



Australia's Sovereign Year Round Firefighting Capability

In preparation for the next fire season, the Australian Government has announced the addition of a Large Air Tanker to provide year round aerial firefighting capability.

Minister for Emergency Management Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie said an annual \$4 million boost to the National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) will allow a Large Air Tanker to be based in Australia to be readily available for our earlier starting and later finishing fire seasons.

"The Black Summer bushfires were one of the worst natural disasters in our nation's history. Having our own water bomber ready for action all year round will allow fire fighters to respond quickly and effectively, saving lives, livelihoods and homes," Senator McKenzie said.

"This Tanker will reduce our reliance on overseas aircraft and together with existing aerial firefighting resources will ensure we are well prepared to combat the threat of bushfires across the country.

A sophisticated fleet of more than 150 specialised, highly mobile aircraft are positioned

around the country to respond to bushfires, protect communities and to support firefighters on the ground.

"The vast capacity of these aircraft, combined with the hard work of firefighters on the ground, and a well-prepared community, will make the difference.

"We have acted on the recommendation of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Final Report for an aerial firefighting capability to be tasked according to the greatest national need," Senator McKenzie said.

In total, the Australian Government has increased its annual investment in aerial firefighting to more than \$30 million for the National Aerial Firefighting Centre to ensure additional resources are available to firefighters.

"By working together to pool our resources, all jurisdictions can get the maximum value for money and ensure that Australians are protected by the best aerial firefighting equipment possible.