

Disaster Ready Fund – Round One 2023-2024

Frequently Asked Questions

The Australian Government has established the Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) which will provide up to \$200 million per year, over five years from 1 July 2023. It will fund projects that build resilience to, prepare for, or reduce the risk of, future natural hazard impacts. It will also help to build the long-term sustainability of communities at risk of being affected by future disasters.

1. What is the Disaster Ready Fund?

The Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) is the Australian Government's flagship disaster risk reduction initiative which will provide up to \$200 million per year to fund projects that reduce the risk or impact of natural hazards and disaster events. The DRF recognises both the importance of disaster preparedness and the role that all levels of government, industry and community play in contributing to disaster preparedness.

The Australian Government, in partnership with state and territory governments, will work to deliver projects that actively reduce the risks and impacts of disaster events and natural hazards, including climate change. The DRF is intended to be an enduring fund, to provide all levels of government, external territories, as well as affected stakeholders, the certainty they need to plan for robust investments in resilience projects to reduce the impacts of disasters predicated by natural hazards.

2. Where can I find more information on the DRF?

The DRF was [announced](#) on 7 September 2022. More information about eligibility and the assessment process can be found in the DRF [Guidelines](#) available on this website.

For further information please contact the NEMA DRF Team via: disaster.ready@nema.gov.au.

3. How much funding is available under DRF Round One 2023-2024?

Up to \$200 million is available under DRF Round One.

4. Who is eligible to apply?

Section 3.1 of the DRF [Guidelines](#) outlines who is eligible to apply under the DRF. Only Australian state and territory governments are eligible to apply for DRF Round One funding. Applicants may engage third parties to deliver services on their behalf for any projects awarded DRF funding. Applicants are encouraged to engage with local communities and organisations to identify suitable projects.

5. I'm a local government or business/organisation, why can't I apply directly?

State and territory governments are primarily responsible for responding to and recovering from natural disasters. However local governments, businesses, the not-for-profit sector and communities also play a significant role in natural disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Building disaster resilience is a shared responsibility and state and territory governments are required to consult and work with local governments, communities and implementing partners to identify suitable projects.

Each state and territory has nominated a lead agency who has responsibility for coordinating proposals in their jurisdiction, and submitting applications to NEMA. The lead agencies are:



Jurisdiction	Lead Agency
Australian Capital Territory	Justice and Community Safety Directorate
New South Wales	NSW Reconstruction Authority
Northern Territory	Northern Territory Emergency Services
Queensland	Queensland Reconstruction Authority
South Australia	South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission
Tasmania	Resilience and Recovery Tasmania, Department of Premier and Cabinet
Victoria	Emergency Management Victoria
Western Australia	Department of Fire and Emergency Services

6. How much funding can be applied for?

There is no minimum or maximum amount of Commonwealth funding per project, within the total allocated for 2023-24 of up to \$200 million. There is no limit to the number of project applications an Applicant may submit. Section 7 of the DRF Guidelines provides further details on the arrangements for Funding Round One (2023-24).

7. What sorts of hazards will the Fund target?

A broad range of hazards are eligible. Section 4 of the DRF [Guidelines](#) explains the eligibility criteria including eligible hazard types (section 4.1) and ineligible hazard types (section 4.2).

8. Are biosecurity threats eligible hazard types?

Biosecurity threats are typically outside the remit of the *Disaster Ready Fund Act 2019*, and therefore would not normally be funded under the Disaster Ready Fund.

9. Are cyber threats eligible hazard types?

Cyber threats are outside the remit of the *Disaster Ready Fund Act 2019*, and therefore normally are unable to be funded under the Disaster Ready Fund.

10. Are road improvement projects eligible for DRF funding?

Applicants can only spend DRF funding on eligible expenditure incurred on eligible project activities, for eligible hazard types, as defined in the [Guidelines](#).

In relation to roads, section 5.2 of the [Guidelines](#) relevantly states that applicants cannot spend the Commonwealth's funding on ineligible expenditure incurred, including:

- road infrastructure works that do not have the primary purpose of reducing community exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a natural hazard's impacts
- road maintenance.

It will ultimately depend on the application itself and be up to the Program Delegate to decide whether eligibility requirements been met for each project.

11. Are land acquisition projects eligible for DRF funding?

While the [Guidelines](#) do not specifically rule out land buyback projects, to be considered for DRF funding, applicants would need to demonstrate that their project meets all eligibility criteria outlined in section 4 of the [Guidelines](#), including that it is an eligible activity type (i.e. an infrastructure project or systemic risk reduction project that falls into one or more the project categories outlined in section 4.3 of the [Guidelines](#)).

Systemic risk reduction categories include, but are not limited to, adaptation projects that improve land use planning and development practice projects, including the preparation of regional or local plans and updating land use planning instruments and building codes.

It will ultimately depend on the application itself and be up to the Program Delegate to decide whether eligibility requirements have been met for each project.



12. Can you provide examples of eligible projects?

As outlined in section 4.3 of the DRF [Guidelines](#), the following are some examples of the project types which may be eligible under the DRF streams. Please note, this list is not exhaustive:

Stream One **'infrastructure'** examples might include, but are not limited to: the construction of flood levees, fire breaks or cyclone shelters, the construction of artificial reefs or sand nourishment on vulnerable coastlines, tsunami warning systems, bushfire warning systems, and investigation, planning and design to resolve emerging risks.

Stream Two **'systematic risk reduction'** examples might include, but are not limited to: the establishment of jurisdiction-wide hazard based information systems, updating state and/or creating local government hazard resilience strategies, hazard research to assist states and developers eliminate inappropriate land sources ahead of construction, and supporting community sector organisations to develop systems, train staff or have materials in place prior to the impact of a natural hazard.

These are examples only. Applicants are encouraged to explore the full range of options available to them, including developing innovative solutions against each of the four activity categories under Stream One and against each of the five activity categories under Stream Two.

13. Can projects contain multiple categories of eligible activities?

Applicants are able to deliver a project that encompasses one or more eligible activity categories.

14. What locations are covered and can projects cover multiple jurisdictions?

Projects must be delivered within the Applicant's respective jurisdiction/s or area of operation. Areas of operation may include a multi-jurisdictional project. Applicants may partner with one another and deliver projects across multiple jurisdictions.

15. Has the allocation of funding for Round One been pre-determined for specific eligible activities or Natural Hazards?

No. There is no set allocation of funding for specific eligible activities or Natural Hazards.

16. What is the length of time a project can be funded for?

The maximum project period is three (3) years from NEMA's written endorsement of the Implementation Plans completed by the Applicant after the Schedule has been signed.

17. Can the DRF cover consultancy costs?

Yes, provided the costs are incurred in accordance with section 5.1 of the DRF [Guidelines](#) (i.e. staffing costs, so long as they can be directly attributed to the provision of the project).

18. Do I need to provide a co-contribution?

Applicants must contribute at least 50 per cent of eligible project expenditure towards each project, as outlined in section 6 of the DRF [Guidelines](#).

19. Who is responsible for providing the 50% co-contribution?

As stated in the Guidelines, Applicants must match Commonwealth funding under the DRF, unless requesting a co-contribution waiver or reduction, which will only be considered in rare and exceptional circumstances.

Jurisdictions are expected to work closely with local governments and other key stakeholders including First Nations communities in developing proposals, including in relation to co-contributions.

It is up to each jurisdiction (as the Applicant) to determine how it coordinates this process and covers the 50% co-contribution for each project, provided all other requirements related to co-contributions and eligibility as outlined in the Guidelines are met. These include that Commonwealth funding from any source (including historical) cannot be used by an Applicant to cover their co-contribution, either fully or in-part.

20. What if I can't provide a co-contribution?

Section 6.2 of the DRF [Guidelines](#) outlines the requirements Applicants must meet to request a waiver or reduction of the co-contribution amount. Requests for waivers or co-contribution reductions will only be considered in rare and exceptional circumstances. Applicants should discuss any



proposed waivers or reductions by emailing disaster.ready@nema.gov.au before submitting an application.

21. What proportion of each co-contribution type (e.g. in-kind vs. financial contribution) will be accepted as part of a jurisdiction's co-contribution?

There is no set limit (minimums or maximums) on proportion of co-contribution type. For example, 100 per cent of a jurisdiction's co-contribution could be an in-kind arrangement. Applicants must provide an indicative budget, which includes details of the mandatory at least 50 per cent co-contribution as an attachment in their application. Further details on co-contributions can be found in section 6 of the DRF [Guidelines](#).

22. Can states/territories reuse an application put forward under a previous round of the ERF that was unsuccessful?

States and territories may apply for projects that have been unsuccessful under previous rounds of the ERF provided they align with Program Objectives for the DRF. Applications must also meet the requirements of the DRF [Guidelines](#).

23. How are the needs of at-risk groups being addressed by the DRF?

Applicants can apply for funding for projects that build the capacity and capability of at-risk communities and community sector organisations to improve their preparedness and resilience to the impacts of future disasters. Applicants are expected to work with local communities to identify suitable projects.

24. What is the open and closing time and date for applications for DRF Round One?

Applications are open until 5.00pm AEDT Monday 6 March 2023. You must submit your application before the closing time and date.

25. Why is the DRF open for less than two months?

NEMA has been consulting with key stakeholders on the development and design of the DRF since October 2022 to ensure states and territories had as much time as possible to start identifying and developing suitable projects.

By opening the DRF between January and March 2023, and assessing the projects immediately afterwards, funding agreements can be signed and projects can start ahead of the 2023-24 High Risk Weather Season.

The DRF is an iterative design approach and NEMA will continue to work with states and territories on the design of future rounds to leverage lessons learned and feedback.

26. What happens if technical issues prevent me from lodging my application on time?

Applicants must submit an application before the closing date and time specified on the cover page of the DRF [Guidelines](#). NEMA will only accept a late application where an Applicant can demonstrate exceptional circumstances prevented them from submitting the application by the closing date.

Agreement to extensions are at the discretion of the Program Delegate, who will only consider exercising this discretion if it would be fair to allow the application to be provided late. If you are having trouble submitting your application, please contact disaster.ready@nema.gov.au prior to the closing date and time.

27. What content types can be submitted via the online application forms?

The online application cover sheet and project application forms support text-only fields, number-only fields, tick boxes and drop-down lists. If wanting to submit other content types (e.g. formatted text, tables, charts, images, etc), these can be included in the mandatory and optional attachments as appropriate.

28. Can I track the progress of my application?

No. It is not possible to track the progress of your application after it is submitted.



29. How are applications assessed?

Applications are assessed against the eligibility criteria, as specified in the DRF [Guidelines](#). Only eligible applications will proceed to the assessment stage and be assessed by the DRF Assessment Panel. The Panel will assess applications against the selection criteria and provide applications with an overall rating. The Minister for Emergency Management will make the final decision on the projects to receive funding under the DRF.

30. If my application is considered to be ineligible, can I amend it and resubmit?

Applicants will not be provided with the opportunity to amend and resubmit if their application is found to be ineligible.

31. When will Applicants be notified about the outcome of an application?

Applicants are expected to be notified of the outcome from mid-2023.

32. Will all states and territories receive an equal share of program funding?

Each jurisdiction will be allocated a minimum baseline funding amount of \$7.5 million under Round One, to ensure equitable distribution, however projects will still need to meet all eligibility requirements and achieve a minimum rating of 'suitable' to secure baseline funding allocations. The remainder of the funding will be distributed across Australian states and territories based on merit.

33. If projects experience increased costs during their implementation, how is this managed by the DRF?

Applicants must do due diligence in their costings and consider appropriate contingencies. The Minister has the authority to agree amendments to Schedules, project scope and project timeframes, where requested in writing by the responsible state or territory minister. Please refer to section 11 of the DRF [Guidelines](#) for further information.

34. Where should I go for further information?

Please ensure you have read the DRF [Guidelines](#) and other documentation available on this website.

If states and territories have any questions regarding the DRF, please contact the NEMA DRF Team via: disaster.ready@nema.gov.au.

