MEDIA RELEASE

INCOMPETENT AND LATE

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The Henderson Government has finally admitted it mishandled the Central Australia bushfire crisis.

The Country Liberals’ four Central Australian members are stunned the Government has announced a review of resourcing arrangements for volunteer brigades in the same week that it defended its handling of its bushfire response.

As well, six weeks after bushfires first started, the Territory Government has finally moved to beef up resources for hard-working volunteer fire fighters.

Shadow Minister for Central Australia, Matt Conlan, said the review was a response to Government failure.

"Minister Karl Hampton has been saying for months now that the Government has equipped brigades for the bushfire season – but clearly this isn’t the case,” Mr Conlan said.

"This is an admission by the Government and the Minister that brigades weren’t adequately prepared for the outset of the bushfire season, which has been one of the worst in recent memory."

Member for Braitling, Adam Giles, said the acquisition of an additional grass fire unit is long overdue.

As well, the Bushfire Council had been requesting additional resources since last year that would have increased its ability to prepare for and fight fires, but the Government failed to respond

"Instead the Government sees fit to boost bushfire resourcing after thousands of square miles of pasture and tonnes of feed have been destroyed."

Member for Araluen, Robyn Lambley, said the Government’s announcement that it will deliver a second-hand grader within the next ‘two or three weeks’ is bizarre.

"Control of the Bushfire Council in Central Australia – like everything else – has been centralised in Darwin, which means you have Top Enders making decisions about fires in Central Australia."

Member for MacDonnell, Alison Anderson, said she had previously received a number of guarantees from the Government about the Territory’s readiness to combat a significant blaze.

"I’ve been asking for months now and the Government pays lip service but hasn’t addressed the problems, which have become evident over the past six weeks,” Ms Anderson said.

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