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## **Budget funds improved emergency services facilities**

Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Simon Corbell, today announced **\$5.7 million** in the 2009-10 ACT Budget to expand the current emergency services facilities at Hume.

“The funding for the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) will see improvements to the current helicopter base on the Monaro Highway and the establishment of a new emergency services training centre adjacent to the facility,” Mr Corbell said.

“The project includes upgrading medical training and staff facilities at the current helicopter base, relocating the bushfire helicopters to the site from the current ESA hangar at Canberra Airport and constructing a new emergency services training centre.

“The new hangar will house two helicopters during the annual bushfire season so they will be closer to the western side of the Territory and in a better location for a rapid response to any fire.

“This should not create any adverse impact on nearby residents as the helicopters will be restricted to flying during daylight hours,” Mr Corbell said.

The Minister said the new ESA Training Centre would bring together the ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Fire Brigade, ACT Rural Fire Service and ACT State Emergency Service in the one location for the first time. This would allow emergency services staff and volunteers to train separately or together in a facility that would provide theoretical and practical training.

“The facility will house administration and theoretical classrooms along with training areas for vertical rescue, breathing apparatus, fire pumping facilities and hot fire training for both flashovers and backdraught fires.

“The planning has taken into account environmental issues. Flashover and backdraft training will include the mitigation of smoke emissions and any contaminated fire fighting water will be captured and reused.”

Also provided in the Budget is **\$2.27 million** to upgrade two of the Territory's volunteer emergency services sheds.

"The ACT RFS Jerrabomberra Brigade, based at Symonston, and the ACT RFS Rivers Brigade and ACT SES Rivers Unit, based in the Cotter district, service large parts of our city," Mr Corbell said.

The Minister said both facilities required major works to meet increased operational demand and to comply with the latest Building Code of Australia. The sheds were designed 20 years ago and no longer fully meet the needs of volunteers or comply with the relevant building and OH&S standards.

"ACT Rural Fire Service and ACT State Emergency Service volunteers regularly give up time away from family, friends and work to help our community in times of need," Mr Corbell said.

"The hard-working volunteers deserve the best facilities that we can give them to continue their invaluable contribution to the community and meet their operational requirements well into the future."

The refurbishments to be undertaken at Jerrabomberra and Rivers sheds include improved secure housing for emergency services vehicles, new training facilities, updated office space and better toilet facilities.

"The funding is in addition to the \$1 million over 2 years for the upgrade of other Territory emergency services facilities I announced as part of the 2008-09 Third Appropriation," Mr Corbell said.

The ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Fire Brigade, ACT Rural Fire Service and ACT State Emergency Service will all benefit from the funding.

As part of the two-year program, Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service sheds will receive upgrades totalling \$400,000. These include:

- Guises Creek Shed;
- Hall Shed;
- Southern District RFS Shed;
- Gungahlin Joint Emergency Services Centre;
- Molonglo RFS Shed; and
- Woden SES Depot.

The Minister said there would also be a series of upgrades to ACT Ambulance and ACT Fire Brigade stations, including engineering works, a new boiler, painting, carpentry, plumbing, gates, perimeter fences, soft furnishings, carports/sheds and other required works.

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