



Australian Government

National Emergency
Management Agency

Submission to the Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding

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Submitted by: Singleton Neighbourhood Centre

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

Our LGA has experienced many disasters in recent years, from floods / fires / tragedy / trauma.

These recent events have shown that communities tend to be reactive in disaster management - meaning the money often floods in after the event has occurred.

However, our experience indicates that Commonwealth funding:

- * Takes too long to reach those in need. SNC supported our community through disasters by co-ordinating emergency relief efforts; collective advocacy; sourcing and au spicing independent funding to meet immediate need.
- * Requires a high level of administration - meaning small orgs and peer-led groups (co-op), are overshadowed by larger organizations, who have the capacity to meet admin burden.
- * Strict tangible outcomes that are not always reflective of local need.

In response to this, there has been some preventative initiatives funded and introduced at Local Government level but still lacking in collective community capacity building funds (such as peer led collective support). This indicated a clear gap in supporting and facilitating localized resilience, through community initiated, peer-led, collective action.

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

Commonwealth Funding has the capacity to reduce disaster risk, if funding structures are well-designed to support and promote localized resilience.

Most recognize that the needs of a larger city based community, will be very different to a rural community, yet funding structures and processes are the same.

In order to achieve 'resilience' and reduce disaster risk in our small regional communities, funding structures need to be reviewed.

Funding processes, guidelines, eligibility, accessibility; need to be tailored to allow for equal opportunity, more flexibility and local autonomy. Reducing funding body expectations of standardized tangible outcomes (in short periods of time), allows focus to remain on local priority, rather than meeting criteria that may not be relevant.





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This could be done with more emphasis on strengths-based, preventative measures / systems - including new dedicated support roles, to co-ordinate local resources.

These roles would proactively work with cross-sector stakeholders and local community, to tailor systems that are suited to their own community - essentially the 'glue' that holds the process together. The aim would be to increase network collaboration and develop collective systems, to sustain local need, with local resources.

No-one knows community capacity, better than those on the frontline. No-one is more on the frontline than our Neighbourhood Centres!

- They are fully inclusive (not defined by barriers), strongly embedded within local communities, trusted by the most vulnerable (at risk), and hold a wealth of information / local knowledge. The broad-reach, diversification and stakeholder engagement of Neighbourhood Centres, gives the unique ability to identify patterns and concerns that are directly impacting local residents. This also increases capacity to 'connect' people / orgs with similar objectives / concerns, providing a platform for collective initiatives.

A short-term investment in community capacity development, will streamline local response to ensure that the community has access to required resources in a timely manner; and deliver long-term, sustainable solutions, reducing ongoing need for Federal investment.

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

Disaster funding is often released in a reactive state. It is usually delivered short-term, to respond to a particular event.

There is little flexibility for delivery / outcomes, and the competitive nature of current funding models - promotes 'working in silo.'

This inhibits collective capacity for local solutions, which we know is the key for RESILIENCE and SUSTAINABILITY.

The administration burden (application criteria; management of funds; capacity for outcomes) is challenging for smaller / independent or not-for-profit orgs - meaning that the same large organizations, tend to be successful (but not always most suited)!

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

No, they are often reactive, difficult to find and vague.

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

No response provided.

