



ACT Government

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INTEGRATING EMERGENCY AND SECURITY SERVICES

The Emergency Services Authority is to become part of the Justice and Community Safety Department, Police and Emergency Services Minister Simon Corbell announced today.

Mr Corbell said the change would not affect the autonomy of the fire brigade, ambulance services, rural fire service and the state emergency service.

“Emergency Services will continue to be managed by the Commissioner who will be responsible for strategic direction and management of the four services,” he said.

“Under the new structure the Commissioner will be able to focus on operational issues and day to day performance of functions will remain under the direct management of the Chief Officers of the services.

Mr Corbell said the ACT Government was committed to a strong and cohesive emergency response with Emergency Services Budget increasing by 46 per cent over the past 3 years.

“Since 2002-03, the Emergency Services Budget has increased by \$21 million, with \$59.157 million to be provided in the 2006-07 Budget,” he said.

Mr Corbell said the Government was also progressing the development of an Emergency Services headquarters at Fairbairn, committing \$25.7 million over the next four years to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided for the four emergency services.

“This demonstrates the Government’s commitment to ensure that there remains an integrated emergency services response,” he said.

“The changes will enhance coordination of the whole-of-government response to emergency situations, further aligning Emergency Services with the agencies that have responsibility for the related areas of security and counter-terrorism.”

As part of the changes the Government will amend the *Emergencies Act* to provide for enhanced accountability for emergency management resources and to clarify reporting on emergency management.

“The amendments will not make any changes to the Bushfire Council, the Emergency Management Committee, the functions or powers of the services or the powers in a state of emergency.”

Mr Corbell said these changes maintained the goals of the McLeod Inquiry to ensure all the emergency services are integrated into a single cohesive organisation.”

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“The focus of McLeod was to bring together the separate organisations that then made up the emergency services group, and which were only loosely co-ordinated by the Emergency Services Bureau,” he said.

“The clear and stated aim of the new structure was to increase the integration and co-ordination of the four services to enable them to work together while still preserving their distinct skills and abilities.

“The McLeod Report recommended the creation of a single entity to bring together the separate emergency services. That has been achieved and will be retained under the new structure.”