

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question On Notice

Wednesday, 13 February 2019

1873. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Environment

I refer to a fire on the Burrup during November 2018, at the north end and for all of Dolphin Island that was caused by a lightning strike, and given the area has World Heritage Value and contains a million plus petroglyphs, I ask:

- (a) is the Minister aware that the department decided to let the fire burn without any restraint;
- (b) will the Minister explain why the decision was made by the department to let the fire burn without any restraint;
- (c) will the Minister advise if any of the Rock Art on the Burrup was damaged by the fire;
- (d) if the Rock Art was not damaged by the fire, will the Minister provide the evidence that demonstrates this to be true; and
- (e) if no to (d), why not?

Answer

- (a) The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) responded to two bushfires ignited by lightning, which merged into one, on the evening of Friday 16 November 2018 in Murujuga National Park. DBCA's response considered risks to life, property (including industry) as well as environmental and cultural values.
- (b) DBCA responded immediately to reports of the bushfires and determined on the evening of Friday, 16 November that the two bushfires were burning in inaccessible terrain that could not be reached safely. On Saturday morning 17 November, DBCA fire crews were able to undertake active suppression on the western flank of the bushfire and were able to prevent its further spread down the western side of the Burrup Peninsula. The eastern portion of the bushfire however remained inaccessible to fire crews for the remainder of the day. On Sunday, 18 November an aerial reconnaissance was flown by helicopter and it was determined that direct attack on the eastern flank of the bushfire was not possible, due to the rocky terrain and sensitive rock art sites found throughout the area.
- (c)-(d) DBCA is working closely with the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation to assess and determine whether any damage has occurred as a result of these bushfires.
- (e) Not applicable.



Hon Stephen Dawson MLC
MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT;
DISABILITY SERVICES; ELECTORAL AFFAIRS