

## **Update on the Australian Bushfires**

I have received an update on assistance the UK Government is providing to the Australian Government to help tackle the Australian Bushfires:

DOMINIC RAAB MP  
Member of Parliament for Esher & Walton



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

16 January 2020

To: All Conservative MPs

Dear colleagues,

**Australian Bushfires**

Over the past four months bushfires in Australia have killed at least 28 people, displaced thousands more and destroyed over 2,000 homes. 11 million acres of land have been burnt and millions of people have been affected by poor air quality. This crisis has been devastating and our hearts go out to the Australian people.

I am sure many of you will have heard the Oral Statement given by the Minister for Asia and the Pacific on 9th January on this topic but I also wanted to take the chance to write to you to set out the support we are providing.

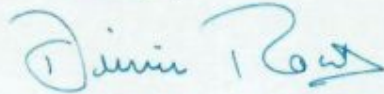
Early in the New Year, I reached out to my Australian counterpart, Minister for Foreign Affairs Marise Payne, to offer our condolences and stress our readiness to provide whatever help was needed. The Prime Minister and the Minister for the Commonwealth, the UN and South Asia, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, have also been in contact with their counterparts.

The Australian government has been inundated with offers of assistance. Given that the UK does not have bushfire experience we can offer to Australia, last week we deployed an expert support and assessment team, made up of specialists from Defence, Health and Fire Services to ensure our assistance matches Australian needs with UK capabilities. The team included a senior member of the UK Fire and Rescue Service, a medical specialist in trauma and mental health and a military liaison officer. The team have been meeting with their Australian counterparts both in the central government and at federal level to establish the types, extent and duration of support that will be of most use to Australian emergency responders. This focused support has been welcomed by the Australian government.

We also stand ready to give further support to Australia, including to address the environmental and ecological impact of the bushfires. Over a billion animals are thought to have perished, and there are concerns that some species found only in certain areas of Australia may have been wiped out altogether.

Australia is one of our most valued allies, partners and friends. We stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with the people of Australia. Our approach will ensure that we give them the help they need in the best way we can. We will do all that is possible to help them respond to and recover from this tragic situation, and we are in close contact with the Australian government to provide this support.

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dominic Raab". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end of the name.

**THE RT.HON. DOMINIC RAAB MP**