

**Additional Estimates opening statement – 4 March 2020**

**Mr Barry Jackson, Managing Director of Defence Housing Australia**

I thought it worthwhile to update the Committee on the impact on the DHA portfolio of the natural disasters that have been impacting Australia.

As previously advised to the Committee, 245 Defence members, and their families, were displaced by the floods in Townsville.

I am pleased to say that following full remediation, 14 Defence members, many with families, have returned to the properties they occupied prior to the floods. Remediation works will continue throughout 2020 to bring the remainder of the flood-affected properties back into DHA's portfolio.

In addition, Australia has endured one of the worst bushfire seasons in its history.

I would like to acknowledge the tragic loss of 33 lives and on behalf of all members of DHA, pay my respects to the families and friends of the deceased and thank the various Fire Services and Defence Force Personnel for their outstanding efforts under such challenging circumstances.

From mid-December 2019, DHA closely monitored fires across multiple locations in Australia and in particular the Nowra region, where in December 2019, 190 DHA-managed properties were under threat.

During the bushfire emergency on the NSW South Coast and Gippsland regions, DHA's Living-In Accommodation Contact Centre provided urgent assistance to 24 Defence bases facing either their own base evacuations or their required participation in bushfire relief activities. Ultimately, no DHA-managed properties were fire-affected. I would like to put on record the excellent co-operation from our counterparts in Defence.

Finally, in January and February, Australia experienced significant weather events which lead to significant and widespread damage across the ACT, Sydney and Nowra regions.

Three hundred and seventy nine (379) DHA-managed properties sustained damage. Fortunately, no one was injured, repairs are ongoing and members are accommodated in their houses.

Thank you.