



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

MEDIA STATEMENT

10 January
2020

Queensland bushfires, investigation update

3:16 PM

The following can be attributed to a QPS spokesperson:

On September 10, 2019 the Queensland Police Service established Taskforce Overcross to coordinate activities to prevent, disrupt and investigate all significant bushfires across Queensland.

The Queensland Police Service and Taskforce Overcross continues to work collaboratively with its partner agencies, the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service and the Queensland Rural Fire Service to investigate fires and identify the potential cause and origin, including any possible human involvement.

The taskforce has established that a number of the fires have been deliberately or recklessly set by school aged children. A number of these have been lit in grass and bushland which in some cases has caused significant property damage. Not only does this behaviour put lives and property at risk, the lighting of fires can lead to prosecution for serious offences.

As at January 8, 2020 there have been 1068 reported bushfires in Queensland since September 10 2019. Of these 114 fires have been deliberately or maliciously lit through human involvement and have been subject to police enforcement action.

Enforcement action includes charging, restorative justice or cautioning.

To date, 109 persons on 180 charges (including 36 adults and 73 juveniles) have been dealt with by police across Queensland for offences relating to recklessly and/or deliberately setting fires.

The type of offences detected state-wide include unauthorised lighting of fires, contravening local fire bans, and endangering property under the Criminal Code.

At this time of heightened danger and weather conditions, the community is asked to work with authorities to prevent fires.

Parents and carers are urged to speak to their children about the consequences of lighting fires in this time of heightened danger and school holidays. The consequences can be dire – people can die, properties can be lost.

Issued by the QPS Media Unit: Brisbane, Australia.

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The Queensland Fire and Emergency Service has a successful program (Fight Fire Fascination) to support parents and guardians with their efforts to educate their children about fire. It is based on a belief that children and young people can learn skills to remain safe from fire.

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