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NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT MINISTERS' MEETING

COMMUNIQUÉ

National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting 25 August 2023

A meeting of the National Emergency Management Ministers was held in Brisbane to align with the AFAC 2023 conference on 25 August. Federal, State and Territory Emergency Management Ministers and the Vice-President of the Australian Local Government Association attended and were supported by senior officials from Australian, state and territory and local governments.

The National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting (NEMMM) was chaired by Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Commonwealth Minister for Emergency Management.

Meeting Outcomes

Seasonal Bushfire Outlook - Spring

NEMMM members were provided with a presentation on the seasonal outlook overview from Andrew Johnson, Chief Executive Officer of the Bureau of Meteorology and summary of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council Seasonal Outlook provided by the National Emergency Management Agency. Members noted the increased likelihood of heatwave, grassfire and bushfire conditions this season and thanked all emergency services personnel for the extensive work undertaken to prepare for the coming season.

Emergency and Temporary Accommodation Coordination

Members discussed the current national housing/accommodation shortages and the need to pro-actively plan to deliver appropriate emergency and temporary accommodation solutions in response to disasters during the 2023-24 Higher Risk Weather Season. Members noted that Commonwealth, state and territory officials are working together to develop advice on the broad range of options available under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and agreed to develop a National Emergency and Temporary Accommodation Register as the first step in a National Plan for providing emergency and temporary accommodation following disasters that incorporate culturally appropriate and inclusive practices. Members also agreed to seek discussion of these matters by Federal, State and Territory Housing Ministers.

Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding Arrangements

The National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting agreed the Commonwealth, states and territories will continue work together to support national consistency including to achieve streamlined processes for local governments to access support and local council awareness of Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements measures ahead of the upcoming High Risk Weather Season.

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Lithium-ion batteries, electric vehicles and safety considerations for Emergency Services Workers

The Australian, state and territory governments agreed to consider emerging risks and impacts on emergency service organisations arising from the increasing use of lithium-ion batteries and associated risks to emergency services workers and the community.

National Capability Projects

Members noted updates to the following projects, Public Safety Mobile Broadband, the National Messaging System, the National Emergency Stockpile and the National 'Tell Us Once' Program and agreed on the importance of maintaining momentum on each project.

Mental Health Initiatives

Members endorsed the first *National Mental Health Plan for Emergency Services Workers: 2024-2027: A commitment to continued action*. The plan acknowledges the specific challenges faced by emergency services workers and the essential role they provide in supporting communities before, during and after disasters, often at the risk of their own health.

The Second National Action Plan to Implement the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework

Members endorsed the Second National Action Plan to implement the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework and stand united in our commitment to work with all stakeholders to implement the Second National Action Plan, and to continue building a disaster-resilient Australia for generations to come.

Update on DRF: High-level principles and design for Round Two

The Australian, state and territory governments discussed the implementation of projects approved through Round One of the Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) and principles that will inform the design of Round Two to ensure the fund delivers safer, more disaster resilient communities.

Exotic Animal Disease Preparedness

Members received an update on the Government's progress on Exotic Animal Disease Preparedness.

Insurance Arrangements

Members discussed the challenges faced by communities relating to insurance efficacy, availability and affordability. Members agreed to continue to work across levels of government through the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee to reduce disaster risk, and to put downward pressure on insurance premiums in the longer term. Members noted the Australian Government's intent to take forward issues raised by NEMMM to the Hazards Insurance Partnership meeting in November 2023.