA: To ask the Minister for City and Government Services

1. When was the 2025-2026 Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP) approved by the Emergency Services Agency.
2. Was this approval process completed on schedule; if not, what issues caused delays in this approval process.
3. Has the residual bushfire risk increased from the previous year.
4. Is the current residual risk considered acceptable.
5. What planned burns have been conducted within the urban area.
6. What planned burns have not been conducted within the urban area and why not.
7. Why has hazard reduction burning not been undertaken within the red stringybark forest located at Bluetts Block adjacent to Denman Prospect when it was on the approved 2024-2025 BOP and the three previous BOPs, given that this area is within a Strategic Fire Fighting Advantage Zone and that fuel levels in that area are considered to be at the extreme level.
8. Is the Parks and Conservation Service willing to advise the residents of Denman Prospect that the area referred to in part (7) is likely to cause a significant risk to their houses if a bushfire occurs there this summer.
9. What proportion of planned road maintenance tasks under the 2024-2025 BOP were completed.
10. What proportion of the strategic fire access network that occurs on lands managed by the Parks and Conservation Service meet the defined road standards for fire access.
11. Are there any key fire access tracks that are in a state that fire fighting vehicles could not use them without improvement works during this summer.

TARA CHEYNE MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. Drafting of the City and Environment Directorate's (CED) 2025-26 Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP) has been completed. It was sent to the Emergency Services Agency (ESA) Commissioner for consideration and approval on 15 December 2025.
2. There is no fixed schedule for approval of a BOP. The ESA Commissioner has 40 working days to review the BOP once received.

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3. Residual risk as at June 2025 was 34.2%, compared to 30.8% in June 2024 and 37.1% in June 2023.

4. The 34.2% residual risk value is within the target band set by the Regional Fire Management Plan (33 to 47%).

5. Prescribed burns in the following locations near or within the urban area have been completed by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service since July 2024: Pine Island, Hill Reserve, Nicholls, Ginninderry, Mount Taylor, Cotter Road Old Depot, Molonglo Pines, Pinnacle, William Hovell Drive Woodland Conservation, O'Connor Ridge Dryandra Street, Hall Cemetery, Dunlop Neck, Crace Nature Reserve Kowen Oaks Estate and Cooleman Ridge.

Prescribed burns in the following locations near or within the urban area have been completed by the Rural Fire Service over the same time period: Molonglo, Narrabundah Hill, Throsby and Croke Place Wetlands

6. Prescribed burns in the following locations near or within the urban area have not been completed due to conditions not being within the required prescription to burn, such as fuel being too dry or too wet, or unsuitable weather: Pialligo Horse paddocks, Denman Prospect, McQuoids Hill, Black Mountain, Hall, Mt Pleasant

A burn at O'Connor Ridge was delayed due to the presence of asbestos on the site; alternative locations/ fuel treatments are being considered.

7. This burn was partially completed in August 2025, targeting areas of dead blackberry and other available fuels within the block. The remaining sections will be treated as soon as fuel and weather conditions meet the prescribed requirements; this was scheduled twice in late 2025 but cancelled due to changes in forecast weather conditions with 24 hours of the burn.

8. Fuel levels and risk to Denman Prospect are currently being managed through several measures including the partial burn completed in August 2025, upgrades to fire trails and an extensive Asset Protection Zone as part of the ongoing development of Denman Prospect.

Community education and awareness is the responsibility of the Emergency Services Agency as directed by the *Emergencies Act 2004*.

9. 76 access maintenance and vegetation maintenance activities were proposed in the 2024-2025 Bushfire Operations Plan; 53 were completed by 30 June 2025, or 70 per cent.

10. The ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) services all roads within the PCS estate to be trafficable to fire appliances as specified in the 'performance standard' outlined in the Bushfire Management Standards. With over 3000km of trails in the PCS estate it is not possible to know the state of all of trails at any moment in time; instead asset maintenance and vegetation management in accordance with the standards is scheduled on a regular interval with reactive repairs organised as issues are identified.

11. PCS is not aware of any strategically important fire trails that are impassable by fire appliances. Some tracks that are less important for fire access and suppression, such as Scenic Road in Pierces Creek, are closed due to unsafe conditions and are scheduled for repair.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tara Cheyne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tara Cheyne MLA
Minister for City and Government Services

Date: 22/12/25

This response required 2hrs to complete, at an approximate cost of \$213.92.