The Northern Territory Bushfire Volunteers Association will soon benefit from $20,000 funding granted by the Territory Government.

The Minister for Parks and Wildlife, Kon Vatskalis, made the announcement at an Emergency Services Volunteers Function in Alice Springs.

"The Government recognises the hard job these people have to do to ensure the community is protected against the devastation of bushfires," Mr Vatskalis said.

"With this year’s fire season fast approaching, this money will be welcomed by the people who need it most.

"The Government will grant the Northern Territory Bushfire Volunteers Association $10,000 before the end of this financial year, and a further $10,000 grant in the 2003/04 Territory Budget.

"This money is to be specifically used to upgrade personal protection equipment such as jackets, as well as safety support gear."

Mr Vatskalis said 2002 saw Central Australia experience one of the worst fire seasons in over 25 years, with more than 134,000 square kilometres burnt out.

The Alice Springs Volunteer Bushfire Brigade attended 83 major fires totalling 2439 hours of volunteer time.