



Australian Government

National Emergency
Management Agency

Submission to the Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding

Response ID: IRCDF_1124_36

Consent option: Publish with name

Submitted by: Office of Sussan Ley MO, Member for Farrer

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

Our office routinely handles/manages incoming inquiries from residents/councils impacted by a disaster, flood, bushfire, weather events

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

No response provided.

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

Broadly...

The state (in our case NSW) is responsible for assessing and declaring a disaster zone or LGA*

They will then contact the Commonwealth to trigger direct federal (eg AGDRP) or joint disaster funding assistance packages or options

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

No - and the primary reason for this submission.

Even with up to a decade in experience, some members of Ms Ley's staff remain perplexed on who handles (or can answer) what; a situation even more complex when neighbouring Victoria is also impacted. While all our leading emergency agencies are well prepared to respond to a disaster, they seem ill-equipped to provide clear, unambiguous advice on funding assistance or points-of-contact for impacted citizens (perhaps outside of an evacuation centre).

Correspondingly, the two main call centre options - Services Australia and Service NSW - become completely overwhelmed (and sometimes at odds with their information) when a wider disaster event occurs.

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

In a suggestion to the above, NEMA and Service NSW (+ RAA and other relevant agencies) could consider establishing a single local phone number (or face-to-face location) as information points for an LGA(s).





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As emergency agencies routinely do (Police, Ambulance, SES etc), following a disaster event these organisations could provide regular/brief disaster assistance updates inc Q&As for Federal and State MPs, Mayors/council officers, media outlets and others who the general public rely on for information.

*Assessing and/or funding a disaster event by LGA can be problematic, particularly in larger rural council areas. A disaster (and the need) is the same, whether one person is impacted, or 1000.



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