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No confidence motion in Emergency Services Minister fails. 15/03/2007. ABC News Online

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No confidence motion in Emergency Services Minister fails

The ACT Opposition has failed in a bid to move a motion of no confidence in the Emergency Services Minister, Simon Corbell.

The Opposition claims volunteer firefighters have lost confidence in Mr Corbell.

Dozens of volunteer fire officers and brigade captains resigned this morning, abandoning their tankers and trucks outside the Legislative Assembly in protest against the restructure of the Emergency Services Agency (ESA).

They claim the ESA is totally unprepared to battle a bushfire like the one which devastated parts of the city in 2003.

In debating the motion of no confidence, Opposition Leader Bill Stefaniak told the Assembly the protest was a damning indictment of Mr Corbell's administration of the agency.

"All the volunteers have no confidence in the structure they have and they have shown that lack of confidence in the most extreme way available to them by senior people resigning today, by people leaving their vehicles out there," he said.

"That is a demonstration of their confidence in this Minister to conduct his role to efficiently and appropriately meet the needs of the community in the times of an emergency."

The Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, has rejected the suggestion that the Minister should be held responsible for the daily administration of the ESA.

"You have moved a motion today asking the Minister for Emergency Services to resign his portfolio responsibilities because he has refused to overrule the expert employed to manage emergency services in the territory, this is a remarkable proposition," he said.

Like all other fire captains and deputies, Simon Katz has resigned his post in protest at the lack of regard for the advice of volunteers.

"That's the reason I'm quitting, if the community doesn't care about it and the politicians don't care enough about it, and the bureaucrats don't care enough about it, then why should I bust my guts and spend thousands and thousands of hours, as do all these people here," he said.

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