



Dominic Perrottet

Treasurer

Gabrielle Upton

Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 17 June 2021

NSW GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES NEW \$28 MILLION MISSION TO TACKLE BUSHFIRE THREAT

The NSW Government will direct \$28 million into research and development and promoting new and emerging industries and technology to better prepare the state for future bushfires.

NSW Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said the NSW Bushfire Response R&D Mission will receive \$7 million per year for the next four years as part of this year's 2021-22 NSW Budget to be handed down next week.

"The 2019-20 bushfires claimed lives, destroyed thousands of homes and cost NSW billions, this investment will go towards reducing the impact of bushfires and responding in the most effective way possible," Mr Perrottet said.

"This focus on new technology to enhance planning, preparation and response will save jobs when a disaster strikes and boost jobs in new industries.

"NSW is unfortunately one of the world's bushfire hotspots, so it makes sense that we should package our hard won know-how and take it to the world."

Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier Gabrielle Upton said the establishment of R&D Missions will address long-term strategic challenges facing NSW, and was a priority action of the "*Turning Ideas into Jobs – Accelerating Research & Development in NSW Action Plan*" launched in January 2021 by Premier Gladys Berejiklian.

"R&D Missions tackle complex challenges that require the integration and translation of research and technology across government agencies," Ms Upton said.

"This funding will help establish a Bushfire Technology Network, engage NSW small business to develop and commercialise bushfire technologies and ensure that new technologies are tested by frontline NSW bushfire services."

The funding will also help address a number of recommendations from the NSW Bushfire inquiry such as establishing NSW as a major world centre for bush fire research, and technology development and commercialisation.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott said the NSW Government

has committed to acting on the lessons learnt from the 2019-20 bush fires.

“Bush fire research is a key recommendation of the independent NSW Bushfire Inquiry and is crucial to ensuring that our emergency services can continue to have the best training and technology that will keep our state safe,” Mr Elliott said.

“The continued investment into research goes hand-in-hand with the NSW Government’s record budget for Emergency Services and continued investment into initiatives that address recommendations from the Bushfire Inquiry.”

Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte, NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, said the Bushfire Response Mission will have a strong focus on technology.

“The Mission will develop the use of real-time data from space, air and ground-based assets, ensure fire ground decisions made are based on information and computer-aided tools, and enable the use of equipment including robots to aid responders,” Mr Durrant-Whyte said.

“Technologies from NSW companies which prove themselves will attract interest from global markets.”

Chair of the Advisory Council David Gonski AC welcomed the Bushfire Response Mission launch.

“The impact of COVID-19 on economic growth makes the task to commercialise more R&D an urgent one,” Mr Gonski said.

“Focussing the commercialisation of technologies on solving one of our state’s greatest challenges is an excellent step in bringing together and promoting the relevant research and development efforts of the business, research sectors and communities across NSW.”

The NSW Government has committed a further \$8 million in funding over two years to establish an Emerging Industry Infrastructure Fund.

This fund will target new industries where NSW potentially has a comparative advantage and where co-investment in joint infrastructure will both build on existing industry and attract global companies and investment into NSW.

Potential investments include the development of sovereign semiconductor production capabilities and the consolidation of NSW’s leading position in synthetic biology.

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