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NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT MINISTERS' MEETING

20 OCTOBER 2023

COMMUNIQUÉ

The National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting (NEMMM), chaired by Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Commonwealth Minister for Emergency Management, was held virtually on 20 October 2023.

Commonwealth, State and Territory emergency management portfolio ministers and the Vice President of the Australian Local Government Association attended and were supported by their senior officials.

Seasonal Outlook

Members were provided with an update on the seasonal outlook overview from the Bureau of Meteorology.

National Preparedness

Members discussed the recent 2023–24 Higher Risk Weather Season (HRWS) National Preparedness Summit, held 25-26 September 2023 at Australian Parliament House, and preliminary insights from the Summit that will support Australia's preparedness for the 2023–24 HRWS.

Governments at all levels have been briefed on the HRWS. While we are well prepared, not all risks can be eliminated. The seasonal climatic outlook presents challenges that will require close coordination and collaboration through existing mechanisms such as the Australian Government National Situation Room, the National Coordination Mechanism and the National Resource Sharing Centre.

The Australian Government continues to work in partnership with States and Territories, which are the lead for crises that occur within their jurisdictions.

Through building and supporting the development of national capabilities like the National Emergency Management Stockpile and Public Safety Mobile Broadband, the Australian Government is working with States, Territories and local governments to keep Australians safe.

Ministers discussed fatigue among workers and volunteers among emergency services, local government, the community sector and other groups, following consecutive years of extreme weather. A range of potential interventions to further support workers and volunteers were identified for further consideration.

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Ministers noted the efforts of all jurisdictions to undertake fuel reduction and broader preparedness activities despite challenging conditions ahead of the 2023-24 HRWS and acknowledged the impacts of climate change on these activities.

Members noted the status of the National Aerial Firefighting fleet ahead of the HRWS and discussed options for improved capability in this area for the future.

Members noted the achievements and operational status of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System as an important capability that supports States and Territories, fire services and the community with critical risk information to make operational and safety decisions.

Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade

Members were provided with a presentation from Mr Nazir Afzal OBE, Chair of the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade (the Review), regarding the outcomes of the Review.

Alternative Commonwealth Capability for Crisis Response

Members were provided with a presentation from the Head of the National Resilience Taskforce, Department of Home Affairs, on the Alternative Commonwealth Capability for Crisis Response.

Independent Review into Commonwealth Disaster Funding

Members noted an update on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Disaster Funding from the Independent Review lead Mr Andrew Colvin AO APM.

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