



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?

We applied for a Disaster Risk Reduction Package (DRRP) National Project Proposal and for the first round of the Disaster Ready Fund through NSW.

Disaster Risk Reduction Package (DRRP) National Project.

* The timeframe for submission of the DRRP proposal (December 2021-January 2022) was very short, and over the Christmas period. This made it a very stressful process. We were successful for the Disaster Risk Reduction Package National Project Proposal. Nevertheless, there is no opportunity for a university to apply directly for funding, and this is a shortcoming. The DRRP has been an excellent opportunity to do coordinated national research in partnership with flood-prone communities and councils. This experience will build capacity in the research sector to partner with communities and councils and also provide much-needed helpful services to Councils regarding the building of disaster resilience. Nevertheless, the funding time frame is very short in order to achieve the required research outcomes. A transparent longer term funding opportunity would allow for innovative research to be supported.

* We have also identified a serious issue regarding disaster funding support more generally. Our research requires us to obtain hydrological data and models from local councils. In the most successful case, it has taken six months to sign off on data-sharing agreements with a Council, and then to obtain the data, severely delaying our research. These models and data were developed / collected using either Commonwealth or State funding. All Commonwealth and State funding agreements should expressly require that data collected and flood models developed by Local Councils and their contractors be available to universities and other research agencies. A central national publicly available access point for these flood models and data should be developed.

Disaster Ready Fund

* The amount of funding for Disaster readiness is insufficient to address the scale of the problem.

* The current Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) is all state-based. There is no national component. From a national university perspective, there are challenges in applying for funding for larger/national projects when funds must be applied for at the state level. Yet there are strong public benefits and efficiencies to be gained through funding national projects.





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* Across DRF-supported projects across the jurisdictions, there are many commonalities, and also some experimentation eg with Nature-based Solutions for flooding. A national evaluation project is required to collect data from each of these projects, monitor and evaluate progress, and use these national datasets to inform future investment.

* In the first DRF round, the timeframe was very short for preparing and submitting the proposal once criteria were released. The time frame was actually shortened after the DRF was announced, resulting in a hurried scramble to prepare proposals. Also, it is generally inconvenient to many organisations for a funding round to be opened just after/ over Christmas/New Year. The round should be advertised either in July/ August and close in November/December OR open in February and close in May/June. This would allow more time to prepare higher quality proposals.

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

No response provided.

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?

No response provided.

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

New significant Funding is required for transformational innovation, science, and technology systems.

Urgent and large-scale research missions are required to develop innovative transformational solutions to disasters. For example, over the next decade, the Government will invest \$3.4 billion to establish the Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator to deliver the capabilities needed by the Australian Defence Force – connecting and streamlining Defence innovation, science, and technology systems. A comparable fund is needed to defend Australia from intensifying natural hazards, through delivering new technologies, strategies and capabilities. Defence is calling upon the best innovators from across the Country to work in partnership with industry and academia to rapidly deliver highly targeted disruptive technologies. There is nothing like this available in the Disaster Funding arrangements. We need an analogous fund for the Disaster preparedness / prevention sector.

* While Natural Hazards Research Australia is succeeding in funding more incremental research to meet the current needs of end users, the amount of funding that they have available across all disasters is not large. Moreover, research organisations with innovative proposals cannot apply for funding directly .

