



Australian Government

National Emergency
Management Agency

Submission to the Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding

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Submitted by: Alton Twine, Director and Local Disaster Coordinator on behalf of City of Gold Coast

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

Commonwealth investment into the City of Gold Coast (City) has enabled the enhancement and fast track of Gold Coast community recovery and resilience activities. The City has directly benefitted from funding support through the following opportunities:

- * 2019-2020 Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Program
- * Preparing Australian Communities
- * Disaster Ready Fund – Round One

The City appreciates the opportunity to submit applications directly to the Commonwealth via established portals and has found this to be a positive experience.

The City has also been the recipient of joint Commonwealth and State funding support through the well-established Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). This funding has been used to restore damaged essential public assets, as well as enhance activities and programs that support recovery and resilience. These well-established processes, administered by Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) and the City of Gold Coast This centralised process proves beneficial and work well.

Over the past 3 years the City has activated several times under the DRFA arrangements which has also provided opportunities to secure additional funding under other targeted programs such as:

- * Community and Recreation Assets Recovery and Resilience Program
- * Local Recovery and Resilience Grant
- * Flood Mapping and Flood Warning Program
- * Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction fund

The City has a significant trigger point of \$2.2M to access DRFA. Sometimes this trigger has not been met. This has impacted the City to source funding for disaster events. An example is the September 2022 event, where essential public asset damage was identified as slightly below the trigger. The City has also led State and Commonwealth relief and recovery activities that has impacted not only the City, where funding support was not available, such as the 2023 Gold Coast Aviation (Helicopter) disaster event.





Recently in situations where Commonwealth funding has been funnelled through the QRA for Queensland-wide allocation and administration, has identified impacts to the timeframe allocated to local governments to prepare and submit applications. Whilst this has been an impact, having a central contact for disaster related funds is of benefit to the City. The City's established networks with the QRA, enables ongoing relationship building, identification and development of programs for targeted funding, and the opportunity to collectively deliver a common community resilience outcome for Queensland.

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

Commonwealth funding can play a crucial role in supporting communities to reduce their disaster risk by investing in a variety of measures and initiatives. The City of Gold Coast has provided some ideas on how this funding can be used, including:

- * Advocate for insurance and financial Incentives - The Commonwealth can explore innovative financial mechanisms to reward resilient home building to build better before
- * Residential Infrastructure improvements (Retrofit) – Funding could be directed towards upgrading residential housing to be more resilient to natural disasters prior to an event. This could be an extension of the Resilient Home Fund to incorporate wind risk for homes in Wind Region B or increase the income threshold eligibility.
- * Community Resilience Programs - The Commonwealth can allocate funds to support community-based programs to assist individuals in identifying their own exposure to hazards. This program could include:
 - o a self-assessment platform that produces a risk result based on their personal circumstance,
 - o information on how individuals can harden their home to improve their overall risk score, and
 - o practical workshops on how they can implement the improvements.
- * Capacity Building: Funding can be used to provide training and capacity-building programs for local agencies. This could include workshops on disaster risk reduction, first aid training, and the development of community-based disaster management plans.

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

The City of Gold Coast is fortunate to have dedicated resources to liaise with state and Commonwealth stakeholders. There is a sound level of understanding of Commonwealth disaster funding processes. It is understood that Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements is the foundation guideline that informs state and local governments of funding arrangements and their application to a wide variety of programs that are offered to support both state and local government activities.

The City encourages opportunities to build relationships and continuously improve its understanding of Commonwealth disaster funding processes so that the desired outcomes for both the community and all levels of government can be achieved.





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

Commonwealth Government

The Commonwealth plays a significant role in providing financial assistance during disasters. It has the responsibility of coordinating and supporting national disaster response and recovery efforts. The Commonwealth provides funding to Queensland Reconstruction Authority to administer, through various programs to prepare for, respond to and recovery from disaster events.

State Government

The Queensland government is responsible for managing disaster through the Queensland Disaster Management arrangements. They have the authority to declare a state of emergency or a disaster and take appropriate actions to address the situation. Once a disaster is declared, Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements are made available. State governments can also request financial assistance from the Commonwealth if the scale of the disaster exceeds their capacity to respond adequately.

The Queensland government, namely QRA, is acknowledged as the central administration agency for joint state and Commonwealth disaster funding. This is an effective process that supports all QLD Local Government Areas (LGA's) and communities.

Local Government

In Queensland, the LGA (Council) plays a crucial role in disaster management at the community level. In times of disaster, the local government coordinates the administration of the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC). The LDMG and LDCC coordinate emergency services, evacuation, and relief efforts. They are responsible for immediate response efforts within their jurisdiction and are the ones who are closest to the affected communities.

Local governments often work closely with the District and State Disaster Management groups and authorities to ensure a coordinated response. Through the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements, Local governments can put in a request for assistance to District and State levels if the disaster exceeds local capacity.

The Local government area is responsible for the community led recovery and resilience activities, which benefit from all levels of government funding and support made available to enable delivery of these activities.

Funding during a disaster is often based on a system of cost-sharing, where the Commonwealth provides financial assistance to the states and territories to support their response and recovery efforts. The specific funding arrangements and mechanisms may vary depending on the type and scale of the disaster.

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

No

