



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY  
OFFICE OF THE CORONER

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Coronial investigation into bushfires underway**

ACT Coroner, Magistrate Maria Doogan, has already met with investigators from the Australian Federal Police to begin setting the direction for the Coronial investigation into the recent bushfires.

Magistrate Doogan said a specialist investigative team has already been established to assist in her independent inquiry into the January, 2003 bushfires in the Australian Capital Territory and the associated tragic deaths.

“Due to the enormous scale of the incident and its devastating effects on the lives and property of the Canberra community, the parameters of the investigation will be very broad”, said Magistrate Doogan.

“The office of the Coroner has a legal duty to investigate all aspects of the manner and cause of deaths of those persons who lost their lives, as well as the cause and origin of the fires that destroyed and damaged property.”

“In addition, there will be ample opportunity to fully and publicly examine the emergency management and response arrangements, and to make any recommendations if necessary in this area

“To maintain the independence and integrity of the Coronial Inquiry, the investigation team will remain independent from the current bushfire and emergency management operations, reporting directly to the Coroner.

“Given the complexities of the overall emergency and the need to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation, the first formal hearings will not commence until the investigation process is completed,” Mrs Doogan said.

**Magistrate Doogan will not be available for media interview. All enquiries should be directed to the ACT Policing media team on 02 62567460.**