



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Bushfires NT Battle to Contain Wildfires

Bushfires NT have battled hard during the past 24 hours to extinguish fires to the north and south of Darwin.

The fires are believed to have been illegally and deliberately lit at Fogg Dam to Darwin's north and Marrakai to Darwin's south, prompting Bushfires NT director Steve Sutton to urge anyone with information to contact NT police on 131 444 or Bushfires NT on 8922 0844 if they have information about the fires.

"If we are able to track down the persons responsible for deliberately lighting these illegal fires we are in a better position to prevent them from doing this again," Mr Sutton said.

"There is presently a high fire danger across the Top End and such senseless activity puts people's lives and property at risk, including those of our Bushfires NT staff and volunteers who work tirelessly containing and extinguishing wildfires.

"I urge the public in the rural area to be vigilant and report any suspected illegal lighting of fires to police or Bushfires NT if they see or know anything.

"Anyone found guilty of illegally lighting a fire faces up to a maximum five year jail term or \$25,000 fine."

Mr Sutton said aerial surveys of affected and surrounding areas were being conducted to track down suspected or would be illegal fire lighters

He said Bushfires volunteers from a number of brigades, and staff from Batchelor have worked with landholders battling the wildfires.

Mr Sutton is hopeful the fires will no longer threaten property or lives by tomorrow afternoon.

This week's fire has also caused visible amounts of smoke to filter across the Darwin and Palmerston region.

Environment Protection Agency Program Environment and Greenhouse Policy Manager Paul Purdon said air quality monitoring in the Darwin region shows that air quality in Darwin is well below national goals for most of the dry season.

"Monitoring has shown that pollutant levels from bushfires are generally low in the region," Mr Purdon said.

"For particulate matter, a primary pollutant from bushfires, Darwin only ever exceeds the national standard once or twice a year.

"Last year we exceeded the standard once and this was a result of fireworks being let off on Territory Day, not bushfires.

"The National Environment Protection Measure (NEPM) goal for Ambient Air Quality allows for the standard to be exceeded up to five times each year. This has not occurred in recorded history in the NT."

**Media Note – For more information contact Steve Sutton on 8922 0832 or Paul Purdon on 8924 4070.**

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