

Minister for Energy and Renewables
Minister for Parks and Environment

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20 September 2024

Mr Mark Shelton
Member for Lyons
Via Clerk of the House
Email: laura.ross@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mark

I write in response to your question on behalf of your constituent in relation to the fire preparedness of the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) ahead of the upcoming fire season.

Fighting bushfires is a combined effort from all of our State Fire Agencies. I note that the PWS does have the resources required to respond to a typical fire season, along with the systems and escalation arrangements to respond to events that are beyond typical.

PWS staff are currently undertaking medical and fitness assessments ahead of the upcoming season, with final firefighting numbers to be confirmed following completion of that training and assessment.

By way of background, there were 116 personnel last season, who were trained to fight fires in remote areas (arduous firefighters), and 27 tanker-based firefighters (moderate firefighters), totalling 143 firefighting personnel.

In addition, PWS had 61 people trained to undertake roles in Incident Management Teams including Incident Controllers, Planning Officers, Logistics Officer, Public Liaison Officers and Operations Officers.

During the peak bushfire season, PWS also has a dedicated, winch capable helicopter, to pre-position in areas of greatest risk and respond to bushfires where required.

PWS has deployed remote cameras with weather stations to assist with detection of fires and also to monitor existing fires. These cameras are part of a statewide network of cameras deployed by the agencies. The cameras and weather stations allow PWS to check and monitor conditions in remote areas, critically saving time and assisting to manage the risks associated with staff deployment when working in these remote and often rugged areas.

Satellite technology also assists with early detection of fires arising from lightning strikes or other sources. These satellites provide information on ignition location and fire intensity, assisting PWS to detect fires early and triage the most important fires to deploy its resources to.

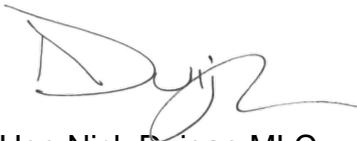
In addition to our State Fire Agency resources, the Australasian Fire Authorities Council's is the National Council for Fire and Emergency Services in Australia and New Zealand. It maintains the National Resource Sharing Centre (NRSC).

The NRSC was established in 2016 to develop and maintain the national arrangement for interstate assistance and to support collaboration with international jurisdictions.

The NSRC arrangements ensure additional specialist personnel and equipment is available should we ever need them.

Thank you for your question and your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Duigan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Nick Duigan MLC
Minister for Parks and Environment