

# COMMUNIQUÉ

## National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting

21 July 2022

All levels of government came together on 21 July 2022 for the National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting (NEMMM) to progress key disaster management issues and reforms. The NEMMM is comprised of all Australian, state and territory emergency management ministers and a representative from the Australian Local Government Association.

It was the first NEMMM held since October 2021, convening shortly after widespread flooding in New South Wales.

The NEMMM was Chaired by Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Commonwealth Minister for Emergency Management. The Chair highlighted the Australian Government's desire to work closely with all jurisdictions to address systemic risk and resilience issues, and foster a spirit of collaboration across the disaster management continuum.

Ministers welcomed the opportunity to work in a more collaborative and cooperative manner, and committed to meeting regularly to address the shared responsibility of disaster response, recovery and resilience.

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

#### Ministerial focus and key priorities

The NEMMM reflected on recent disaster events across Australia, and acknowledged those impacted. Members also noted the number of regions that has experienced repeated floods and fires and the particular impact of these compounding disasters. The NEMMM also noted the impact of climate change on the frequency and severity of natural disasters.

The Chair noted that a review of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) is underway, with initial improvements to be delivered ahead of the upcoming 2022-23 high risk weather season (HRWS).

The Chair also reflected on the Australian Government's commitment to establish a Disaster Ready Fund to provide up to \$200 million per year for disaster risk reduction and mitigation. Further, implementation of recommendations from the *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements* (Royal Commission) remains a high priority, noting cross-jurisdictional work underway to progress priority actions tasked by the National Federation Reform Council.

#### Update on the 2022-23 winter-spring outlook and high risk weather season (HRWS) preparedness program

The NEMMM noted an update on the 2022-23 winter-spring outlook by Dr Andrew Johnson, CEO and Director of Meteorology, Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) which is indicating flooding will be one of the major concerns again this high risk weather season (HRWS). The BOM predicts that the chance of La Nina forming later this year is around 50 percent and if this occurs, it would be the third consecutive La Nina season in Australia. Australia may also be facing a Negative Indian Ocean Dipole event over coming months, which typically results in above-average rainfall over parts of the southern Australia.

Members also noted an update on the HRWS and preparedness program by Mr Joe Buffone PSM, Director General, Emergency Management Australia (EMA). The update noted that EMA coordinates a series of nationwide briefings ahead of each HRWS to help ensure communities are well-prepared for potentially damaging weather events.

### Update on foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and lumpy skin disease (LSD)

The NEMMM noted an update on FMD and LSD from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Current measures to protect Australia include biosecurity measures at international borders and product testing on arrival in the retail environment. At the date of the meeting, neither FMD nor LSD had entered the country.

### Open discussion

Members provided updates on current issues facing their jurisdictions and agreed to consult with the Commonwealth on the structure and progression of the Disaster Ready Fund, including a willingness to consider matching Commonwealth funding.

The NEMMM also agreed to progress the recommendations of the Royal Commission as a priority and acknowledged the important shared leadership role of the Commonwealth and states and territories in this space. Queensland and Western Australia have agreed to take leadership roles in fulfilling recommendations regarding land use planning and the role of mental health in natural disasters, respectively

Members noted the ongoing review of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and the shared goal of disaster recovery assistance that most effectively supports natural disaster impacted communities.

Members acknowledged the upcoming Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Brisbane on 19-22 September 2022 as an opportunity to re-convene and demonstrate Australia's commitment to working collaboratively with regional neighbours on disaster management.