



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CORONER

MEDIA RELEASE

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Coronial investigation into bushfires progressing well

ACT Chief Coroner, Ron Cahill, today advised that considerable progress has been made with the Coronial Inquiry into the cause and origin of the January bushfires and the manner and cause of the tragic deaths associated with them.

“The Coroner, Magistrate Doogan, has established a special team of investigators and is meeting regularly with them. She has also toured the worst affected areas and conducted an aerial inspection of the entire fire area to better understand the impact of this event” Mr Cahill said.

There has also been close liaison with the Director of Public Prosecutions, who will provide Counsel to assist the coroner, and lines of communication have been opened with the NSW State Coroner to ensure that any cross-border issues are addressed and that information is shared between jurisdictions.

The investigation team is receiving good co-operation from Emergency Service managers and hundreds of relevant documents have been seized and taken into the custody of the Coroner. Plans are being made to ensure that the huge amount of information which will have to be processed by the coronial team is assisted by the latest information technology.

The Coroner proposes to hold an early Directions Hearing to deal with applications from people interested in making submissions to or being heard by the Inquiry, and to set a hearing timetable. That Directions Hearing will take place as soon as the investigative phase of the inquiry is further advanced.

“The independent administrative review being conducted by Mr McLeod will, no doubt, also provide useful input to the Coroner’s Inquiry” Mr Cahill said.

Chief Coroner Cahill will not be available for media interview.