



ACT Government

2003-2004 BUDGET

BUILDING A CITY SAFER FROM THREAT OF BUSHFIRES

The Stanhope Government's second Budget will immediately inject an extra \$330,000 into a new Fire Fuel Management Plan, which will reduce the threat of bushfires in and around Canberra.

Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope said the important proposal would be made up of two figures - \$250,000 for Fire Fuel Management in Canberra Nature Park and \$80,000 to employ an additional Bushfire Officer on a 12-month contract.

"My Government is funding this \$250,000 program to conduct additional hazard reduction measures in various areas of Canberra Nature Park adjoining or close to residential areas.

"After the December 2001 fires, we reduced fire hazards in a number of areas including Red Hill, Bruce and Tuggeranong," Mr Stanhope said. "The January fires means we need to ensure that fuel loads in areas in and around our suburbs are kept to a minimum so that there is as little risk as possible to private and public property.

Fire Fuel Reduction works will occur before the coming fire season with exact timing dependant on prevailing weather conditions.

The following Fire Hazard Reduction works planned are:

- Physical removal in areas of Mount Ainslie and around the Ainslie Village;
- Hazard reduction burning in Aranda bushland, Black Mountain and Caswell Drive;
- Slashing in various areas of Canberra Nature Park;
- Trail maintenance in various areas of Canberra Nature Park; and
- Extension of fuel modified zones along various areas of the urban interface eg, Oakey Hill.

"Without our injection of \$250,000, these works could simply not be done," Mr Stanhope said. "However, to ensure the protection of the Canberra community we have allocated all necessary funds to cover the equipment, machinery and labour costs to get this job done."

"Necessary recovery efforts have been a tremendous strain on ACT Government finances and resources," Mr Stanhope said. "However, my Government will ensure that the necessary work on bushfire hazard reduction is completed before the next fire season. This additional funding provides for a qualified and experienced person who will oversee the work to minimise the risks from fire to Canberra suburbs.

"This Budget ensures we are building a city and community safe from the risks of bushfires next summer," Mr Stanhope concluded.

Statement ends



AUSTRALIAN
LABOR
PARTY

Released: 6 May 2003

Inquiries: Kelvin Watt

02 6205 9777(w)

0411 707 489(m)