

## Timeline of Communities at Work's involvement in the 2003 ACT Bushfire

- Opened the Tuggeranong Community Centre during the fires to provide support for those fighting and escaping the fires
- CEO Maureen Cane was seconded to the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce as the community sector representative.
- Working on the ACT Bushfire Recovery Taskforce in the months immediately following, Communities at Work delivered counselling to those affected by the fires and helped manage the process of recovery and rehabilitation. It became apparent that scars were not limited to the physical landscape, and that many Canberrans would carry emotional reminders of the firestorm with them for some time.
- Communities at Work joined the Non-Urban Study Steering Committee, tasked with providing the ACT Government with ideas, options and recommendations on future land use in non-urban areas of the ACT. From this work, the ACT Government created the Shaping Our Territory Working Group to implement a range of projects.
- **In August 2003**, Communities at Work hosted information sessions at the Weston Creek Community Centre, focusing on helping the community deal with the ongoing psychological impact of the fires.
- **In October 2003**, Communities at Work ran the "Celebration of Families" in Weston Creek, partnering with local businesses, community groups and volunteers and drawing together the community with a positive celebration. Over 3,500 people enjoyed a day of fun-filled free entertainment and activities.
- **In 2004**, Communities at Work convened the Bushfire Recovery Community Development Network which aimed to deliver bushfire recovery activities to support the continuation of community renewal processes in bushfire-affected suburbs. The Network met on a monthly basis and proved to be a valuable community development forum for residents and community organisations.
- **In August 2004**, Communities at Work ran a community doorknock, reaching 500 households in the Weston Creek area. As a result, Communities at Work relaunched the Weston Creek festival, which had ceased running 10 years earlier. Working with local community groups, Communities at Work ran the Weston Creek Community Festival from 2005-2009, at which point it was handed across to the Weston Creek Community Council.
- **In January 2005**, a twilight function was held at Weston Creek Primary School to mark the second anniversary of the firestorm, attended by over 300 people from the community.

- **In March 2005**, Communities at Work's Community Development team presented a paper to the 20/20 Vision Health Promotion Conference titled "Rebuilding a Burnt Community". A quarterly community newsletter ChatAway was produced and delivered to all homes in the fire-affected urban areas.
- **In 2005**, Communities at Work ran a project for local residents to reflect on the region and capture their work in a giant mural, titled the "Weston Creek Community Art Wall". The mural was unveiled by Minister John Hargraves on 30th November. Located near the car park on the wall of the Weston Creek Community Centre at Cooleman Court, the mural holds a central place for local residents to this day.
- **During 2004/5** Communities at Work supported a project for Mt Taylor Estate residents to draw people together to carve their community's story of resilience into a 150 yr old red gum tree. The Firestorm Storytree, Ceramics and Time Capsule were designed and created by the Mt Taylor Estate community, in collaboration with the artist Bryan Carrick, in memory of the Canberra Firestorm.
- **On 18 January 2006**, Communities at Work CEO Maureen Cane officiated at the opening of the ACT Bushfire Memorial. More than 250 people attended the ceremony in Stromlo Forest Park, the area still dark and barren, scarred by the ferocious fires that had ripped through 3 years before.
- Communities at Work continued to convene the Bushfire Recovery Community Development Network for residents affected by the fires to meet and advise on community development. **In May 2007**, the Network held the inaugural Community Safety Field Day in conjunction with Community Fire Units, providing an educational and fun day for families across the ACT to see first-hand demonstrations and activities about emergency preparedness and recovery. Directly supporting the recommendations of the McLeod Report in the Operation Response to the '03 Bushfires, the Community Safety Field Day helped to deliver greater community involvement in personal and property protection.
- **Today**, Communities at Work continues to work to support the Canberra community. We remain a member of the Social Recovery Committee and **in 2019-20**, staffed the bushfire emergency and recovery centres in Dickson and Erindale, providing free food, clothing and support to people fleeing the fires.