



Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef  
Minister for Science and Youth Affairs

Your Ref: 662187  
Our Ref: CTS 05407/21

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8 April 2021

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 17 March 2021 enclosing Parliamentary Petition 3433-20 regarding the use of fires by some suburban property owners for burning vegetation and rubbish.

There are several measures in place to regulate backyard burning, including impacts of smoke on neighbours and burning when there is a total fire ban. Any fire over a certain size (namely, if any dimension of the material to be consumed exceeds two metres) needs a permit under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990*. Permits are issued by local fire wardens and have conditions to minimise smoke blowing towards dwellings and fire escaping to bushland. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services can also investigate and act against people burning when there is a total fire ban. Members of the public should provide Queensland Fire and Emergency Services with information relating to illegal burning, if they have concerns.

In some instances, local government laws apply for people wishing to have smaller fires. The *Environmental Protection Act 1994* contains provisions for environmental nuisance from smoke from backyard fires, with the responsibility for enforcing those provisions devolved to local governments under the Environmental Protection Regulation 2019. When a fire is lit, whether permitted or not, these nuisance provisions are managed and enforced by local governments. It is also the responsibility of local governments to provide proactive education about responsibilities when it comes to backyard burning and nuisance caused to others by smoke.

Ipswich City Council has a process in place to address impacts to others from backyard fires and smoke. This includes information on citizens' responsibilities to avoid nuisance and environmental harm and a process to raise complaints with the Council.

I trust that this information has been of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

Meaghan Scanlon MP  
**Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef**  
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