



Australian Government

National Emergency Management Agency

National Report:

*Royal Commission into National Natural
Disaster Arrangements* recommendations
implementation status

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Preamble

The *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements* (Royal Commission) was established on 20 February 2020 in response to the extreme bushfire season of 2019-2020 which resulted in the devastating loss of life, property and wildlife, and environmental destruction across the nation¹.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has compiled the national report in consultation with state and territory governments, who have also endorsed the publication. This national report provide a summary of activity being undertaken by governments across the nation to address the Royal Commission recommendations directed to the Australian Government, and to the Australian Government and state and territory governments jointly².

Introduction

The Royal Commission's Final Report was published in October 2020 (refer <https://www.royalcommission.gov.au/>). Substantial achievements have been realised in response to implementation of the Royal Commission recommendations. However, progress has been impacted by necessary demands from all levels of government and our emergency response agencies in response to the increasing incidence and severity of natural disasters as well as managing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Royal Commission made it clear that state and territory governments should continue to have primary responsibility and accountability for emergency management within their boundaries. It also acknowledged that implementing Royal Commission recommendations calls for a cohesive and unified national effort, noting that national natural disaster arrangements is a shared responsibility across all levels of government.

Since the Final Report of the Royal Commission was tabled in the Australian Parliament on 30 October 2020, Australia's disaster management landscape has, and continues, to evolve. Australia has experienced further extreme disasters such as the floods in 2022, which have highlighted the need for ongoing reforms and that the implementation of recommendations needs to align with the evolving landscape.

While the Commonwealth and states and territories continue to enhance efforts to support communities so they can respond to, and recover from disasters, improving disaster and climate resilience and preparedness is now an increasing priority.

All levels of government want to ensure that communities are resilient against disasters and are in the best possible position to recover when disaster does occur.

The Australian Government and state and territory governments have fully considered the Royal Commission findings and strategic objectives and are incorporating them into their business as usual activities. Governments are striving for continuous improvement and the application of lessons learnt from ongoing operations is increasing resilience to future disasters.

NEMA was established on 1 September 2022, as an enduring agency to provide holistic emergency management at the Australian Government level. NEMA brings together the former National Recovery and Resilience Agency and Emergency Management Australia, formerly part of the Department of Home Affairs to provide national end-to-end oversight across the emergency management spectrum, specifically focussing on risk reduction, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

¹ Royal Commission, page 2.

² It is acknowledged that there are many activities being undertaken across the country, by many agencies and organisations that contribute towards the implementation of the Royal Commission's findings that are not included in this report. Their non-inclusion in this report does not reduce their relevance and importance.



Key measures that have been implemented to address the recommendations of the Royal Commission include the Australian Government's establishment of the NEMA and the Disaster Ready Fund (DRF). The DRF will provide up to \$1 billion over five years, from 1 July 2023, to improve Australia's disaster resilience. The DRF will bolster Australia's ability to reduce disaster risk, and curb the devastating impacts of natural hazards by investing in important disaster mitigation projects like flood levees, sea walls, cyclone shelters, evacuation centres, fire breaks and telecommunications improvements.

Other initiatives to address recommendations of the Royal Commission being implemented include:

- The Independent Review into Commonwealth Disaster Funding including building additional resilience into Commonwealth programs.
- The review of Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) to streamline and build additional resilience into joint Commonwealth-State recovery programs.
- The Australian Government's ambitious 2030 commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 43 per cent below 2005 levels, putting Australia on track to achieve its 'net zero emissions by 2050' target.
- The establishment of the Australian Climate Service (ACS) on 1 July 2021 to support better decision-making through improved climate, disaster risk and impact information, services and tools.
- The establishment of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) on 1 September 2022 to improve fire agencies' ability to consistently communicate the fire threat across Australia and provide a national decision-making framework that supports operational planning, response and consistent community messaging.
- The development of the Australian Warning System (AWS), to provide nationally consistent warnings for emergencies like bushfire, flood, storm, extreme heat and severe weather.



‘Implementation status categories’ for recommendations for Australian Government responsibility, or Australian and state and territory government responsibility.

Recommendation implementation category status	Definition
Implementation is completed	Recommendation has been implemented in full, or the intent of the recommendation has been met through activity undertaken and the transition to business as usual.
Implementation is approaching completion	Implementation of the recommendation is underway and a pathway to completion has been agreed. Substantial progress has occurred.
Implementation is underway	Implementation of the recommendation is underway and a pathway to completion has been identified or is being developed.
Implementation is dependent on other activities	Implementation of the recommendation has begun but a pathway to completion is dependent on other activities.

The National Report containing the ‘implementation status categories’, reflects project delivery, and has been agreed by the Royal Commission Implementation Time-limited Working Group.

Royal Commission Final Report Chapter Summary

National coordination arrangements 3.1-3.6

An Independent Review of National Natural Disaster Governance Arrangements (the Review) will focus on how national governance arrangements more effectively serve the current and future state of national natural disaster preparedness, adaptation, response, recovery, resilience and long term policy requirements in Australia.

The Review will address concerns that current arrangements are too rigid, and not broad enough to enable committees to discuss cross-portfolio issues or issues beyond the remit of the 'traditional' emergency management sector, including implementation of the broad range of Royal Commission recommendations. The Review will also specifically consider opportunities to address recommendation 3.2 regarding establishment of an authoritative disaster advisory body. The outcomes of the Review will complement work to strengthen and better target engagement across the Australian Government, and state and territory governments and with emergency management partners and industry.

Key Australian Government disaster coordination frameworks and plans are continually revised to ensure they are fit for purpose and reflect changes in the crisis and disaster management landscape. These include the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (AGCMF), which outlines the Australian Government's approach to preparing for, responding to and recovering from crises, and the Australian Government Disaster Response Plan (COMDISPLAN), which outlines the coordination arrangements for the provision of Australian Government non-financial assistance in the event of a disaster or emergency.

Recommendation 3.1 – Forum for Ministers

Australian, state and territory governments should restructure and reinvigorate ministerial forums with a view to enabling timely and informed strategic decision-making in respect of:

- 1) long-term policy improvement in relation to natural disasters
- 2) national preparations for, and adaptation to, natural disasters, and
- 3) response to, and recovery from, natural disasters of national scale or consequence including, where appropriate, through the National Cabinet or equivalent intergovernmental leaders' body.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is approaching completion. The National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting (NEMMM) was formally reconstituted as a ministerial council, with revised Terms of Reference, reporting to National Cabinet following a Review of Ministerial Councils in 2022. Further, an independent review of national natural disaster governance arrangements is being undertaken to examine how national governance arrangements can more effectively serve national natural disaster preparedness, adaptation, response, recovery, resilience and long term policy requirements in Australia.



Recommendation 3.2 – Establishment of an authoritative disaster advisory body

Australian, state and territory governments should establish an authoritative advisory body to consolidate advice on strategic policy and relevant operational considerations for ministers in relation to natural disasters.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. The outcomes of the Review noted in Recommendation 3.1, will provide the strategic direction for the establishment of an authoritative disaster advisory body.

Recommendation 3.3 – Revise COMDISPLAN (Australian Government Disaster Response Plan)

The Australian Government should revise the COMDISPLAN thresholds to provide that a request for Australian Government assistance, including Defence assistance, is able to be made by a state or territory government when:

- 1) it has exhausted, or is 'likely to exhaust', all government, community and commercial resources
- 2) it cannot mobilise its own resources (or community and commercial resources) in time, or
- 3) the Australian Government has a capability that the state or territory does not have.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is completed. COMDISPLAN was reviewed and updated in 2020-21 following the Royal Commission. As per the requirement for a review to be undertaken every three years, the plan is currently under review again. This review will include guiding principles for requesting assistance, prioritisation of non-financial assistance and expanding the list of assistance that is available to jurisdictions.

Recommendation 3.4 – Integrating disaster management of the Australian Government

Australian Government agencies should work together across all phases of disaster management.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is completed. The AGCMF was reviewed and published in July 2021. The AGCMF details how agencies should work together across all phases of disaster management.

On 1 September 2022 the Australian Government established the NEMA as a single, enduring agency to better respond to emergencies, help communities recover, and prepare Australia for future disasters.

Recommendation 3.5 – Establishing a standing resilience and recovery entity

The Australian Government should establish a standing entity that will enhance natural disaster resilience and recovery, focused on long-term disaster risk reduction.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is completed. On 1 September 2022 the Australian Government established NEMA as a single, enduring agency to better respond to emergencies, help communities recover, and prepare Australia for future disasters.



Recommendation 3.6 – Enhanced national preparedness and response entity

The Australian Government should enhance national preparedness for, and response to, natural disasters, building on the responsibilities of Emergency Management Australia, to include facilitating resource sharing decisions of governments and stress testing national disaster plans.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is completed. The enhanced national preparedness and response capability has been delivered through initiatives including the National Joint Common Operating Picture (NJCOP) capability, the upgrade of the Australian Government National Situation Room, establishment of the national emergency management exercising capability, and a range of national capability projects including the National Emergency Management Stockpile, and funding to expand the capability of the National Resource Sharing Centre.



Supporting better decisions 4.1-4.7

The Australian Government, and state and territory governments are working together guided by the Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing (the Agreement) which came into effect on 9 July 2021. The Agreement commits all jurisdictions to share public sector data as a default position, where it can be done securely, safely, lawfully and ethically. In line with the Royal Commission's findings, the Agreement recognises data as a shared national asset and aims to maximise the value of data to deliver outstanding policies and services for Australians.

The ACS was established in July 2021, bringing together world-leading expertise from the Bureau of Meteorology, Geoscience Australia, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), and the Australian Bureau of Statistics to support communities and businesses to better anticipate, manage and adapt to the risks that a changing climate will bring.

The ACS work is guided by recommendations from the Royal Commission. It works with partners and stakeholders across the Commonwealth and state and territory governments to establish and deliver a national capability to provide decision-makers across the entire economy with the information, advice and insights they need about climate and disaster risk. The ACS connects the Commonwealth's extensive climate and natural hazard data and information in one place.

Delivering a steep change in national capability, including better science and more harmonised, integrated and accessible data and information, takes time. The ACS is delivering its work program in a phased approach, building the foundations in data across Australia's social, economic, natural and built domains, and upgrading and downscaling climate models to enable more granular analysis of risk across Australia and over time.

The initial focus has been on delivering integrated climate and disaster risk information services for NEMA. The data feeds into the NJCOP, which assists decision makers with near real time automated situational awareness of flood, fire, tropical cyclone, and severe weather events including, severe floods that affected large parts of the country through 2022 for planning, response and recovery.

Planned work over the ACS's four year establishment period will improve internal data, tools and systems for delivering risk information services to a wider range of users. This capability will involve close collaboration with all levels of governments.

Recommendation 4.1 – National disaster risk information

Australian, state and territory governments should prioritise the implementation of harmonised data governance and national data standards.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. The ACS is delivering climate and disaster risk data and information that informs decision making across the national natural disaster continuum. The ACS is committed to building and delivering data sets across Australia's social, economic, natural and built domains that can be used to understand and monitor exposure, vulnerability and impact. Consistent with the Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing, the Australian, state and territory governments are working together to standardise the collection and management of bushfire behaviour data.



Recommendation 4.2 – Common information platforms and shared technologies

Australian, state and territory governments should create common information platforms and share technologies to enable collaboration in the production, analysis, access, and exchange of information, data and knowledge about climate and disaster risks.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. NEMA has delivered the NJCOP capability, which was unveiled for use in November 2021. The NJCOP can now be accessed by a range of Australian Government, state and territory agencies, with user access steadily increasing. The NJCOP data feeds facilitate sharing of information before a crisis to assist NEMA and stakeholder preparation, as well as during a crisis to provide situational awareness and decision support. The full NJCOP capability will be delivered in successive releases over four years to 2025-26, providing an all-hazards situational awareness and decision support tool.

The ACS is also leading work within the Commonwealth to bring together and improve data, tools and systems to support decision-making. The ACS is investing in a platform to be delivered in phases, to assist with the sharing of harmonised information and analytics on disaster and climate risks.

Recommendation 4.3 – Implementation of the National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability

Australian, state and territory governments should support the implementation of the National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability and aligned climate adaptation initiatives.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. The ACS work programs aim to deliver a steep change in integrated climate and disaster risk information. Through the ACS and CSIRO, the National Bushfire Intelligence Capability will provide nationally consistent best practice bushfire data products and services to support prevention, risk reduction and, in its next phase, short term preparedness and planning for high risk weather seasons.

Recommendation 4.4 – Features of the National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability

The National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability should include tools and systems to support operational and strategic decision making, including integrated climate and disaster risk scenarios tailored to various needs of relevant industry sectors and end users.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is underway. The ACS is working to provide consistent, authoritative data including, downscaled climate projections and modelling, hazard, exposure, vulnerability and impact information including an information platform to support sharing and collaboration on national climate and disaster risk information and decision support tools.



Recommendation 4.5 – National climate projections

Australian, state and territory governments should produce downscaled climate projections:

- 1) to inform the assessment of future natural disaster risk by relevant decision makers, including state and territory government agencies with planning and emergency management responsibilities
- 2) underpinned by an agreed common core set of climate trajectories and timelines, and
- 3) subject to regular review.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. The ACS is working to improve future climate modelling and deliver 'next generation' downscaled (sub-15 km) climate projections at multiple timescales for key areas of Australia. The projections will enable assessments of future natural disaster risk for decision-making. A National Partnership for Climate Projections has been developed to guide the delivery of a nationally aligned, sustainable, and integrated approach to Australian projection science and projections information through a shared vision outlined in the Climate Projections Roadmap for Australia.

Recommendation 4.6 – Consistent impact data standards

Australian, state and territory governments should work together to develop consistent data standards to measure disaster impact.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. All Australian governments are working to implement this recommendation through the Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing that was signed at National Cabinet on 9 July 2021.

Australian, state and territory governments continue to refine national data standards to measure disaster impact, including the National Impact Assessment Framework Data Dictionary.

Recommendation 4.7 – Collection and sharing of impact data

Australian, state and territory governments should continue to develop a greater capacity to collect and share standardised and comprehensive natural disaster impact data.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. NEMA has completed a Commonwealth data needs assessment that has highlighted 21 areas of data need. In collaboration with the state and territory governments, the ACS is building a national capability to support increased coordination of natural hazard risk information, including data sharing to measure disaster impact.



Declaration of national emergency 5.1

The *National Emergency Declaration Act 2020* (NED Act) and *National Emergency Declaration (Consequential Amendments) Act 2020* established a legislative framework to enable the Governor-General to declare a national emergency. The Acts were passed by the Parliament on 10 December 2020 and received Royal Assent on 15 December 2020.

Under the NED Act, the Governor-General may, on the advice of the Prime Minister, declare a national emergency in relation to emergencies that rise to the level of national significance.

The making of a NED signals to the Australian community and to all levels of government across Australia, the severity of an emergency event. It also provides certainty about the statutory powers available to the Commonwealth to handle an emergency causing nationally significant harm.

When a NED is in force, a range of powers are available to Commonwealth ministers to assist with response and recovery from the emergency to which the declaration relates. This includes the power to suspend, vary or substitute 'red tape' requirements where doing so would be of benefit to the public or a section of the public, the power to require Commonwealth entities to report on stockpiles during a national emergency, and the streamlining of statutory tests to exercise national emergency laws.

The first emergency declaration under the NED Act was made on 11 March 2022 in response to the New South Wales floods in March 2022.

Recommendation 5.1 – Make provision for a declaration of a state of emergency

The Australian Government should make provision, in legislation, for a declaration of a state of national emergency. The declaration should include the following components:

- 1) the ability for the Australian Government to make a public declaration to communicate the seriousness of a natural disaster
- 2) processes to mobilise and activate Australian Government agencies quickly to support states and territories to respond to and recover from a natural disaster, and
- 3) the power to take action without a state or territory request for assistance in clearly defined and limited circumstances.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is completed. The *National Emergency Declaration Act 2020* and *National Emergency Declaration (Consequential Amendments) Act 2020* establish a legislative framework to enable the Governor-General to declare a national emergency on the Prime Minister's advice. The Acts were passed by Parliament on 10 December 2020 and received Royal Assent on 15 December 2020.



National emergency response capability 6.1-6.6

Noting that capacity and capability requirements are different in each state and territory, state and territory governments are/or have developed state-based capability frameworks to coordinate capability, planning and investment requirements based on current and future disaster risk.

Nationally, the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) is enhancing the National Capability Statement, assessing the feasibility of a National Deployment Management System, standardising national role descriptions and enhancing the integration of interstate resource sharing with the National Situation Room. AFAC is also developing capability in the prevention and mitigation of emergencies by delivering a Prescribed Burning Masterclass series and through its Collaboration Model continues to develop national positions and doctrine that contribute to agencies capability requirements.

Furthermore, states and territories continue to participate in national public safety communications bodies and initiatives, such as the National Emergency Communications Working Group and other relevant inter-jurisdictional bodies, to implement the National Framework to Improve Government Radio Communications Interoperability. State and territory governments are working together to improve interoperability in cross-border areas.

A future pathway for the Public Safety Mobile Broadband (PSMB) capability is being developed based on an independent review that was completed in late 2022. The Australian Government has committed \$10.1 million to establish a central Taskforce, to be led by the NEMA, to drive the delivery of the PSMB capability. This follows the delivery of a PSMB proof of concept trial by the New South Wales Government, which was completed in December 2022. The trial has contributed to the findings and recommendations of the PSMB Strategic Review and will inform technical viability and service delivery models for the PSMB program.

Recommendation 6.2 – A national register of fire and emergency services personnel and equipment

Australian, state and territory governments should establish a national register of fire and emergency services personnel, equipment and aerial assets.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. A national list of fire and emergency services personnel and equipment in the form of the National Capability Statement provides a snapshot of capability, and is being updated in late 2023.

NEMA has engaged the National Resource Sharing Centre (NRSC), to enhance and finalise a national list for fire emergency service or equipment.

Recommendation 6.4 – Delivery of a Public Safety Mobile Broadband capability

Australian, state and territory governments should expedite the delivery of a Public Safety Mobile Broadband capability.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. The Australian Government is responding to the PSMB Strategic Review Final Report by providing leadership to expedite the delivery of a PSMB capability across all Australian states and territories. The Australian Government has committed funding to establish a central Taskforce, which is being established and led by NEMA, to drive the delivery of the PSMB capability.



Recommendation 6.5 – Multi-agency national-level exercises

Australian, state and territory governments should conduct multi-agency, national-level exercises, not limited to cross-border jurisdictions. These exercises should, at a minimum:

- 1) assess national capacity, inform capability development and coordination in response to, and recovery from, natural disasters, and
- 2) use scenarios that stress current capabilities.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is completed. Since the Royal Commission, multiple national-level crisis response exercises have been conducted. NEMA will continue to work with stakeholders to design and deliver the forward national crisis exercise program.

Recommendation 6.6 – Employment protections for fire and emergency services volunteers

The Australian Government should consider whether employment protections under the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) are sufficient to ensure that fire and emergency services volunteers will not be discriminated against, disadvantaged or dismissed for reasons associated with their volunteer service during natural disasters.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is completed. The Attorney-General wrote to state and territory counterparts on 25 May 2021 stating that the Attorney-General's Department view is that the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) provides sufficient minimum employment protections for volunteers.



Role of the Australian Defence Force 7.1-7.3

The Royal Commission stated that the Australian Defence Portfolio key priorities were to defend Australia and its national interests, protect and advance Australia's strategic interests, and promote regional and global security and stability, as directed by government. Noting that Defence assistance during civil emergencies should only be used in the most extreme circumstances and as a last resort.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) however does have unique capabilities to provide support to civil authorities and it is important that these capabilities are well understood so they can be effectively utilised nationwide, if necessary. States and territories, in partnership with the Commonwealth, are taking deliberate steps to strengthen their understanding of ADF planning and capability and are continuing to work closely with the ADF before, during and after emergencies.

The Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Manual, Protocol for Requesting Non-financial Defence Assistance in support of Domestic Emergency Management and the *Defence Legislation Amendment (Enhancement of Defence Force Response to Emergencies) Bill 2020* has been reviewed and updated.

These efforts contribute towards ensuring a balance is achieved between leveraging essential and proportionate Defence assistance whilst mitigating against potentially significant impacts to the Defence's core mission of defending Australia and its national interests.

Recommendation 7.2 – Review of Defence Assistance to the Civil Community manual

The Australian Government should review the content of the Defence Assistance to the Civil Community manual to ensure consistency of language and application with a revised COMDISPLAN.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is completed. The review has been completed with an updated Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Manual published on 22 September 2021. NEMMM on 9 December 2022 endorsed the Protocol for Requesting Non-financial Defence Assistance in support of Domestic Emergency Management.

Recommendation 7.3 – Legal protections for Australian Defence Force members

The Australian Government should afford appropriate legal protections from civil and criminal liability to Australian Defence Force members when conducting activities under an authorisation to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is completed. Implementation of the *Defence Legislation Amendment (Enhancement of Defence Force Response to Emergencies) Bill 2020* passed both houses of Parliament on 8 December 2020. The Bill provides immunity for Australian Defence Force members that is similar to that enjoyed by civilian emergency services personnel, and affords appropriate legal protections to persons conducting activities in good faith.



National aerial firefighting capabilities and arrangements 8.1-8.3

Fire and emergency aviation capabilities are optimised through resource sharing, cooperation, collaboration and communication with the Australian Government, state and territory governments, international bodies and industry partners. Most firefighting aircraft are leased from appropriately experienced and qualified Australian commercial aircraft providers. However, by sharing some aircraft costs with countries in the northern hemisphere, Australia is able to utilise a fleet size larger than would otherwise be possible.

The National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) procurement and subsequent leasing arrangements provided 161 services for the 2022-23 summer, of which 95 per cent are resident year-round in Australia, including 75 per cent owned and operated by Australian companies. Tender activity underway for 2023-24 continues to encourage tenderers to highlight benefits of local ownership, basing arrangements, and Australian crew.

A National Sovereign Large Air Tanker (LAT) was added to Australia's existing firefighting capability under the Australian Government's \$4 million funding boost in September 2021, through a time-limited leasing arrangement. The LAT is on contract until June 2024, with the option to extend further should that be necessary. State and territory aircraft are available for deployment to other jurisdictions when needed, as a part of the national fleet arrangements.

The NAFC is investigating the effectiveness of aerial firefighting capabilities. Working with Natural Hazards Research Australia (NHRA) and guided by states and territories, the work is evaluating various types of aircraft and their effectiveness in different situations. This work will inform options for future national aerial firefighting capabilities. An updated National Aerial Firefighting Strategy will be developed in 2024, based on NAFC research.

Recommendation 8.1 – A sovereign aerial firefighting capability

Australian, state and territory governments should develop an Australian-based and registered national aerial firefighting capability, to be tasked according to greatest national need. This capability should include:

- 1) a modest, very large air tanker/large air tanker, and Type-1 helicopter capability, including supporting infrastructure, aircrew and aviation support personnel, and
- 2) any other aerial firefighting capabilities (e.g. Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), line-scanning, transport, and logistics) that would benefit from a nationally coordinated approach.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is approaching completion. The National Aerial Firefighting Centre procurement and subsequent leasing arrangements provided 161 services for the 2022-2023 summer, of which 95 per cent are resident in Australia year-round, including 75 per cent owned and operated by Australian companies. A national Large Air Tanker is on contract until June 2024. Further investigations are continuing to determine the most effective aviation model for Australia.



Recommendation 8.2 – Research and evaluation into aerial firefighting

Australian, state and territory governments should support ongoing research and evaluation into aerial firefighting. This research and evaluation should include:

- 1) assessing the specific capability needs of states and territories, and
- 2) exploring the most effective aerial firefighting strategies.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is approaching completion. The National Aerial Firefighting Centre has been awarded an Australian Government grant to investigate the effectiveness of aerial firefighting. Working with NHRA and guided by states and territories, the work is investigating various types of aircraft and their effectiveness in different situations.

Recommendation 8.3 – Developing the aerial firefighting industry’s capability

Australian, state and territory governments should adopt procurement and contracting strategies that support and develop a broader Australian-based sovereign aerial firefighting industry.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. The National Aerial Firefighting Centre is investigating the effectiveness of aerial firefighting arrangements. Jurisdictions will use this study and information gathered about the complex international aerial firefighting market to develop an updated National Aerial Firefighting Strategy. The strategy will include assessments of the required future characteristics of the Australian fleet and is planned to be developed during 2024.



Essential services 9.1-9.5

Resilient supply chains are vital for a safe, secure and prosperous Australia. The Australian Government, state and territory governments, as well as the private sector, have a role to play in identifying and managing supply chain risks. Governments, along with the private sector, continue to work to manage supply chain disruptions due to natural disasters through national forums such as the National Coordination Mechanism (NCM), the Trusted Information Sharing Networks and the Office of Supply Chain Resilience as well as on a state basis to consider local requirements.

While states and territory governments strive to provide timely and accurate information to the public on road closures and openings, it is not always feasible to provide real-time information, due to the size of the road networks and the need to ensure the safety of staff during critical events. Road closure information is published by state and territory governments through various channels, based on local requirements, which may include websites, apps and phone services.

Due to the finalisation of the *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018* and amendments passed in March 2022, coupled with the launch of the Australian Government's 2023 Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy (the Strategy) and Plan in February 2023, the Australian Government is now well placed to understand and support industry's management of risks to Australia's critical infrastructure. Work is ongoing to incorporate these reforms at all levels of governments across states and territories.

The Strategy provides a national framework to guide Australia to enhanced critical infrastructure security and resilience. The Cyber and Infrastructure Security Centre (CISC) and the critical infrastructure community have developed the Strategy together with a complementary Plan that outlines the activities that the CISC will undertake to deliver the Strategy. The Strategy will guide efforts to secure Australia's critical infrastructure from 2023 to 2028.

Recommendation 9.1 – Supply chains – government review

Australian, state and territory governments, in consultation with local governments and the private sector, should review supply chain risks, and consider options to ensure supply of essential goods in times of natural disasters.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. The Office of Supply Chain Resilience (OSCR) in the Department of Industry, Science and Resources, continues to identify and monitor critical supply chain vulnerabilities that could impact Australia's national interest. This includes on: health, safety or wellbeing; economic stability and viability; national security; and shared strategic interests with key international partners.

NEMA obtained authority under the 2022 Budget process to establish the National Emergency Management Stockpile (NEMS) capability. The NEMS project has commenced. This project has received additional funding from Government to continue work to establish the NEMS over the 2022-23 and 2023-24 Financial Years. The Australian Government's establishment of a coordinated national emergency management stockpile will assist in building greater supply chain resilience and ensuring the supply of essential goods in times of disasters.

Recommendation 9.4 – Collective awareness and mitigation of risks to critical infrastructure

The Australian Government, working with state and territory governments and critical infrastructure operators, should lead a process to:

- 1) identify critical infrastructure
- 2) assess key risks to identified critical infrastructure from natural disasters of national scale or consequence
- 3) identify steps needed to mitigate these risks
- 4) identify steps to make the critical infrastructure more resilient, and
- 5) track achievement against an agreed plan.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is completed. The amended *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018* (SOCI Act) introduces a number of significant measures to enhance critical infrastructure security, which materially delivers upon this recommendation. The amended SOCI Act has provided Australia with a preventative and responsive framework to uplift the security and resilience of critical infrastructure.

Recommendation 9.5 – Improving coordination arrangements between critical infrastructure sectors and with government

The Australian Government should work with state and territory governments and critical infrastructure operators to improve information flows during and in response to natural disasters:

- 1) between critical infrastructure operators, and
- 2) between critical infrastructure operators and governments.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is completed. The NCM ensures coordination, communication and collaboration during a national crisis, and is used to effectively define a problem, ensure national situational awareness and coordination of effective consequence management for complex crises.

The Trusted Information Sharing Network (TISN) is the Australian Government's primary engagement mechanism with industry on critical infrastructure. The TISN brings together stakeholders from across the critical infrastructure community, including critical infrastructure owners and operators, supply chain entities, peak bodies, academics, research institutes, and all levels of government.



Community education 10.1

The states and territories are continuing to implement, evaluate and strengthen their existing suites of disaster education and engagement programs aimed at promoting disaster resilience for individuals, communities and industry, in line with local requirements.

At a national level the Australian Government funds the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) to provide a number of events, services and products that support community disaster resilience planning, education and leadership. Primarily the work of AIDR is focused on building knowledge and capability of the various sectors that work with communities to enhance resilience.

Emergency planning 11.1-11.2

The Royal Commission acknowledged that emergency planning requires a collective and collaborative approach. Local governments play a critical role in all aspects of the emergency management spectrum. They provide a unique local perspective as they are closest to individuals and communities.

State and territory governments are progressing arrangements tailored to their local needs to support local governments' understanding of risk and fulfil their roles and responsibilities, including the management and sharing of resources.

Evacuation planning and shelters 12.1-12.7

AIDR is leading a review of the Evacuation Planning Handbook that, when complete, will provide national consistency with localised implementation.

State and territory governments are also reviewing and exercising evacuation processes and arrangements and providing contemporary training as part of their continuous emergency management improvement processes. A critical part of the training and exercising is the development of evacuation plans that are flexible and adaptable to different emergency situations. While core principles remain, planning is conducted depending on the environmental circumstances and local arrangements.

State and territory governments continue to review and enhance their roadside vegetation management practices in accordance with their local conditions and requirements.

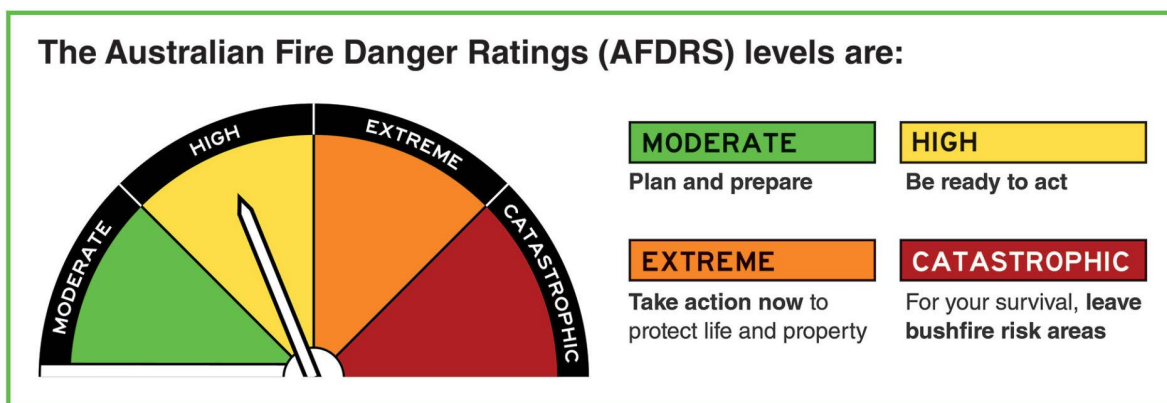
Emergency information and warnings 13.1-13.6

For the first time, public information is becoming nationally consistent.

The AFDRS was rolled out nationally on 1 September 2022. It substantially improves fire agencies' capability to communicate the fire threat across Australia and provides for a national decision-making framework that supports operational planning, response and consistent community messaging. The system achieves national consistency in levels, colours and language, which will assist the public to make informed actions to safeguard life, property and the environment.



The Australian Fire Danger Ratings (AFDRS) levels are:



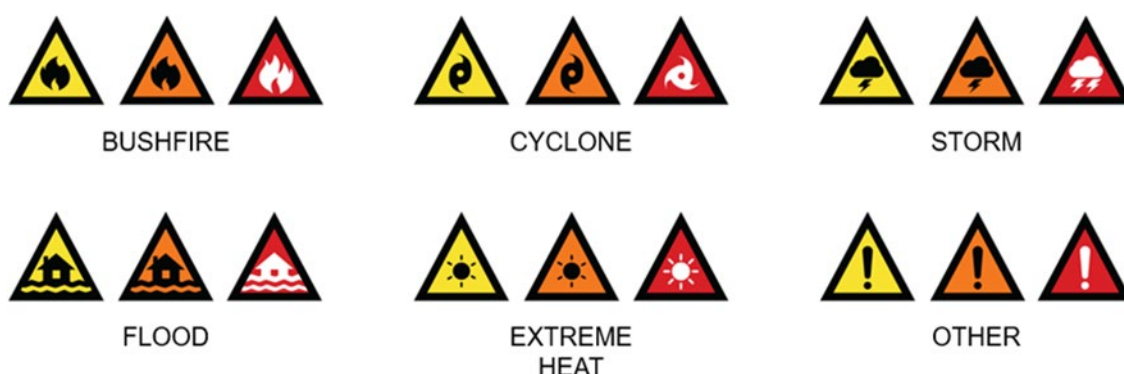
The AFDRS is being promoted through a national community education campaign across multiple media platforms including, social media, television, web pages, print and radio.

The AWS is a nationally consistent approach to warnings for hazards such as bushfire, flood, storm, cyclone, extreme heat, and severe weather. Implementation of the AWS has been coordinated through the AFAC National Public Information and Warnings Group, where jurisdictions have reached consensus on how warnings can better reflect the needs of the community, ultimately supporting members of the public to make appropriate decisions in times of adversity.

The AWS has been designed based on national research and delivers a more consistent approach to warnings using a nationally consistent set of icons, colours, terminology and calls to action to provide warnings to communities across Australia, and display these on websites and apps.

The AWS has been implemented across all Australian bushfire agencies, with other hazards being implemented by jurisdictions in a staggered approach determined by their system requirements and operational priorities. State and territory governments are also currently working collaboratively to finalise frameworks for heatwave, cyclone and severe weather.

The AWS community education and engagement program was launched in December 2021 under the 'Know the Signs' campaign. A range of social media, print and digital assets have been developed for the campaign, which jurisdictions will be able to use as part of their ongoing community education and awareness programs. Rollout of the campaign in states and territories has commenced and will continue to be aligned to their specific requirements and hazard seasons.



The national education campaign will raise awareness of the AWS for multiple hazards and will increase understanding of the action that community members should take when they receive a particular warning. This will empower people to make informed decisions, to take protective action, and reduce potential impacts and consequences of a hazard when they receive a warning.

Recommendation 13.5 – The development of national standards for mobile applications

The Australian Government should facilitate state and territory governments working together to develop minimum national standards of information to be included in bushfire warning apps.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is underway. Australian, state, and territory governments continue to engage on the challenges associated with the implementation of this recommendation due to different methods of data capture across jurisdictions. Work is progressing on a solution to standardise data for mobile application purposes.

Recommendation 13.6 – Exploring the development of a national, all-hazard warning app

Australian, state and territory governments should continue to explore the feasibility of a national, all-hazard emergency warning app.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is dependent on other activities. The Australian Government is committed to investigating the feasibility of a multi-hazard and multi-jurisdictional warning app. Such an app continues to be dependent on the national roll out of the AWS. The Australian Government is supporting advancement of buy-in and on boarding to the AWS to ensure consistency in hazard terminology and narrative as well as underlying data standardisation for national application.



Air quality 14.1-14.3

The Royal Commission highlighted the need for air quality information and warnings to enable the public to make informed decisions to mitigate the impact of bushfire smoke and other airborne pollutants.

A nationally consistent framework for public air quality information and health advice has been agreed by all jurisdictions, through the inter-jurisdictional Australian Health Protection Principal Committee. State and territory governments are currently updating their systems and websites to adopt the new framework.

The Australian Government is funding the development of a national prototype smoke forecasting system. The project will test potential extensions to the extant operational system currently being provided by the Bureau of Meteorology in Victoria and New South Wales. Consideration is also being given to extending the current operational system more widely.

Recommendation 14.1 – Nationally consistent air quality information, health advice and interventions

Australian, state and territory governments should:

- 1) develop close to real-time, nationally consistent air quality information, including consistent categorisation and public health advice
- 2) greater community education and guidance, and
- 3) targeted health advice to vulnerable groups.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is approaching completion. A new nationally consistent framework for public air quality information and health advice has been agreed by all jurisdictions, through the inter-jurisdictional Australian Health Protection Principal Committee.

States and territories are updating their systems and websites to adopt the new framework, providing a nationally consistent approach for hourly air quality information, and targeted education and health advice to support communities and vulnerable groups.

Recommendation 14.2 – National Air Quality Forecasting Capability

Australian, state and territory governments should develop national air quality forecasting capabilities, which include broad coverage of population centres and apply to smoke and other airborne pollutants, such as dust and pollen, to predict plume behaviour.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. The CSIRO has made significant progress in developing a smoke forecasting capability prototype with the goal of improving bushfire smoke forecasting capability.

The Bureau of Meteorology currently runs a smoke forecasting system in Victoria and New South Wales. The national roll-out of the current operational system to other states and territories is being progressed.

Health 15.1-15.4

The National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre (NCCTRC) has become a key component of the Australian Government's disaster and emergency medical preparedness and response capability to natural and man-made incidents of local, national and international significance.

While the NCCTRC traditional responses concentrated on international disasters, more recently the focus has shifted to public health emergencies as well as to domestic deployments. This includes the catastrophic bushfires in Victoria and New South Wales in January 2020, and Australia's COVID-19 response. Key elements of the NCCTRC's capacity to quickly and effectively respond include the coordination and delivery of the Australian Medical Assistance Team (AUSMAT) program, which is achieved through teaching, exercising, research and the maintenance of a nationally agreed upon AUSMAT database. This is well complemented through the NCCTRC's ability to maintain a constant state of readiness by being equipped and prepared to respond quickly upon request by the Australian Government.

The Australian Government, state and territory governments are working collaboratively developing arrangements that facilitate greater inclusion of primary healthcare providers in disaster management, including representation on relevant disaster committees and plans, plus provision of training, education, and other support.

The Australian Government, in close partnership with state and territory governments, has released the *National Disaster Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework* (Framework) to guide action and investment on mental health and wellbeing before, during and after disasters. This framework will ensure mental health support is a standard component of disaster preparedness, response, recovery and resilience.

There is a collaborative, national approach to refine arrangements to support localised planning and improve the coordination and delivery of appropriate mental health services to communities following a natural disaster. These activities will be undertaken with reference to the Framework and builds on the principles.

Recommendation 15.1 – Australian Medical Assistance Teams

Australian, state and territory governments should review Australian Medical Assistance Team capabilities and procedures and develop necessary training, exercising and other arrangements to build capacity for domestic deployments.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. Australian, state and territory governments continue to work together through the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre and the National Health Emergency Management Standing Committee to support and build national Australian Medical Assistance Team capability and capacity.



Recommendation 15.2 – Inclusion of primary care in disaster management

Australian, state and territory governments should develop arrangements that facilitate greater inclusion of primary healthcare providers in disaster management, including: representation on relevant disaster committees and plans and providing training, and education and other supports.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. NEMA continues to work with the Australian Government Department of Health, which has the lead on primary health care matters with the states and territories, to implement this recommendation. This included making sure primary health care matters were included in the recent package of flood support initiatives (\$4.7 million to ensure the immediate continuity of primary health care services for flood-impacted Australians).

Recommendation 15.3 – Prioritising mental health during and after natural disasters

Australian, state and territory governments should refine arrangements to support localised planning and the delivery of appropriate mental health services following a natural disaster.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is approaching completion. The Australian Government, in close partnership with state and territory governments, has released the *National Disaster Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework* (the Framework). The Framework guides co-ordinated approach to mental health and wellbeing services and support in disaster settings. The Australian Government is now commencing the implementation of the Framework.

Recommendation 15.4 – Enhanced health and mental health datasets

Australian, state and territory governments should agree to:

- 1) develop consistent and compatible methods and metrics to measure health impacts related to natural disasters, including mental health, and
- 2) take steps to ensure the appropriate sharing of health and mental health datasets.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. Australian, state and territory governments are working together to implement this recommendation through the Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing that was signed at National Cabinet on 9 July 2021 and through the State Federal Recovery Data Working Group. Additionally, the implementation of the aforementioned *National Disaster Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework* will be an opportunity to refine metrics and data sharing arrangements across levels of government.



Wildlife and heritage 16.1

Achieving consistent listing of threatened species and ecological communities has become business as usual under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (Act 1999)* (EPBC Act).

The EPBC Act provides a legal framework to protect and manage unique plants, animals, habitats and places. This includes threatened species and ecological communities, heritage sites, marine areas, internationally important wetlands and other protected matters.

The Australian, state and territory governments are sharing the outcomes of species assessments through the 'Common Assessment Method' under the EPBC Act to ensure consistent statutory listings in each jurisdiction.

Recommendation 16.1 – Environmental data

Australian, state and territory governments should ensure greater consistency and collaboration in the collation, storage, access and provision of data on the distribution and conservation status of Australian flora and fauna.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is approaching completion. Australian, state and territory governments are collaborating and sharing threatened species assessments through the 'Common Assessment Method' intergovernmental memorandum to ensure consistent statutory protection of threatened flora and fauna across jurisdictions.



Public and private land management 17.1-17.3

State and territory governments are providing a suite of informative materials to help inform and educate the community about fuel load management strategies consistent with their local environment.

The Australian Government and state and territory governments are working together to standardise and share data, including fuel load data that will be enabled by the Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing (IGA).

The CSIRO is collaborating with partners through the National Bushfire Intelligence Capability (NBIC), to deliver bushfire knowledge, data and mapping products to provide a national picture of bushfire hazard and risk.

Recommendation 17.1 – Public availability of fuel load management strategies

Public land managers should clearly convey and make available to the public their fuel load management strategies, including the rationale behind them, as well as report annually on the implementation and outcomes of those strategies.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. State and territory governments are progressing activities tailored to their local needs.

Recommendation 17.2 – Assessment and approval processes for vegetation management, bushfire mitigation and hazard reduction

Australian, state and territory governments should review the assessment and approval processes relating to vegetation management, bushfire mitigation and hazard reduction to:

- 1) ensure that there is clarity about the requirements and scope for landholders and land managers to undertake bushfire hazard reduction activities, and
- 2) minimise the time taken to undertake assessments and obtain approvals.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. State and territory governments are progressing activities tailored to their local needs.



Recommendation 17.3 – Classification, recording and sharing of fuel load data

Australian, state and territory governments should develop consistent processes for the classification, recording and sharing of fuel load data.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. In December 2020 the National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting (NEMMM) agreed to Fuel Management Information Sharing and Transparency Principles as part of a broader proposed framework to enable sharing of state and territory bushfire risk reduction data with the Australian Government. Subsequently, the Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing was developed which provided a strong authorising environment for data sharing. This obviated the need for further development of the proposed framework for Fuel Management Information Sharing and Transparency.

The National Bushfire Intelligence Capability (NBIC), has been identified as the technical means through which jurisdictional data used to produce a national picture of bushfire hazard would be managed and shared with the Australian Government. The NBIC is being led by CSIRO, supported by the NEMA working with state and territory bodies to address agreed priority bushfire hazard information needs.



Indigenous land and fire management 18.1-18.2

Australian and state and territory governments are working together to strengthen and embed the role and connection of First Nations and traditional land management practices, and are exploring opportunities to leverage insights from First Nations land and fire management practices now and into the future.

A national workshop for Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) members occurred in October 2022 on First Nations Land and Fire Management in line with Recommendations 18.1 and 18.2. The workshop provided a forum for sharing best practice, barriers and opportunities for incorporating First Nations land and fire management practices in public land management activities.

Recommendation 18.1 – Indigenous land and fire management and natural disaster resilience

Australian, state, territory and local governments should engage further with Traditional Owners to explore the relationship between Indigenous land and fire management and natural disaster resilience.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. A national workshop for ANZEMC members occurred in October 2022 on First Nations Land and Fire Management in line with Recommendations 18.1 and 18.2. The workshop provided a forum for sharing best practice, barriers and opportunities for incorporating First Nations land and fire management practices in public land management activities.

The AIDR funded by the Australian Government, engages directly with First Nations Peoples to better understand First Nations experiences and needs both prior to, during and after disaster events. Through its body of work AIDR aspires to incorporate First Nations' knowledge and practice into arrangements nationally.

State and territory governments are also progressing activities tailored to their local needs.

Recommendation 18.2 – Indigenous land and fire management and public land management

Australian, state, territory and local governments should explore further opportunities to leverage Indigenous land and fire management insights, in the development, planning and execution of public land management activities.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. In the 2022-23 Federal Budget, \$636.4 million was committed to double the Indigenous Rangers Program, creating more jobs caring for Country and bolstering disaster resilience. This funding will deliver an estimated 2,000 additional ranger jobs, establish new ranger groups, bring more First Nations women into ranger work and provide pathways for young people, strengthening the engagement of Traditional Owners in land management and natural disaster resilience.

Land-use planning and building regulation 19.1-19.4

To boost the coordination and collaboration of national action to implement the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, NEMA, supported by the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, has brought together a range of sectors and voices to embark on a design process to identify nationally significant and transformational actions that will reduce disaster risk. Building on the work already underway, NEMA is now drafting Australia's Second National Action Plan (2023-25) under the Framework.

General insurance has a critical role to play in the economy, insulating individuals and businesses from the financial impact of loss or damage to their insured assets. Increased community awareness of extreme weather risks and the potential measures that can be taken to mitigate these risks can drive community uptake and investment in household resilience before disaster strikes.

Natural hazard risk is increasing in many areas of Australia, which is driving up the cost of insurance and creating underinsurance issues. Poor insurance coverage makes it harder for households and communities to fully recover if hit by a disaster.

NEMA has developed a partnership, the Hazards Insurance Partnership (HIP) which is a single touchpoint between the Australian Government and the insurance industry to engage on issues of disaster risk reduction and hazard insurance.

The HIP program of work will support NEMA to identify the most pressing insurance issues in areas with high natural hazards risk and test the best policy solutions to reduce risk and insurance costs.

These measures build on the Disaster Ready Fund which provides up to \$200 million annually to build disaster resilience and mitigation projects across Australia.

At National Cabinet, on 9 December 2022, First Ministers tasked Planning Ministers with developing a national standard for considering disaster and climate risk, as part of land use planning and building reform.

In addition, state and territory governments are continuing to implement arrangements to improve disaster risk information to support decision making in land-use planning for new developments within their own jurisdictions.

Progress continues through collaboration and development of the National Construction Code. The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) business plan includes a project focussed on building resilience consistent with Recommendation 19.4. The ABCB is working to assess the suitability of the current National Construction Code provisions in respect of climate change-related extreme weather events. The ABCB is also working with Standards Australia on a review of the *Construction of building in bushfire-prone areas* (AS 3959:2018) and with the Department of Industry, Science and Resources on considering the objectives of the National Construction Code.



Recommendation 19.1 – Communication of natural hazard risk information to individuals

State and territory governments should:

- 1) each have a process or mechanism in place to communicate natural hazard risk information to households (including prospective purchasers) in ‘hazard prone’ areas, and
- 2) work together, and with the Australian Government where appropriate, to explore the development of a national mechanism to do the same.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. The Australian Government in partnership with state and territory governments are providing funding to the Resilient Building Council (previously the Bushfire Building Council of Australia) to develop the Bushfire Resilience Star Rating system, including a self-assessment app for householders in bushfire prone regions to help them understand how their homes are vulnerable to bushfires and identify the actions they can take to address this vulnerability through retrofitting and home improvements.

Recommendation 19.2 – Guidance for insurer-recognised retrofitting and mitigation

The insurance industry, as represented by the Insurance Council of Australia, working with state and territory governments and other relevant stakeholders, should produce and communicate to consumers clear guidance on individual-level natural hazard risk mitigation actions insurers will recognise in setting insurance premiums.

Responsibility: Insurance industry.

Status: Implementation is underway. A number of the Insurance Council of Australia’s (ICA) members have developed programs that incentivise consumers to improve the resilience of their homes in exchange for reduced premiums. The ICA provide an overview of measures for consumers on their website.

The ICA has engaged with state governments on the design of key programs to assist consumers in building resilience to worsening extreme weather events, which in turn can reduce risk and place downward pressure on premiums. For example, via engagement in the design of the Queensland Resilient Homes Fund.



Recommendation 19.4 – National Construction Code

The Australian Building Codes Board, working with other bodies as appropriate, should:

- 1) assess the extent to which AS 3959:2018 *Construction of building in bushfire-prone areas* and other relevant building standards, are effective in reducing risk from natural hazards to lives and property, and
- 2) conduct an evaluation as to whether the National Construction Code should be amended to specifically include, as an objective of the code, making buildings more resilient to natural disasters.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. The Australian Building Codes Board is reviewing the National Construction Code to determine if further enhancements should be made to make new buildings more resilient to climate change-related extreme weather events.



Insurance 20.1

Provisions exist within the jointly funded Commonwealth-State/Territory DRFA to support the clean-up of disaster related debris. The Commonwealth is working collaboratively with the states and territories to develop a new national advisory on clean-up and debris removal under the DRFA. The advisory will enhance awareness and facilitate greater consistency. It will include information on eligible disaster clean-up activities as well as the evidentiary requirements for DRFA audit, assurance and claiming purposes.

Recommendation 20.1 – Debris clean-up arrangements

Governments should create and publish standing policy guidance on whether they will or will not assist to clean-up debris, including contaminated debris, resulting from natural hazards.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is approaching completion. Provisions exist within the jointly funded Commonwealth-State/Territory DRFA to support the clean-up of disaster related debris. The Commonwealth is working collaboratively with the states and territories to develop a new national advisory on clean-up and debris removal under the DRFA.



Coordinating relief and recovery 21.1-21.5

The Commonwealth and Victoria are co-chairing a working group to develop a proposal for a national framework for the regulation of fundraising conduct.

The second Charitable, Not-for-profit and Philanthropic Roundtable was held on 16 May 2023, to support continuous improvement and coordination of the sector in disaster recovery and risk reduction before, during and after a disaster. Additionally, NEMA has established a Strategic Group to complement and support the Roundtable and facilitate a closer relationship with the sector.

The Regional Recovery Exercising Program supports recovery discussion exercises at the local and regional level and the deliverables include a national Recovery Exercising Toolkit to strengthen collaboration and coordination across government, non-government and community based organisations.

Recommendation 21.2 – Reform fundraising laws

Australian, state and territory governments should create a single national scheme for the regulation of charitable fundraising.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is approaching completion. The Australian, state and territory governments are working collaboratively to develop a proposal for a national framework for the regulation of fundraising conduct.

On 10 February 2023, the Council for Federal Financial Relations agreed to a set of nationally consistent fundraising principles for the regulation of charitable fundraising conduct. Regulatory guidance to support the fundraising principles will also be developed in collaboration with the charitable fundraising sector.

Recommendation 21.3 – National coordination forums

The Australian Government, through the mechanism of the proposed standing national recovery and resilience agency, should convene regular and ongoing national forums for charities, non-government organisations and volunteer groups, with a role in natural disaster recovery, with a view to continuous improvement of coordination of recovery support.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is approaching completion. NEMA held the second Charitable, Not-for-profit and Philanthropic Roundtable on 16 May 2023, which was an opportunity to engage on operational coordination, reflections from the recent High Risk Weather Season, and policy collaboration on disaster recovery and risk reduction initiatives. The Australian Government and the Sector agreed to biannual Roundtables. In April 2023, NEMA also established a Charitable, Not-for-profit and Philanthropic Strategic Group, which will continue to meet regularly.



Recommendation 21.4 – National recovery resource sharing arrangements

Australian, state and territory governments should establish a national mechanism for sharing of trained and qualified recovery personnel and best practice during and following natural disasters.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. Australian, state and territory governments are developing the Disaster Recovery People Capability Framework (Framework) that sets out common recovery roles across the recovery cycle, and the associated capability and proficiency requirements and desirable attributes. The Framework is intended to establish a national standard for recovery practitioners that can be utilised by government agencies, non-government organisations and community groups who have a role, or are looking to play a role, in recovery. The National Recovery Training Project is being led by NEMA and the Australian Industry Standards (now Industry Skills Australia) and is currently developing a formalised recovery training package, which will result in two new qualifications (Diploma and an Advanced Diploma of Community Safety (Recovery Management)).

Recommendation 21.5 – National level recovery exercises

Australian, state and territory governments should work together to develop a program for national level recovery exercises, building on the work currently underway through the Community Outcomes and Recovery Sub-committee of the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is approaching completion. The Australian Government is investing in the National Capability Package (NCP) to strengthen recovery and resilience capability at the local, regional and national levels. The NCP includes the Regional Recovery Exercising Program which supports recovery exercises at the local and regional level. Deliverables include a national Recovery Exercising Toolkit to strengthen collaboration and coordination across government, non-government and community based organisations.



Delivery of recovery services and financial assistance 22.1-22.8

The joint Commonwealth-State/Territory DRFA are being reviewed to address recommendations by the former Council of Australian Governments and the Royal Commission. The DRFA Review was established to ensure equitable access to support so Australians impacted by disasters are treated more consistently and fairly, streamline processes so governments can respond quickly and appropriately to disasters, and encourage jurisdictions to build back better.

Through the DRFA review there has been significant work on streamlining processes between the Commonwealth and the states and territories to ensure governments can respond more quickly and appropriately to disasters. Three new 'off the shelf' Category C and D recovery packages have been developed covering infrastructure betterment, recovery grants for primary producers and recovery grants for small businesses and non-profit organisations. In December 2022, the NEMMM agreed to develop three additional 'off-the-shelf' packages covering welfare and mental health, legal recovery assistance, and tourism recovery. The Commonwealth is working collaboratively with the states and territories on these packages.

Additionally, the Australian, state and territory governments continue to progress initiatives to ensure that personal information of those affected by a natural disaster can be appropriately and safely shared to prevent individuals needing to retell their story. At the national level, the Tell Us Once Program has progressed to the second phase of work, involving analysis of user needs and leveraging state, territory and Commonwealth based solutions through existing and planned data sharing initiatives and technologies.

Recommendation 22.1 – Evaluation of financial assistance measures to support recovery

Australian, state and territory and local governments should evaluate the effectiveness of existing financial assistance measures to inform the development of a suite of pre-effective pre-determined recovery supports.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. As part of the joint Commonwealth, State and Territory DRFA Review, a national comparison of DRFA assistance measures has been undertaken, which shows disaster-affected communities are afforded different types and levels of assistance depending on where they live. As a consequence of this, the scope of the DRFA Review has been expanded to develop new financial support measures for individuals, households, primary producers and small businesses that are fit-for purpose, appropriately targeted and nationally consistent



Recommendation 22.2 – Appropriate sharing of personal information

Australian, state and territory governments should ensure that personal information of individuals affected by a natural disaster is able to be appropriately shared between all levels of government, agencies, insurers, charities and organisations delivering recovery services, taking account of all necessary safeguards to ensure sharing is only for recovery purposes.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. The National Tell Us Once Program has progressed to the second phase of work which involves an in-depth analysis of user needs and experiences, and leveraging of state, territory and Commonwealth based solutions through existing and planned data sharing initiatives and technologies, to produce an options analysis and defensible recommendation for future funding considerations.

Recommendation 22.3 – Review the thresholds and activation process for the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements

In reviewing the DRFA, Australian, state and territory governments should examine the small disaster criterion, and financial thresholds generally.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. Work to review the DRFA financial year thresholds is being undertaken as part of the DRFA Review.

Recommendation 22.4 – Nationally consistent Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements assistance measures

Australian, state and territory and local governments should develop greater consistency in the financial support provided to individuals, small businesses and primary producers under the DRFA.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. Work is being progressed through the DRFA Review to develop nationally consistent Category A and B measures (refer to Recommendation 22.1).

Three new 'off-the-shelf' Category C and D recovery packages have been developed covering infrastructure betterment, recovery grants for primary producers and recovery grants for small businesses and non-profit organisations. In December 2022, the NEMMM agreed to the development of three additional 'off-the-shelf' packages covering mental health, legal recovery assistance, and tourism recovery. The Commonwealth is working collaboratively with the states and territories on these packages.



Recommendation 22.5 – Develop nationally consistent, pre-agreed recovery programs

Australian, state and territory governments should expedite the development of pre-agreed recovery programs, including those that address social needs, such as legal assistance domestic violence, and also environmental recovery.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. Through the DRFA Review (refer to Recommendation 22.1), Commonwealth, state and territory officials are working collaboratively to develop pre agreed 'off-the-shelf' DRFA Category C and D recovery packages to provide a more consistent approach to recovery support. The 'off-the-shelf' packages are intended to address common gaps in recovery assistance across the social, built, economic and environmental domains, whilst maintaining flexibility to meet local recovery needs and build community resilience.

Three 'off-the-shelf' Category C and D recovery packages have been developed covering infrastructure betterment, recovery grants for primary producers and recovery grants for small businesses and non-profit organisations. In December 2022, the NEMMM agreed to develop three additional 'off-the-shelf' packages covering welfare and mental health, legal recovery assistance, and tourism recovery. The Commonwealth is working collaboratively with the states and territories on these packages.

Recommendation 22.6 – Better incorporate 'build back better' within the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements

Australian, state and territory governments should incorporate the principle of 'build back better' more broadly into the DRFA.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is approaching completion. A component of the DRFA Review is the development of new national guidance on Category B public asset restoration and Category D betterment to facilitate greater investment in disaster resilient infrastructure.

Significant 'build back better' assistance packages were approved in response to the NSW and Queensland floods in 2022, including Resilient Homes and Infrastructure Betterment packages.

Recommendation 22.7 – Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements recovery measures to facilitate resilience

Australian, state and territory governments should broaden Category D of the DRFA to encompass funding for recovery measures that are focused on resilience, including in circumstances which are not 'exceptional'.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. The scope of the DRFA Review has been expanded to ensure the arrangements are structured to build resilience during the recovery phase.



Recommendation 22.8 – Streamline the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements processes

Australian, state and territory governments should create simpler DRFA application processes.

Responsibility: Australian and state and territory governments.

Status: Implementation is underway. A new streamlined process for activating DRFA Category C and D assistance has been developed and endorsed by the NEMMM. It is now being used by all states and territories to request Category C and D assistance in response to severe disasters. Work is also being undertaken to review key DRFA definitions to ensure they are fit-for-purpose, applied consistently by states and territories, and support streamlined access to assistance.



Assurance and accountability 24.1-24.3

The ANZEMC has established a time-limited working group to enable national-level coordination, collaboration and consistency in the implementation and reporting of recommendations by the Royal Commission. This report is a product of the Royal Implementation Time-limited Working Group.

State and territory governments have, or are exploring, appropriate mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement suitable to their circumstances and practices.

Royal Commission documentation and content will continue to reside on the over-arching Royal Commission's website, hosted by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.

Recommendation 24.1 – Accountability and assurance mechanisms at the Australian Government level

The Australian Government should establish accountability and assurance mechanisms to promote continuous improvement and best practice in natural disaster arrangements.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is completed. The 2023 review of the AGCMF by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet will address identified gaps in the Framework to support building the system capability and continuous improvement, reference to best practice methodology, and assurance processes to ensure crisis plans remain current. Further, the review will capture NEMA's role, governance arrangements for coordinating information, decision-making, reporting and transparency, and triggers for escalation to whole of Government and national coordination arrangements.

Recommendation 24.3 – A public record of national significance

The material published as part of this Royal Commission should remain available and accessible on a long-term basis for the benefit of individuals, communities, organisations, business and all levels of government.

Responsibility: Australian Government.

Status: Implementation is completed. High level Royal Commission documentation and content will continue to reside on the over-arching Royal Commissions website (refer <https://www.royalcommission.gov.au/>)