



Australian Government

National Emergency
Management Agency

Submission to the Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding

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Consent option: Publish with name

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Q1. What experience have you had with Commonwealth disaster funding support?

Significant. At a local government level, particularly since the 2011 Brisbane Floods. I have been the Local Disaster Coordinator at Two Queensland Local Governments, was part of the review into the NDDRA transition to the DRFA and was the Disaster Management Lead at the Local Government Association of Queensland and a member of the State Disaster Management Committee for 5 years from 2017. I am completing a doctorate in Disaster Management (Community Safety), focusing on resilience in the wake of the 2011 Queensland Floods (final thesis submission 2024).

Q2. How could Commonwealth funding support communities to reduce their disaster risk?

I am currently the CEO of a rural and remote council, that is classified for Commonwealth funding as "very remote". This area is subject to regular and ongoing isolation due to rainfall events. Not all those events have significance that generate DRFA activation, however impacts in isolation and lack of capacity to have supplies delivered often occurs. This is due largely to the fact that a "once size fits all" model is applied to the process that fails to recognise the unique situation of a remote council area. The delivery of DRFA and the role of the Commonwealth and States needs to be more porpoise built and locally applicable. There are more remote councils than large regional councils and there needs to be a definition of need that is beyond population. The Commonwealth needs to reconsider its funding formula to recognize that resilience in both infrastructure and in preparedness needs to be applied. This includes betterment funding that is not competitive, rather ongoing programs of roads and services infrastructure upgrade that will provide ongoing improvements for communities, reduce ongoing repair and provide much needed local jobs. This in particular should be afforded to Water delivery in local areas, beyond the restrictive requirements of the current DRFA and fund Remote airstrips to create a strong network of relief and recovery supply and access for medical services, including, but not restricted to, the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Q3. Please describe your understanding of Commonwealth disaster funding processes.

The process is a shared provision between States/territories and the Commonwealth. It is designed to ensure that funding is a shared resource to facilitate necessary repair through counter disaster funding, REPA and betterment. Funding for resilience operations is competitive, underfunded and often over subscribed.



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Q4. Are the funding roles of the Commonwealth, states and territories, and local government, during disaster events clear?

Queensland has a strong system, largely facilitated through the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. Its clarity is compromised by its complexity.

Q5. Is there any further information you would like to provide?

An opportunity exists here for the Commonwealth to recommit to the ongoing capacity to improve resilience across infrastructure, transport (air, road and rail) and in human and social support and to commit to long term betterment.

An Example of this would be an upgrade of the current state road between Jundah and Longreach. The road is in many places a 3 metre wide strip that is impossible to navigate in wet weather. In addition, that road is flooded across multiple, but identifiable channels. Capacity to improve that road is not a "quick fix", but commitment from the government for sequential improvement (betterment) over a decade would create a safe course of travel, reduce the costs of ongoing reinstatement after rainfall/flooding, and actively create employment security for the people of western Queensland.

