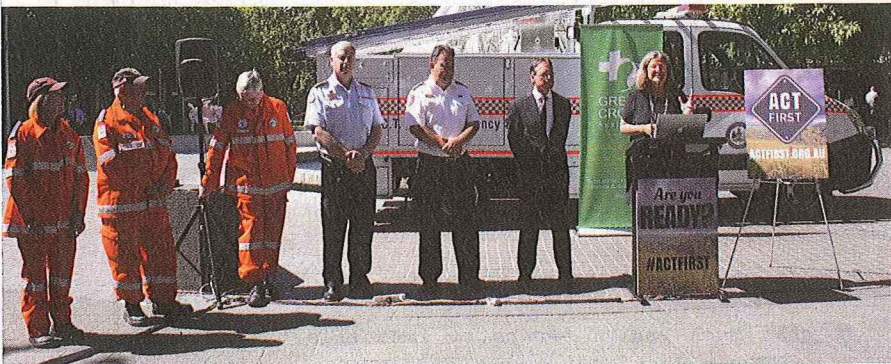


Resource encourages residents to ACT First



Local SES members Sue Elsbury, Gordon McAlpine and Peter Outeridge joined Chief Officer of the ACT SES Tony Graham, Chief Officer of the ACT RFS Andrew Stark, Federal Minister for the Environment Greg Hunt and Green Cross Australia CEO Mara Bun at the launch of ACT First on Wednesday 6 November.

This is a view shared by Chief Officer of the ACT SES Tony Graham who said that, anecdotally, of the 2,200 yearly average requests for storm and flooding assistance about half could be prevented.

'We know that we will never have everyone do the preparation but if we can get most of the people to do more in advance of a natural event, it can save us having to respond and prevents some of the damage going to occur,' Mr Graham said, who added that once you have created your plans, it is also important to regularly review them as 'circumstances change'.

Launched by Green Cross Australia on Wednesday 6 November, the ACT First website is about self-reliance and self-responsibility.

The interactive resource is easy to use and can be customised to each user's needs and circumstances – including location in the ACT, types of pets, family members and form of residence – to create custom preparedness tips.

Green Cross Australia has partnered with the ACT Government's Emergency Services Agency, Australian National University and CSIRO to create ACT First. The website aims to empower communities who are aware of their risks and are better prepared to respond to – and survive – severe weather events or natural disasters. For more information, visit actfirst.org.au

Fire and storm seasons are closely intertwined in the ACT which is why the timing of a new online resource to help ACT residents prepare for severe weather events has been welcomed by the ACT Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service.

The new ACT First resource enables users to access specific weather archives as well as the latest weather warnings and up-to-date

information on how to be aware, prepare and help others.

Chief Officer of the ACT RFS Andrew Stark said in terms of preparation 'it is only too late when the storm or fire hits'.

'This is a wonderful website,' Mr Stark said. 'When real disaster occurs, the community is in the frontline before we arrive... it is about developing lasting and personal plans for people in the community.'