



Australian Government

National Emergency
Management Agency

Submission to the Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding

Response ID: IRCDF_1334_91

Consent option: Publish with name

Submitted by: National Growth Areas Alliance

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

The responses in this submission are based on information provided by the City of Wanneroo which is a member of the National Growth Areas Alliance.

The City of Wanneroo, has received Commonwealth funding for the 'Prepare Together' project which delivers emergency management preparedness sessions for the community. It has funding of circa \$85,000 to deliver these sessions from 2022 to 2024.

The project has been very successful and received a Resilience Australia award. We recommend using this project model as a prototype for wider adoption.

The project has improved the community awareness of where to find information in an emergency (such as a bushfire or flood), bushfire kits, information about what to do with pets during an emergency etc. The Program includes showbags for the community that include instructions on how to prepare individual bushfire plans, a USB to store copies of key documents such as birth certificates, passports, drivers licence, marriage certificates etc.

During the Yanchep bushfires in 2019 the communications and power were either destroyed or interrupted. The Federal Government subsequently provided funding for a satellite dish to assist with communications during future emergency events.

Also as a result of the Yanchep bushfires, the NEMA provided \$1.25m as part of the Protecting our Communities program to underground the power lines to ensure power remains available during future emergency events.

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

Commonwealth funding could be provided to create a facility to carry forward funding from one year to the next that isn't already expended due to factors out of the control of Local Government. For example, the City of Wanneroo has Mitigation Activity Funding (from the State Government) for prescribed burning prior to the bushfire season. However if the burns are unable to be completed prior to the bushfire season, the remaining funding cannot be carried over.

Provide funding for additional Bushfire Centres of Excellence. In Western Australia there is bushfire centre of excellence is located in Nambeelup in the southern corridor. We recommend an additional





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centre be located in the North District to service the northern corridor as well given the significant bushfire risk in the region.

Provide funding for essential bushfire mitigation activities where State Government funding is insufficient or withdrawn. For example, the City of Wanneroo is concerned the State Government may withdraw the funding of the Local Government bushfire risk management plans which are aligned with the statewide bushfire risk management system. For Local Governments to obtain funding, they have to prepare a bushfire risk management plan to identify, assess, and mitigate risks on State Government land that the Local Government manages. The City of Wanneroo relies on this funding to carry out mitigation works, install strategic fire breaks, and so on. Without the funding, this work will not continue and the bushfire risk to the community increases.

Provide funding for consistent signage. For example, the City of Wanneroo had to upgrade all the electronic fire danger rating signs so the ratings were nationally consistent. The requirement was part-funded by the State Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES). However three of the signs had to be relocated and therefore the total cost was more than the DFES funding so the council was responsible for funding the difference.

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

No response provided.

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

It is not clear.

The Commonwealth Government should provide overarching support during disaster events, especially for the evacuation and associated recovery costs.

For example, during the Yanchep bushfires in 2019, the council had to pay for traffic management and other temporary facilities including toilets and catering, that cost circa \$170,000. Fortunately the State Department of Emergency Services repaid these costs, however there is no pre-existing agreement in place.

Given Local Government is responsible for the coordination and organisation of the emergency response locally, they become responsible for paying the invoices for these services, with no guarantee that these costs will be reimbursed.

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

No response provided.

