



Australian Government

National Emergency  
Management Agency

# Submission to the Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding

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**Consent option:** Publish with name

**Submitted by:** Karen Tough

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

Watching funding support administered across East Gippsland and the willingness of some to fight hard for their share.

Whilst others give up. Not enough at ground level for individual and community mental health recovery.

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

Ongoing mental health recovery required at a community level, given the significant mental health decline amongst all of East Gippsland since 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfires and the Covid outbreak. Humans need to re-group during and after a disaster, with conversation and connection being key. We need to prepare our communities mental health now, to build resilience before nature delivers her next challenge.

Our communities were inundated with external agencies with unfamiliar faces leading the mental health recovery. We have highly experienced mental health clinicians within our community at every level. Mitigating the risk by building resources now with a highly experienced local team. Does East Gippsland Shire work with the mental health providers within East Gippsland?

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

Any large agency will get picked to provide the support and the external team waltz in.

Local mental health services are not factored in to the occasion as seen in 2019/20 bushfires, with the longest operating mental health recovery service not given the opportunity to apply as allied health professionals to support the local community. Even with the advantage of operating for 30 years, with extensive connections and knowledge of the community.

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

No.

I was not flame affected, but did watch families who were in a complete chaos of how to navigate all funding options.

No one knew where to go and what to ask for. Others had no idea there were funding options available.





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If you live 300kms from the main town, information cannot be filtered in and out effectively unless locals share this.

Some would have no idea.

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

As a social worker and mental health clinician, I am watching our community struggle.

Wait lists for a therapist is a nightmare.

Telehealth options can disconnect us.

The East Gippsland Shire has no on the ground, local community supports that focus specifically on group mental health recovery. NONE.

This is what we need. All of us. CONNECTION with mental health support.

