

# ROYAL COMMISSION INTO NATIONAL NATURAL DISASTER ARRANGEMENTS

## QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

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### Overview

Since 2011, Queensland has been impacted by more than 80 significant natural disaster events resulting in loss of life and more than \$16.4 billion in damage to public infrastructure alone.

With a record 10 separate natural disaster events striking the state in 2018–19, the Queensland Government recognises that, as the climate changes, so too will the frequency and intensity of these events.

The Queensland Government remains committed to making Queensland the most disaster resilient state in Australia and strives to safeguard people, property and the environment from disaster impacts, while recognising the importance of empowering and supporting local communities to manage disaster risks, respond to events and be more resilient.

The Queensland Government has demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement of disaster management arrangements through robust planning and preparations, actively participating in the *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements* (RCNDA) and commitment to embed the insights and expertise of the independent Queensland Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM).

The Queensland Government is committed to improving our disaster preparedness, response and recovery to meet the challenges ahead.

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### 2019–20 Black Summer Bushfires

The 2019–20 bushfire season (known as Black Summer) saw unprecedented destruction across Australia with over 24 million hectares of land burnt. Tragically, 33 people died and the RCNDA noted that extensive smoke coverage across much of Eastern Australia may have caused many more deaths. More than 3000 homes were destroyed and nearly three billion animals were killed or displaced. It is estimated that the national financial impacts of these bushfires were more than \$10 billion.

Queensland experienced a challenging start to the 2019–20 bushfire season, with the Sarabah, Peregian Springs and Stanthorpe bushfires in September 2019 and this continued with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' attendance at more than 8000 bushfire

incidents during the season and more than 7.7 million hectares burnt. The community impact was significant, with 49 homes destroyed and devastating effects on businesses and environmental values.

The Queensland Government requested the independent IGEM undertake further monitoring of Queensland's disaster management arrangements with regard to bushfire in response to the Sarabah, Peregian Springs and Stanthorpe bushfires. The IGEM found a clear demonstration of improvements to disaster management arrangements from those seen in the IGEM's *2018 Queensland Bushfires Review* report and identified good practice is being used across disaster management arrangements. The IGEM review also found that the maturation of lessons management across the disaster management sector is evident.

The 2019–20 bushfire season was a catalyst for, although not the sole focus of, the inquiry undertaken by the RCNDA.

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## Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements

The RCNDA was established on 20 February 2020 to examine improvements to natural disaster management arrangements and the legal framework for Federal Government involvement in responding to national emergencies.

The RCNDA received extensive evidence from more than 270 witnesses and almost 80,000 pages of tendered documents and more than 1750 public submissions.

The Queensland Government actively and fully participated in the RCNDA, providing eight state witnesses over nine days and almost 30,000 pages of material.

The RCNDA final report was tabled in the Federal Parliament on 30 October 2020 and made 80 recommendations focused on improvements to national preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery. Many of the recommendations are directed at the Federal Government. Although none of the recommendations is directed solely at the Queensland Government, many recommendations were directed collectively to states and territories, or to the Federal Government and states and territories.

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## Findings and the Queensland Government Response

The RCNDA final report acknowledged the many positive unique features of the well-tested Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements, including the recovery leadership taken by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and focus on improvement delivered through the independent IGEM.

The RCNDA has found that there are opportunities for better national coordination in preparation, response, and recovery from natural disasters. The RCNDA final report's 80 recommendations intend to guide future actions by governments across Australia.

The Queensland Government is committed to community safety and allocated more than \$39 million over four years in 2020, with more than \$8.6 million ongoing funding towards a range of initiatives to improve our disaster management arrangements. These initiatives complement many of the proposed actions suggested by the RCNDA and include supporting community recovery, improving air-quality monitoring, community engagement, bushfire mitigation, better land-use planning, and enhancing intelligence capability and predictive services. The Queensland Government also announced funding in 2020 of more than \$15 million and \$3.1 million in ongoing costs to bolster aerial asset capabilities.

This is in addition to \$16 million over four years and \$2.6 million per year ongoing committed in the 2019–20 State Budget to provide improved capability for bushfire management in Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) parks and State forests. This commitment is primarily focused on taking practical steps to improve the containment of wildfires on QPWS-managed land in strategic locations across Queensland.

Building on these commitments, the Queensland Government supports or supports in-principle all recommendations either directed at state and territory governments, or requiring involvement from state and territory governments, with the exception of recommendation 21.2 (a single national approach to fundraising laws) which is 'noted'. The Federal Government has flagged a single national approach would require a referral of powers, which the Federal Government is not seeking at this time. The Queensland Government is however participating in national working groups to progress State-led national reforms such as the implementation of a cross-border recognition model for fundraising approvals, and the alignment of reporting thresholds for charities registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. The Queensland Government is progressing implementation of the Queensland Government Response to the RCNDA, having already delivered 11 recommendations. The Queensland Government has committed more than \$11 million over four years and \$1.267 million ongoing to support continued implementation of the recommendations, including monitoring arrangements through the established disaster management arrangements. It is noted that the IGEM also has a legislated function to provide assurance for disaster management in Queensland, which includes considering progress of implementation of RCNDA and other relevant report recommendations.

The Queensland Government extends gratitude to the RCNDA for its comprehensive consideration of these difficult issues and looks forward to working closely with our partners in local government, non-government agencies and all jurisdictions to improve outcomes for Queenslanders and Australians when it comes to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from natural disasters.

The Queensland Government high-level response to the RCNDA final report recommendations is attached. We commend the Queensland Government response to all stakeholders.

<b>Queensland Government Response to:</b> <i>Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report – 28 October 2020</i>			
<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Government Response</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should restructure and reinvigorate ministerial forums with a view to enabling timely and informed strategic decision-making in respect of: (1) long-term policy improvement in relation to natural disasters (2) national preparations for, and adaptation to, natural disasters, and (3) response to, and recovery from, natural disasters of national scale or consequence including, where appropriate, through the National Cabinet or equivalent intergovernmental leaders' body.	Support (Delivered)	The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring coordinated and evidenced based actions between the State and Federal Government in the best interests of Queensland.  The Queensland Government will continue to work with its jurisdictional counterparts to identify and secure ongoing improvements in preparing for, responding to and recovering from natural disasters at both the State and Federal level.
<b>3.2</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should establish an authoritative advisory body to consolidate advice on strategic policy and relevant operational considerations for ministers in relation to natural disasters.	Support (Delivered)	The Queensland Government considers the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee is best placed to provide this expertise.
<b>3.3</b>	The Australian Government should revise the COMDISPLAN thresholds to provide that a request for Australian Government assistance, including Defence assistance, is able to be made by a state or territory government when: (1) it has exhausted, or is 'likely to exhaust', all government, community and commercial resources (2) it cannot mobilise its own resources (or community and commercial resources) in time, or (3) the Australian Government has a capability that the state or territory does not have.	Note: Federal Government led	
<b>3.4</b>	Australian Government agencies should work together across all phases of disaster management.	Note: Federal Government led	
<b>3.5</b>	The Australian Government should establish a standing entity that will enhance national natural disaster resilience and recovery, focused on long-term disaster risk reduction.	Note: Federal Government led	
<b>3.6</b>	The Australian Government should enhance national preparedness for, and response to, natural disasters, building on the responsibilities of Emergency Management Australia, to include	Note: Federal Government led	

	facilitating resource sharing decisions of governments and stress testing national disaster plans.		
4.1	Australian, state and territory governments should prioritise the implementation of harmonised data governance and national data standards.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of harmonised data governance and national data standards where possible, noting that not all jurisdictions collect and maintain the same data sets.
4.2	Australian, state and territory governments should create common information platforms and share technologies to enable collaboration in the production, analysis, access, and exchange of information, data and knowledge about climate and disaster risks.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of common information platforms to facilitate inter-jurisdictional collaboration and information exchange, on the basis that an implementation approach which is achievable for all jurisdictions is identified.
4.3	Australian, state and territory governments should support the implementation of the National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability and aligned climate adaptation initiatives.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of the implementation of the National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability and aligned climate adaptation initiatives, noting the role of the Federal Government in leading implementation.
4.4	The National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability should include tools and systems to support operational and strategic decision making, including integrated climate and disaster risk scenarios tailored to various needs of relevant industry sectors and end users.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of the development of the National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability including tools and systems that support operational and strategic decision making, on the basis that the Federal Government will lead this work.
4.5	Australian, state and territory governments should produce downscaled climate projections: (1) to inform the assessment of future natural disaster risk by relevant decision makers, including state and territory government agencies with planning and emergency management responsibilities (2) underpinned by an agreed common core set of climate trajectories and timelines, and (3) subject to regular review.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of the development of climate projections underpinned by common climate trajectories and timelines, noting that the Queensland Government already produces high-quality, downscaled climate projection datasets available via the Queensland Future Climate website. The Queensland Government also produces derivative natural hazard assessments such as the State Heatwave Risk Assessment and Severe Wind Hazard Assessment.
4.6	Australian, state and territory governments should work together to develop consistent data standards to measure disaster impact.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of common standards for measuring the impacts of natural disasters, on the basis that an implementation model which is achievable for all jurisdictions is identified.
4.7	Australian, state and territory governments should continue to develop a greater capacity to collect and share standardised and comprehensive natural disaster impact data.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of the collection and sharing of standardised natural disaster impact data, where possible, noting that jurisdictions will have differing capability.

<p><b>5.1</b></p>	<p>The Australian Government should make provision, in legislation, for a declaration of a state of national emergency. The declaration should include the following components: (1) the ability for the Australian Government to make a public declaration to communicate the seriousness of a natural disaster (2) processes to mobilise and activate Australian Government agencies quickly to support states and territories to respond to and recover from a natural disaster, and (3) the power to take action without a state or territory request for assistance in clearly defined and limited circumstances.</p>	<p>Note: Federal Government led The <i>National Emergency Declaration Act 2020</i> (the Act) commenced on 16 December 2020. The Queensland Government notes the stated purpose of a national declaration mechanism is to galvanise Federal Government resources. Deployment of these resources must occur in consultation with affected states and territories to ensure that locally-led arrangements, which contribute to building ongoing resilience in communities, are not unduly impacted.</p>	
<p><b>6.1</b></p>	<p>State and territory governments should have a structured process to regularly assess the capacity and capability requirements of fire and emergency services, in light of both current and future natural disaster risk.</p>	<p>Support in-principle</p>	<p>The Queensland Government is supportive of a structured process, noting that capacity and capability requirements of Queensland's fire and emergency services are informed by a range of considerations, including climate, population, risk and economic projections and the size and geographical diversity of Queensland. Where possible, capacity and capability requirements are scaled and tailored to meet a range of potential quantifiable and unquantifiable risks.</p>
<p><b>6.2</b></p>	<p>Australian, state and territory governments should establish a national register of fire and emergency services personnel, equipment and aerial assets.</p>	<p>Support in-principle</p>	<p>The Queensland Government is supportive of the establishment of a national register of fire and emergency services personnel, equipment and aerial assets. The Queensland notes that significant investment and resources would be required to regularly track all personnel, equipment and assets over time given Queensland's emergency services are largely volunteer based.</p>
<p><b>6.3</b></p>	<p>State and territory governments should update and implement the National Framework to Improve Government Radio Communications Interoperability, or otherwise agree a new strategy, to achieve interoperable communications across jurisdictions.</p>	<p>Support in-principle</p>	<p>The Queensland Government is supportive of the revision of the National Framework, on the basis that implementation does not limit processes Queensland has in place to achieve interoperability with states that border Queensland.</p>
<p><b>6.4</b></p>	<p>Australian, state and territory governments should expedite the delivery of a Public Safety Mobile Broadband capability.</p>	<p>Support in-principle</p>	<p>The Queensland Government is supportive of the delivery of the Public Safety Mobile Broadband capability, noting that formalisation of governance arrangements through the National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting, and the proposed review of a delivery pathway should provide a strong basis for further development.</p>

6.5	Australian, state and territory governments should conduct multi-agency, national-level exercises, not limited to cross-border jurisdictions. These exercises should, at a minimum: (1) assess national capacity, inform capability development and coordination in response to, and recovery from, natural disasters, and (2) use scenarios that stress current capabilities.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of national exercises, that are desktop based. Field exercises, while supported in-principle, would be costly if personnel and equipment were to be deployed great distances interstate to participate in an exercise, and again, would take resources away from other disaster preparedness and risk mitigation activities.
6.6	The Australian Government should consider whether employment protections under the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) are sufficient to ensure that fire and emergency services volunteers will not be discriminated against, disadvantaged or dismissed for reasons associated with their volunteer service during natural disasters.	Note: Federal Government led	
7.1	State and territory governments should take steps to ensure that there is better interaction, planning and ongoing understanding of Australian Defence Force capabilities and processes by state and territory fire and emergency service agencies and local governments.	Support (Delivered)	The Queensland Government supports the recommendation, noting that the Australian Defence Force is recognised as a key partner stakeholder under Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements and has provided invaluable support and assistance to Queensland communities during and after some of the State's most significant disaster events. The Queensland Government will continue to build on this well-established relationship.
7.2	The Australian Government should review the content of the Defence Assistance to the Civil Community manual to ensure consistency of language and application with a revised COMDISPLAN.	Note: Federal Government led	
7.3	The Australian Government should afford appropriate legal protections from civil and criminal liability to Australian Defence Force members when conducting activities under an authorisation to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters.	Note: Federal Government led	
8.1	Australian, state and territory governments should develop an Australian-based and registered national aerial firefighting capability, to be tasked according to greatest national need. This capability should include: (1) a modest, very large air tanker/large air tanker, and Type-1 helicopter capability, including supporting infrastructure, aircrew and aviation support personnel, and (2) any other aerial firefighting capabilities (eg Light Detection and Ranging	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of the establishment of a national aerial firefighting capability that is tasked according to greatest national need, noting that the Federal Government, in consultation with states and territories, is best placed to lead this work.



	(LiDAR), line-scanning, transport, and logistics) that would benefit from a nationally coordinated approach.		
<b>8.2</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should support ongoing research and evaluation into aerial firefighting. This research and evaluation should include: (1) assessing the specific capability needs of states and territories, and (2) exploring the most effective aerial firefighting strategies.	Support	The Queensland Government supports the Federal Government, in consultation with states and territories, leading research and evaluation into the current and future aerial firefighting needs of jurisdictions.
<b>8.3</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should adopt procurement and contracting strategies that support and develop a broader Australian-based sovereign aerial firefighting industry.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of an investigation into the feasibility of long-term contractual arrangements with domestic suppliers of aerial firefighting services, noting the Federal Government, in consultation with states and territories, is best placed to lead this work.
<b>9.1</b>	Australian, state and territory governments, in consultation with local governments and the private sector, should review supply chain risks, and consider options to ensure supply of essential goods in times of natural disasters.	Support in-principle (Delivered)	<p>The Queensland Government is supportive of the review of supply chain risks, noting that it has reviewed supply chain risks in response to previous disasters and is experienced in ensuring supply of essential goods and services to communities and individuals in times of natural disasters.</p> <p>The potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the establishment of additional mechanisms to manage broader supply chain risks for essential supplies. These mechanisms include proactive engagement with key industries, such as supermarkets, on maintaining essential supply and readiness to apply emergency planning regulations.</p> <p>The Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements include well-established and exercised processes aimed at resupplying disaster-isolated communities, rural properties and stranded persons.</p>
<b>9.2</b>	State and territory governments should include road closure and opening information on all roads within their borders on public apps.	Support (Delivered)	<p>The Queensland Government supports the provision of road opening and closure information and has embedded road closure and opening information for all state-controlled roads in Queensland through the QLDTraffic service (website, app and 131 940 phone service).</p> <p>Additionally, the QLDTraffic service captures events on local government roads, through relationship with some local governments.</p>



<p><b>9.3</b></p>	<p>State and territory governments should provide information to the public on the closure and opening of roads. Information should be provided in real-time, or in advance based on predictions, where possible.</p>	<p>Support in-principle (Delivered)</p>	<p>The Queensland Government is supportive of the provision of timely and accurate information to the public on the closure and opening of roads, in the interest of enabling safe and efficient travel, noting that it is not always feasible to provide real-time information on closures, due to the size of the Queensland road network as well as the need to ensure the safety of staff when access to areas is impacted during critical events.</p> <p>The Queensland Government does not publish predictions of closures, due to the potential risk of misinformation.</p> <p>The status of road closures for all state-controlled roads in Queensland is provided through the QLDTraffic service (website, app and 131 940 phone service).</p>
<p><b>9.4</b></p>	<p>The Australian Government, working with state and territory governments and critical infrastructure operators, should lead a process to: (1) identify critical infrastructure (2) assess key risks to identified critical infrastructure from natural disasters of national scale or consequence (3) identify steps needed to mitigate these risks (4) identify steps to make the critical infrastructure more resilient, and (5) track achievement against an agreed plan.</p>	<p>Support in-principle</p>	<p>The Queensland Government is supportive of a process whereby critical infrastructure risks are identified and where possible, mitigated, noting that the Federal Government as lead for this recommendation has commenced work with critical infrastructure owners and operators to identify critical infrastructure and systems of national significance, and assess key risks and mitigations, including for nationally significant incidents.</p> <p>The Queensland Government is committed to working with the Federal Government, other jurisdictions and the owners and operators of critical infrastructure to build critical infrastructure resilience.</p>
<p><b>9.5</b></p>	<p>The Australian Government should work with state and territory governments and critical infrastructure operators to improve information flows during and in response to natural disasters: (1) between critical infrastructure operators, and (2) between critical infrastructure operators and government.</p>	<p>Support in-principle</p>	<p>The Queensland Government is supportive of improved information flows, noting that, along with recommendation 9.4, the Federal Government, in consultation with states and territories, is best placed to lead this work.</p> <p>The Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements ensure that the owners and operators of critical infrastructure impacted by the disaster are appropriately engaged.</p>

			The Queensland Government supports working with the Federal Government and other jurisdictions to examine how information flows can be enhanced, however, during a disaster response, alternative arrangements outside of the agreed disaster management arrangements should be avoided to ensure that there is no duplication or conflicting advice provided to the owners and operators of critical infrastructure.
<b>10.1</b>	State and territory governments should continue to deliver, evaluate and improve education and engagement programs aimed at promoting disaster resilience for individuals and communities	Support	<p>The Queensland Government supports and is committed to the delivery of programs that promote disaster resilience for individuals and communities.</p> <p>The Queensland Government will continue to fund and implement the annual Get Ready Queensland program. This year-round all-hazards resilience and preparedness program is launched each year prior to Queensland's severe weather season. It involves a broad-reaching awareness campaign, and grants to local governments (total \$2 million per annum) to help communities prepare for disasters and improve their resilience.</p>
<b>11.1</b>	State and territory governments should take responsibility for the capability and capacity of local governments to which they have delegated their responsibilities in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from natural disasters, to ensure local governments are able to effectively discharge the responsibilities devolved to them.	Support in-principle (Delivered)	Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements provide an established framework to support local governments to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters.
<b>11.2</b>	State and territory governments should review their arrangements for sharing resources between their local governments during natural disasters, including whether those arrangements: (1) provide sufficient surge capacity, and (2) take into account all the risks that the state or territory may face during a natural disaster.	Support in-principle (Delivered)	The <i>Disaster Management Act 2003</i> and Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements provide an established framework for the sharing of resources between local governments during natural disasters.
<b>12.1</b>	State and territory governments, working with local governments and fire and emergency service agencies, should ensure that there are appropriate arrangements for roadside vegetation management that take into account, among other things: (1) priority access and egress routes (2) road priority, utility and strategic value (3) cost, and (4) residual risk to national natural disasters.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of a process to ensure roadside vegetation management arrangements are appropriate, noting that it is working with the Local Government Association of Queensland to provide clarity as to the roles and responsibilities for the management of vegetation within road corridors.

<b>12.2</b>	State and territory governments should ensure that those responsible for evacuation planning periodically review those plans, and update them where appropriate, including in relation to: (1) roles and responsibilities of state and territory governments, local governments and local communities (2) education and signage about evacuations and evacuation routes, including education of seasonal populations (3) the adequacy of evacuation routes; including contingencies if evacuation routes or centres are assessed as not being able to cope, and (4) the potential inability to evacuate, either by reason of circumstances or personal characteristics.	Support	The Queensland Government supports the periodic review of evacuation plans to ensure they remain current and continue to provide for best evacuation outcomes.
<b>12.3</b>	State and territory governments should ensure that those responsible for evacuation planning periodically review those plans, and update them where appropriate, including in relation to: (1) key risks that essential service outages have on communities during a severe or catastrophic natural disaster (particularly communications and power) (2) availability of essential supplies, including food and water, and (3) consequence management and compounding events such as the loss of essential services or health impacts.	Support	The Queensland Government supports the periodic review of evacuation plans to ensure risks to the delivery of essential services can be managed.
<b>12.4</b>	State and territory governments should, as a priority, adopt nationally consistent terminology and functions for the different sheltering facilities, including evacuation centres, Neighbourhood Safer Places, places of last resort and natural disaster shelters.	Support	The Queensland Government supports nationally consistent terminology and functions for evacuation and sheltering places.
<b>12.5</b>	State and territory governments should provide further community education on the function and limitations of different sheltering facilities, including evacuation centres, Neighbourhood Safer Places, places of last resort and natural disaster shelters. This education should be nationally consistent.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of community education on evacuation shelters and safer places to ensure communities understand to where they should evacuate as a natural disaster approaches.
<b>12.6</b>	State and territory governments should ensure those responsible for evacuation planning periodically review these plans, and update them where appropriate, to account for the existence and standard of any evacuation centres and safer places (however described) in the community, including: (1) the capacity of a centre to handle seasonal population variation (2) the suitability of facilities to cater	Support	The Queensland Government supports the periodic review of evacuation plans, including the suitability of evacuation centres and safer places.

	for diverse groups, including vulnerable people, and those evacuating with animals, and (3) the existence of communications facilities and alternate power sources.		
<b>12.7</b>	State and territory governments should ensure those responsible for evacuation planning periodically review those plans, and update where appropriate, to provide for coordination between states and territories in cross-border areas and to provide cross-border access to evacuation centres.	Support	The Queensland Government supports the periodic review of evacuation plans, including cross-border arrangements for border communities.
<b>13.1</b>	State and territory governments should expedite the development and implementation of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System. It should ensure that there is national consistency in the visual display of the AFDRS and action to be taken in response to each rating.	Support	The Queensland Government supports national consistency in public communications, such as the Australian Fire Danger Rating System.
<b>13.2</b>	State and territory governments should deliver education to ensure that the public understands the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System ratings, the potential danger attached to each rating, and the action that should be taken in response to each rating.	Support	The Queensland Government supports the development of education campaigns to improve community safety.
<b>13.3</b>	State and territory governments should urgently deliver and implement the all-hazard Australian Warning System.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of an all hazards Australian Warning System, noting implementation of nationally consistent bushfire warnings commenced in December 2020.
<b>13.4</b>	State and territory governments should ensure that the implementation of the Australian Warning System is accompanied by a carefully developed national education campaign that considers the needs of all Australians.	Support	The Queensland Government supports the development of education campaigns to improve community safety.
<b>13.5</b>	The Australian Government should facilitate state and territory governments working together to develop minimum national standards of information to be included in bushfire warnings apps.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of national consistency in public communications, including through mobile applications and will support the Federal Government in leading this recommendation.
<b>13.6</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should continue to explore the feasibility of a national, all-hazard emergency warning app.	Support	The Queensland Government supports investigations into the feasibility of a national, all-hazards emergency warning app.
<b>14.1</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should: (1) develop close to real-time, nationally consistent air quality information, including consistent categorisation and public health advice (2) greater	Support	The Queensland Government supports and is committed to providing Queenslanders with air-quality information to assist individuals in making decisions about their health and wellbeing.

	community education and guidance, and (3) targeted health advice to vulnerable groups.		The Queensland Government has adopted the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee endorsed hourly reporting on air quality. Public messaging is also delivered on forecast air-quality for the next day (24-hour), with targeted advice to vulnerable groups.
<b>14.2</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should develop national air quality forecasting capabilities, which include broad coverage of population centres and apply to smoke and other airborne pollutants, such as dust and pollen, to predict plume behaviour.	Support	<p>The Queensland Government supports and is committed to providing Queenslanders with air-quality information to assist individuals in making decisions about their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The Queensland Government has adopted the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee endorsed hourly reporting on air quality. Public messaging is also delivered on forecast air-quality for the next day (24-hour), with targeted advice to vulnerable groups.</p>
<b>15.1</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should review Australian Medical Assistance Team capabilities and procedures and develop necessary training, exercising and other arrangements to build capacity for domestic deployments.	Support	The Queensland Government supports and is committed to continuing to provide highly-skilled AUSMAT-trained staff for deployment by the Federal Government both internationally and domestically under the AUSMAT program.
<b>15.2</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should develop arrangements that facilitate greater inclusion of primary healthcare providers in disaster management, including: representation on relevant disaster committees and plans and providing training, education and other supports.	Support	The Queensland Government supports and continues to advocate for greater inclusion of primary health care providers and Primary Health Networks in disaster management, primarily through establishment of health sub-committees for District Disaster Management Groups throughout Queensland.
<b>15.3</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should refine arrangements to support localised planning and the delivery of appropriate mental health services following a natural disaster.	Support	<p>The Queensland Government support and has integrated mental health planning through the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements, at a local, district and state level.</p> <p>Mental health services are primarily delivered through the establishment of Mental Health Disaster Recovery Teams with joint funding from the Federal and Queensland governments under Category C of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.</p> <p>Additionally, the Queensland Government has strong partnerships with the non-government organisation (NGO) sector, who provide a range of</p>

			social, emotional and psychological support services in response to natural disasters.
<b>15.4</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should agree to: (1) develop consistent and compatible methods and metrics to measure health impacts related to natural disasters, including mental health, and (2) take steps to ensure the appropriate sharing of health and mental health datasets.	Support	The Queensland Government supports the development of nationally consistent and compatible methods and metrics to measure health impacts related to natural disasters, including mental health and the appropriate sharing of relevant mental health datasets.
<b>16.1</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should ensure greater consistency and collaboration in the collation, storage, access and provision of data on the distribution and conservation status of Australian flora and fauna.	Support in-principle	<p>The Queensland Government supports greater availability, consistency and utility of biodiversity data through the Australian Virtual Herbarium, Atlas of Living Australia and the National Vegetation Information System. Queensland shares both spatial and site biodiversity data with other jurisdictions and this data is freely available from the Queensland Globe, Open Data Portal and QSpatial.</p> <p>The Queensland Government is also collaborating with the Federal Government to align the national conservation status of Queensland threatened species using the agreed common assessment method to help maintain the current high level of scientific rigour in the assessment and listing of threatened species.</p>
<b>17.1</b>	Public land managers should clearly convey and make available to the public their fuel load management strategies, including the rationale behind them, as well as report annually on the implementation and outcomes of those strategies.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of making available the fuel load management strategies of public land managers, noting that it will identify opportunities within existing frameworks for public land managers to do this.
<b>17.2</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should review the assessment and approval processes relating to vegetation management, bushfire mitigation and hazard reduction to: (1) ensure that there is clarity about the requirements and scope for landholders and land managers to undertake bushfire hazard reduction activities, and (2) minimise the time taken to undertake assessments and obtain approvals.	Support in-principle	<p>The Queensland Government is supportive of working with landholders and land managers to ensure there is a clear understanding of how existing exemptions apply to the establishment and maintenance of firebreaks and fire management lines under Queensland’s vegetation management framework.</p> <p>The Queensland Government will also clarify arrangements with a number of local governments that have local laws that also regulate vegetation clearing for fire management.</p>

<b>17.3</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should develop consistent processes for the classification, recording and sharing of fuel load data.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of the development of consistent processes, where possible, for the classification, recording and sharing of fuel load data, noting that integrating jurisdictional differences will take time and that the Federal Government, in consultation with states and territories, is best placed to lead and facilitate an implementation approach which is achievable for all jurisdictions.
<b>18.1</b>	Australian, state, territory and local governments should engage further with Traditional Owners to explore the relationship between Indigenous land and fire management and natural disaster resilience.	Support	The Queensland Government supports ongoing engagement and collaboration with traditional owners to develop best practice approaches to bushfire mitigation and disaster resilience.
<b>18.2</b>	Australian, state, territory and local governments should explore further opportunities to leverage Indigenous land and fire management insights, in the development, planning and execution of public land management activities.	Support	The Queensland Government supports ongoing collaboration with traditional owners to develop and improve the planning and execution of public land management activities.
<b>19.1</b>	State and territory governments should:(1) each have a process or mechanism in place to communicate natural hazard risk information to households (including prospective purchasers) in ‘hazard prone’ areas, and (2) work together, and with the Australian Government where appropriate, to explore the development of a national mechanism to do the same.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of the improvement of processes and mechanisms for communicating natural hazard risk information to households to improve individual and community disaster preparation and resilience.
<b>19.2</b>	The insurance industry, as represented by the Insurance Council of Australia, working with state and territory governments and other relevant stakeholders, should produce and communicate to consumers clear guidance on individual-level natural hazard risk mitigation actions insurers will recognise in setting insurance premiums.	Support (Delivered)	<p>The Queensland Government supports working with the insurance industry to provide information to consumers to mitigate against the impacts of natural disasters to reduce the long-term costs associated with disaster damage and insurance premiums.</p> <p>Given the Federal Government’s responsibility for regulating the insurance industry, and the national nature of disaster risk, the Federal Government has a clear role to play in enhancing the information provided to consumers relating to insurance premium reductions possible through household-level mitigation works.</p> <p>Queensland has already developed a suite of building guides outlining resilient design for Queensland homes, and provides insurance</p>



			information to consumers through the Get Ready Queensland website and advertising campaigns.
<b>19.3</b>	State, territory and local governments should be required to consider present and future natural disaster risk when making land-use planning decisions for new developments.	Support	The Queensland Government supports a process for land use planning decisions to consider safety and resilience to hazards, including the potential impacts of natural disasters.
<b>19.4</b>	The Australian Building Codes Board, working with other bodies as appropriate, should: (1) assess the extent to which AS 3959:2018 Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas, and other relevant building standards, are effective in reducing risk from natural hazards to lives and property, and (2) conduct an evaluation as to whether the National Construction Code should be amended to specifically include, as an objective of the code, making buildings more resilient to natural hazards.	Support	<p>The Queensland Government supports the Australian Building Codes Board, working with other bodies as appropriate to:</p> <p>(1) assess the extent to which AS 3959:2018 Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas, and other relevant building standards, are effective in reducing risk from natural hazards to lives and property, and consider relevant amendments, and</p> <p>(2) conduct an evaluation as to whether the National Construction Code should be amended to specifically include, as an objective of the code, making buildings more resilient to natural and other hazards and consider relevant amendments.</p>
<b>20.1</b>	Governments should create and publish standing policy guidance on whether they will or will not assist to clean-up debris, including contaminated debris, resulting from natural hazards.	Support (Delivered)	The Queensland Government supports clear guidance on assistance for the clean-up of debris, noting the Queensland Government co-funds the clean-up of debris by local governments to enable safe access to residential properties, and provides clear policy guidance on Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement eligibility for clean-up activities via websites, tip-sheets, pre-season preparedness training, and the Queensland Disaster Relief and Recovery Funding Guidelines.
<b>21.1</b>	State and territory governments should develop and implement efficient and effective arrangements to: (1) educate the public about the challenges associated with donated goods, for example, the storage and distribution of donated goods, and (2) manage and coordinate donated goods to ensure offers of support are matched with need.	Support (Delivered)	The Queensland Government supports education on and the management of donated goods, noting that it has an effective and efficient mechanism in place to manage and coordinate donated goods to meet identified needs. This occurs through a 'virtual warehouse'. These arrangements are embedded in the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements and articulated in the Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Management Guideline.
<b>21.2</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should create a single national scheme for the regulation of charitable fundraising.	Noted	Without commitment to a single national scheme from the Federal Government, the Queensland Government can only 'note' this

			<p>recommendation at this time. The Queensland Government acknowledges the Federal Government is working with the States and Territories to implement a cross-border recognition model for fundraising authorisations, and a framework for the alignment of State and Federal financial reporting requirements. While these proposals will deliver some targeted reforms for the charitable fundraising sector, they do not equate to consideration of a single national scheme.</p>
<b>21.3</b>	<p>The Australian Government, through the mechanism of the proposed standing national recovery and resilience agency, should convene regular and ongoing national forums for charities, non-government organisations and volunteer groups, with a role in natural disaster recovery, with a view to continuous improvement of coordination of recovery support.</p>	<p>Note: Federal Government led</p>	
<b>21.4</b>	<p>Australian, state and territory governments should establish a national mechanism for sharing of trained and qualified recovery personnel and best practice during and following natural disasters.</p>	<p>Support in-principle</p>	<p>The Queensland Government is supportive of the establishment of a national mechanism and is working with the Federal Government and other jurisdictions on relevant arrangements, including a National Recovery Capability Strategy.</p>
<b>21.5</b>	<p>Australian, state and territory governments should work together to develop a program for national level recovery exercises, building on the work currently underway through the Community Outcomes and Recovery Subcommittee of the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Queensland Government supports the development of a national level recovery program and is supporting work underway through the Community Outcomes and Recovery Sub-Committee of the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee to progress this work.</p>
<b>22.1</b>	<p>Australian, state and territory and local governments should evaluate the effectiveness of existing financial assistance measures to inform the development of a suite of pre-effective pre-determined recovery supports.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Queensland Government supports the evaluation of existing financial measures and will continue to work with the Federal Government and other jurisdictions to evaluate funding effectiveness and develop a range of 'off-the-shelf' recovery supports. Queensland is committed to ensuring that 'off-the-shelf' packages embed sufficient flexibility to be tailored so they are fit for purpose, fit for place, and address the specific needs arising from local disaster impacts.</p>
<b>22.2</b>	<p>Australian, state and territory governments should ensure that personal information of individuals affected by a natural disaster is able to be appropriately shared between all levels of government, agencies, insurers, charities and organisations delivering recovery</p>	<p>Support in-principle</p>	<p>The Queensland Government is supportive of the development of a national system for the collection and dissemination of personal information, noting that the cost implications are likely to be significant.</p>

	services, taking account of all necessary safeguards to ensure the sharing is only for recovery purposes.		The Queensland Government considers that the development of an administrative process, based upon the affected person giving consent, should be prioritised over amendments to privacy legislation.
<b>22.3</b>	In reviewing the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, Australian, state and territory governments should examine the small disaster criterion, and financial thresholds generally.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of the review of Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and will continue to work with the Federal Government and other jurisdictions to investigate the implications of amendments to the small disaster criterion and financial thresholds.
<b>22.4</b>	Australian, state and territory and local governments should develop greater consistency in the financial support provided to individuals, small businesses and primary producers under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.	Support in-principle	The Queensland Government is supportive of the review of financial support arrangements and will continue to work with the Federal Government and other jurisdictions to investigate the implications of greater consistency.
<b>22.5</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should expedite the development of pre-agreed recovery programs, including those that address social needs, such as legal assistance domestic violence, and also environmental recovery.	Support	The Queensland Government supports the development of pre-agreed recovery programs and will continue to work with the Federal Government and other jurisdictions to ensure that 'off-the-shelf' packages embed sufficient flexibility to be tailored so they are fit for purpose, fit for place, and address the specific needs arising from local impacts.
<b>22.6</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should incorporate the principle of 'build back better' more broadly into the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.	Support	The Queensland Government supports efforts to 'build back better' through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. Queensland is the only jurisdiction in Australia who has delivered three Betterment programs and is currently delivering a fourth Betterment program.
<b>22.7</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should broaden Category D of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements to encompass funding for recovery measures that are focused on resilience, including in circumstances which are not 'exceptional'.	Support	The Queensland Government supports the review of Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and will continue to work closely with the Federal Government to progress this work.
<b>22.8</b>	Australian, state and territory governments should create simpler Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements application processes.	Support	The Queensland Government supports a simpler process and has worked with the Federal Government and other jurisdictions to streamline and simplify Category C and D processes and is trialling these processes during the 2020–21 high risk weather season.

<b>24.1</b>	The Australian Government should establish accountability and assurance mechanisms to promote continuous improvement and best practice in natural disaster arrangements.	Note: Federal Government led	
<b>24.2</b>	Each state and territory government should establish an independent accountability and assurance mechanism to promote continuous improvement and best practice in natural disaster arrangements.	Support (Delivered)	The Queensland Government supports an independent mechanism to promote continuous improvement and best practice, noting that the functions of the independent Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management, established under the <i>Disaster Management Act 2003</i> (Qld) include: monitoring the compliance of departments with their disaster management responsibilities and identifying opportunities to improve disaster management outcomes.
<b>24.3</b>	The material published as part of this Royal Commission should remain available and accessible on a long-term basis for the benefit of individuals, communities, organisations, businesses and all levels of government.	Note: Federal Government led	