



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Bushfires NT Enforcement Officers Inspect Record Number of Land Tenures**

Bushfires NT enforcement officers have been busy this dry season inspecting more than 8500 land tenures for the first time ever in the Vernon Region.

Bushfires NT director, Steve Sutton said the Fire Break Enforcement program in the Vernon Region has been a huge success.

“To date, 537 warnings have been issued, with all land tenures in the region being inspected,” he said.

“When we compare the numbers with last year we find a 50 per cent improvement in firebreak installations.

“People are clearly getting the message and taking steps to protect themselves from wildfire.

“We are really pleased with the results, as it means reduced risk for rural landholders and improved safety for our volunteer fire fighters.

“This is the first time since the program commenced that all landholdings have been inspected in the one fire season.”

Mr Sutton said this huge task was made possible by the addition of new staff.

“There has been huge growth in the number of rural properties in the area, and long wet season meant a long growing season, with the prospect of a severe fire season,” he said.

Mr Sutton said while residents have been installing fire breaks, the 13 Volunteer Bushfire Brigades in the region have been conducting planned hazard reduction burns.

“These were completed several weeks ago and the only fires now occurring are wildfires,” he said.

“Volunteers spend thousands of hours suppressing wildfires each year, and the recent large fires suggest this year will be particularly busy.

“Anyone caught illegally lighting fires will be prosecuted under the Bushfires Act, of which the maximum penalty is \$25,000 or five years jail.”

Mr Sutton reminded landholders are responsible for reducing bushfire risk on their property. Installing firebreaks and fire access trails provides access for fire fighting vehicles.

“Fire breaks are absolutely essential and there have been several prosecutions resulting in hefty fines and criminal records imposed on landowners who failed to install them to meet the minimum standard,” Mr Sutton said.

Ends

**Media Note – For more information contact Steve Sutton on 0401 118 326**

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