



**The Hon Dan Tehan MP**  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
Minister for Defence Personnel  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC

Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Telephone: 02 6277 7820

MC16-003101

Mr Brett Davis  
Secretary BirdLife Shoalhaven  
Shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au

Dear Mr Davis

Thank you for your email of 16 October 2016 to the Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Marise Payne, about the October 2016 bushfire at Becroft Weapons Range (BWR). As this matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities, your correspondence has been passed to me for response.

The Department of Defence has a Bushfire Management Plan (BMP) in place, which incorporates a range of control measures to reduce the risk and effects of bushfires at BWR. This plan states hazard reduction burning should occur during autumn, outside the key Eastern Bristlebird breeding season. However, due to local weather conditions, several attempts to conduct the burn during that time were not possible. As the planned burn had a small footprint and was not deemed to be a significant impact on the environment, including key Eastern Bristlebird habitats, the burn was postponed until there were optimal safe weather conditions.

It is regrettable that the hazard reduction burn breached containment lines. The NSW Rural Fire Service is conducting an investigation and Defence will consider the outcome of that investigation in order to take appropriate actions to avoid future occurrences, and remediate the habitats where possible.

Professor David Lindenmayer of the Australian National University has conducted recent Eastern Bristlebird monitoring at BWR (September 2016). Defence has plans to conduct further monitoring to assess impact of fire on the population, in addition to heritage assessments, weed control and vertebrate pest management.

If you require any further information about this matter, the Defence local BWR point of contact is:

Mr Garry Clarke  
Base Support Manager – Shoalhaven  
Telephone: 0408 962 614  
Email: [garry.clarke@defence.gov.au](mailto:garry.clarke@defence.gov.au)

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Dan Tehan', written over the 'Yours sincerely' text.

**Dan Tehan**

1 DEC 2016