



# Responding to Bushfire Risk

## An investment in firefighting

Our \$10 million plan to respond to the increased bushfire & emergency risk in the ACT.

**Global warming is increasing bushfire danger weather in the ACT which creates an increased risk of bushfires. The fire season is starting earlier and running for longer and will continue to lengthen into the future.**

Modelling suggests that by 2030, the number of professional firefighters in Australia will need to increase by between 67% and 83% (depending on how much our climate changes) to keep pace with increased population, asset value, and fire danger weather. In the ACT the projected required increase is between 37% and 97%.<sup>1</sup>

**The ACT Greens are committed to addressing the increased bushfire risks presented by global warming, ensure effective bushfire management, and to ensure we have a well equipped and effective firefighting force.**

**We want our emergency services to be well resourced, coordinated and supported to meet the needs of the ACT community, and for the ACT community to be prepared for the risks of living in a bushfire prone landscape.**

**That's why the ACT Greens will invest \$10 million dollars to:**

- » Support additional fire fighting staff over the next 4 years to respond to bushfires and other emergencies;
- » Purchase a new aerial pumper and a Hazmat/breathing apparatus appliance;
- » Establish a key stakeholder roundtable to discuss traditional fire management in Namadgi National Park; and
- » Ensure key stakeholders - including Emergency Services professionals and volunteers - are closely included in decisions such as the structure of emergency agencies and emergency service planning (such as bushfire zones).

### **> More Firefighters**

**As global warming increases bushfire risk in the ACT, and as our population grows, increased**

<sup>1</sup> Lesley Hughes and Will Steffen (Climate Council of Australia), "Be Prepared: Climate Change and the ACT Bushfire Threat", 2014. <http://www.climatecouncil.org.au/uploads/a56c563caa5bb336050ed88c60dba7e4.pdf>; NIEIR, "Firefighters and climate change: The human resources dimension of adapting to climate change. (UFU Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications' Inquiry into recent trends and preparedness for extreme weather events), 2013.

**firefighting staff and resources are needed to keep the community safe from fires and emergencies. Existing firefighters are already undertaking large amounts of overtime to meet demand.**

**The Greens are also committed to ensuring that firefighters are appointed to fill the positions already funded in the current budget.**

**> New firefighting equipment**

**ACT firefighters need specialist equipment to respond to emergencies and are in need of a second aerial firefighting vehicles, and an additional Hazmat response vehicle. The Greens would provide funding for the purchase of both an aerial pumper (which can be used as a pumper and an aerial device) as well as a Hazmat/ breathing apparatus appliance.**

**> Traditional fire management**

**The ACT Bushfire Council, established after the 2003 bushfires, includes representatives from professional and volunteer firefighters as well as rural and conservation interests.**

**Over the past decade the Council has developed the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan, which aims for the best balance possible between protection of life and property and conservation of biodiversity. In working towards joint management of Namadgi National Park with the ACT Government and traditional owners of the land, it has become evident that there are**

**conflicting policies around fire management techniques that should or could be used in the area.**

**This is a complex policy area that the Greens believe needs broader stakeholder discussion, commencing with a roundtable.**