



Media statement

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Black Cat Creek bushfire Major Incident Report

The City of Albany has acknowledged a decision by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to publically release the Major Incident Report into the Black Cat Creek bushfire.

The MIR, which was conducted on behalf of DFES, the Department of Environment and Conservation (now Parks and Wildlife), and the City of Albany, outlines 10 recommendations for State-wide improvements in bushfire response, preparedness and risk mitigation.

Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington noted the MIR's authors suspected the arrangements between DFES, DEC and the City during the fire were not unique to Albany and were likely to be similar across the State.

Mr Wellington said all 10 recommendations in the MIR had been accepted by the City and had either already been enacted or were in the process of being enacted.

However he said the City wanted to go further than simply achieving technical compliance with the MIR's recommendations, which is why the City has commissioned a separate review to identify ways it can better support, guide and train the 16 volunteer bushfire brigades it is responsible for.

"The City and the wider community are in great debt to our dedicated and selfless volunteer firemen, who are constantly standing by ready to drop everything and literally put their lives on the line to protect our lives and property," Mr Wellington said.

"The tragic loss of DEC firefighter Wendy Bearfoot in the Black Cat Creek fire highlighted the importance of acknowledging when improvements can be made across all agencies, including the City, to try and reduce the risk of such a heartbreaking event happening again."

Mr Wellington said the separate review had included extensive consultation with all City of Albany volunteer fire brigades and would include a range of short, medium and long term actions.

"The City is committed to making sure our volunteers have as much support and guidance as possible in order to improve fire response and preparedness and reduce fire risk in the future," he said.

The report will be released publically when complete.

END