



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?**

Accessing the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements in response Natural Disaster Declared flood events for the restoration of essential public assets primarily roads, bridges and associated infrastructure.

The conditions of the funding under the DRFA are very limited, being focused on the restoration of essential public assets to pre-disaster condition only. This impedes achieving value for money for the restoration of essential public assets, particularly following significant flood events. By way of example, restoring a road or bridge to pre-flood condition normally means it will get washed away again in the next flood and the flood after that.

Smaller Councils such as Junee are very limited in the amount of funding that they can access and allocate to betterment and/or improvement works to better protect its local roads and associated assets against the impacts of more frequent and intense natural disaster events, and are generally forced to rely on the DRFA. This in turn limits the restoration works to what can be achieved within the funding available to restore the functionality of the asset rather than what should be done to restore and improve the asset to ensure it is better able to withstand the next flood or fire.

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

Work proactively with Local and State Governments to develop a program to strengthen the maintenance, safety, and resilience of the Local and State road network, giving particular attention to areas that are prone to flooding or experience access limitations during natural disaster events.

A more sustainable model for the DRFA that provides for building back better.

The DRFA should allow increased flexibility to build back better with fast, efficient approval mechanisms that enable timely recovery work post-disaster.

Reduce the red tape and provide additional Government resources to enable faster approvals for road infrastructure construction, maintenance, and management, including during disaster recovery works.

Continue to collaborate with Local Governments to address the longer-term impacts of climate change.





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

In respect to the DRFA, whilst the State Government is primarily responsible for the provision of relief and recovery assistance to disaster affected communities, the Commonwealth Government has entered into a cost sharing arrangement with the States.

Although the Commonwealth provides disaster funding assistance of up to 75% to the State, the availability of this funding to Local Government seems very limited and at the discretion of the State. The application and approval process for securing funding through the DRFA for Local Government is convoluted and takes up significant resources that would be better utilised in responding to the event rather than responding to the red tape.

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

The disaster funding arrangements between the State and Commonwealth are not clear, particularly around the availability of funding for Local Government to support betterment and improved disaster resilience outcomes. This seems to be inconsistent across States and would benefit from clarification from the Commonwealth on how Local Government should be better supported by the States to access funding for betterment and improved outcomes for the community through the DRFA.

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

No response provided.

