

# Tuggeranong Community Council

By President Nick Tsoulis

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I WANTED our community to reflect this month on the 10th anniversary of the Canberra bushfires that killed four people and destroyed 516 homes, including the suburbs of Duffy, Chapman, Rivett and Kambah, which were in the direct path of this firestorm on January 19, 2003.

Many ACT residents were given little or no warning of the danger. As 5pm arrived Canberra's fate had been sealed with houses reported destroyed as well as houses in the small forestry settlement of Uriarra.

Escape for our residents was hampered by poor warnings and the location of the settlement in the pine forest. Fires in the Michelago area, just South of Theodore forced the closure of the Monaro Highway into Canberra as fires spread through the Kambah Pool area and into the suburb of Kambah causing damage to many homes and one of the ACT's primary Urban and Rural fire stations.

Our Council remembers the fire that spread through parkland, crossing the Tuggeranong Parkway and Athllon Drive and finally engulfing Mount Taylor. Within an hour, houses were also burning in Torrens on the slopes of Mount Taylor and Weston Creek, and the Erindale College declared an evacuation emergency centre.

The Tuggeranong Community Council remembers how our region was directly effected with the first casualty of the fire, a local elderly woman named Dorothy McGrath, whom died at the nearby Stromlo Forestry Settlement followed, Alison Tener, Peter Brooke and Douglas Fraser all from Duffy.

We also remember our brave Emergency service volunteers, fire, ambulance and local police, nurses, doctors and vets, SES, ACTEW all working together to restore normality in the coming days to Tuggeranong's residents, injured wildlife and working round the clock to restore our water, gas, sewerage and communications that were heavily affected.

The Tuggeranong Community Council will observe a minutes silence at our next Council meeting to remember the victims of Canberra worst natural disaster followed by the Chief Minister of the ACT Katy Gallagher MLA to address TCC as special guest speaker at the first 2013 general meeting of the Tuggeranong Community Council (TCC).

Ms Gallagher is expected to talk on a range of issues concerning Tuggeranong residents and take questions from the floor, in particular about announcements from last years ACT election.

The meeting will be in the upstairs formal dining room at the Southern Cross Club Greenway on Tuesday, February 5, commencing at 7.30pm.

I am urging all the Tuggeranong Community to attend this meeting, with an opportunity to hear our Chief Minister's plan for Tuggeranong for the next 10 years.