



**Marion Scrymgour**  
MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT

**13 September 2005**

## **MINISTER THANKS BUSHFIRE VOLUNTEERS**

Environment Minister Marion Scrymgour has praised Bushfires Council volunteers for their selfless efforts in battling bushfires in the Top End this week.

Ms Scrymgour said more than 50 Bushfires NT staff and volunteers from 10 Brigades battled the wild fire since it was sparked on 9 September, using 24 grass fire units, three tanker trucks, three helicopters, three graders and one loader.

She praised staff and Bushfires NT volunteers for risking their lives and in some cases their own property when battling the fires of the past few days.

“The work, dedication and commitment of Bushfires NT staff and volunteers since this all began on Saturday are nothing short of amazing,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“In some circumstances the volunteers used their own vehicles to help fight the fire and each one of them deserves a pat on the back.”

Bushfires NT has begun investigating the cause of this week’s blaze that affected more than 100 properties near Darwin River south of Darwin.

“Property and land across a 30 square kilometre region was affected by the large fires,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“While many landholders in the region have done the right thing by implementing positive land management practices such as installing firebreaks and fire access trails, and reducing grass fuel by early dry season burning, some have continually failed to heed our warnings.

“Since the start of the dry season we have repeatedly encouraged rural landholders to take action in preparation for events such as the large fires of the past few days, as it helps prevent lives, property and the environment succumbing to wild fire.

“And while we are lucky no one has died, we have had reports of several injuries to landholders, as well as a few residential dwellings being destroyed, not to mention more than 100 other properties being affected.”

Ms Scrymgour reinforced that now was not the time to relax, with the fire break enforcement program is still in place.

“So once the mopping up and fire containment in the region is complete Bushfires Council will continue with the next task at hand to do what we can to limit the risk of this happening again.”

Bushfires NT staff and volunteers were also called out to several other fires across the Top End yesterday including one at Tortilla Flats north of Adelaide River.

She said where landholders repeatedly fail to heed Bushfires NT warnings to install fire breaks they face penalties of up to two years imprisonment or \$5000 in fines under section 47 of the NT Bushfires Act.