

# Inquiry into the Operational Response to the January 2003 Bushfires in the ACT

Ron McLeod AM

1 August 2003

ISBN 0 642 602166

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Chief Minister's Department

Publication No 03/0537  
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Maps on the front and rear inside covers of the report were provided courtesy of the NSW Rural Fire Service. The Inquiry has not independently verified the fire related information on the maps.



## Inquiry into the Operational Response to the January Bushfires

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Mr Jon Stanhope MLA  
Chief Minister  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
GPO Box 1020  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Chief Minister

I have pleasure in passing on the report of the Inquiry I conducted, in response to the terms of reference you provided.

The report deals with all of the matters I considered were important but it was not possible to address every matter raised with me during the Inquiry. My approach was to concentrate on those issues that suggested the possibility that they may be related to systemic weaknesses in the emergency management arrangements in place in the ACT. In this way, my report focuses on matters that may warrant direct attention by the Government, and by the agencies responsible for dealing with the fires and their aftermath.

The submissions and comments I received from members of the community, and from other sources, were extremely helpful to the Inquiry. Especially where they added weight to general themes or trends that emerged, they were particularly useful in identifying possible weaknesses in current practices and approaches.

I have thanked all who assisted, in the body of the report. I received full cooperation from the members of the ACT public service and others holding positions of authority, who without exception approached the Inquiry in a positive and constructive manner.

Around 60 recommendations are made in the report and I commend them to you for consideration.

Thank you for inviting me to undertake this important Inquiry. It was a privilege to be able to play a small part in helping to identify the lessons to be learnt from the event.

Yours sincerely

R N McLeod  
1 August 2003