



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: Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

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

PMHC established a dedicated team of project delivery staff to administer the flood recovery program for the LGA. This team has been responsible for the collection of information on damage sustained, scoping and costing the proposed restoration treatment, submission and management of disaster funding claims (including pre-damage evidence), implementation of the reconstruction effort and finalisation of funding claims. Commencing in July 2021, this team has been responsible for PMHC's response to AGRN960, AGRN987, AGRN1012 and AGRN1025. In doing so we have been required to work with the following agencies and funding streams:

- * TfNSW - NSW Storm and Flood Clean-up Program AGRN954 and 960, Boating Infrastructure Emergency Repair Pool and NSW Severe Weather and Flooding (22 February 2022 onwards) Clean-up Program AGRN1012
- * PWA - NSW Storm and Flood Clean-up Program AGRN954 and 960 and NSW Severe Weather and Flooding (22 February 2022 onwards) Clean-up Program AGRN1012
- * Crown Lands - NSW Storm and Flood Clean-up Program AGRN954 and 960 and Crown Land Flood Recovery Program – February March 2022 Storm and Flood Event AGRN1012
- * NSW Department of Regional NSW - Community Local Infrastructure Recovery Program
- * NSW Office of Local Government - Local Government Recovery Grants Program for AGRN1012 and 1025
- * NSW Department of Primary Industries - Recreational Fishing Trusts
- * Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources - National Recovery and Resilience Agency - Preparing Australian Communities Local Stream
- * NSW EPA - Council Community and Recreation Assets Clean-up Program

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

Providing opportunity to activate "betterment funding" on any of the damages submitted for funding as an extension of the existing claims submission process for DRFA. Current betterment programs such as the Regional Roads and Transport Recovery Program and Infrastructure Betterment Fund require a





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separate grant funding application, which we have found to be duplicative in terms of providing evidence of pre-event condition and damage sustained and responding to queries. To date, our experience has indicated a lack of communication and sharing of information between the teams administering each of these funding programs.

Expansion of the definition of essential public assets to provide for other Council assets, including water and sewer infrastructure, parks and reserves and buildings would considerably reduce financial and asset availability risks for councils.

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

The Commonwealth sets aside funding for categories of disaster recovery funding to be administered by respective agencies. Claims are submitted to administering agency, the process for which varies between funding programs:

- * TfNSW - NSW Storm and Flood Clean-up Program AGRN954 and 960 and NSW Severe Weather and Flooding (22 February 2022 onwards) Clean-up Program AGRN1012
- * TfNSW - Boating Infrastructure Emergency Repair Pool
- * PWA - NSW Storm and Flood Clean-up Program AGRN954 and 960 and NSW Severe Weather and Flooding (22 Feb 2022 onwards) Clean-up Program AGRN1012
- * Crown Lands - NSW Storm and Flood Clean-up Program AGRN954 and 960
- * Crown Lands - Crown Land Flood Recovery Program – February March 2022 Storm and Flood Event AGRN1012
- * NSW Department of Regional NSW - Community Local Infrastructure Recovery Program
- * NSW Office of Local Government - Local Government Recovery Grants Program for AGRN1012 and 1025
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- * Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources - National Recovery and Resilience Agency - Preparing Australian Communities Local Stream
- * NSW EPA - Council Community and Recreation Assets Clean-up Program

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

This is clear for the repair of essential public assets as the Commonwealth deals directly with State, who in turn manage the claims made by Local Government. However there is confusion around which State agency handles each type of asset, for example footpaths are assessed by TfNSW if they are adjacent to a road, but by PWA if located anywhere else. Carparks are another example, as they are a transport asset, but are assessed by PWA or Regional NSW depending on the location of the asset.

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

No response provided.

