



Attorney-General's Department
Submission to the
Environment and Communications
References Committee

Inquiry into recent trends in and preparedness for extreme weather
events

INTRODUCTION

The Attorney-General's Department (AGD) contributes to the Australian Government's commitment to a stronger and fairer Australia by striving to achieve a just and secure society through the improvement of Australia's national security and emergency management system^[1]. In respect to emergency management, AGD provides national leadership to guide the efforts of all Australian governments enabling a whole-of-nation, resilience-based approach to preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters.

While AGD has a national coordination role, primary responsibility for the protection of life, property and the environment rests with the States and Territories in their capacity as first responders during times of emergency.

National Strategy for Disaster Resilience

Disaster resilience is the collective responsibility of all sectors of society, including all levels of government, business, the non-government sector and individuals. For a resilient nation, all members of the community need to understand their role in minimising the impacts of disasters, and have the relevant, knowledge, skills and abilities to take appropriate action. A disaster resilient community works together to understand and manage the risks that it confronts.

On 13 February 2011, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience – Building the resilience of our nation to disasters (the Strategy). The purpose of the Strategy is to provide high-level guidance on disaster management to federal, state, territory and local governments, business and community leaders and the not-for-profit sector. The Strategy focuses on priority areas to build disaster resilient communities across Australia and recognises that disaster resilience is a shared responsibility for individuals, households, businesses and communities, as well as for governments. Endorsement of the Strategy is the first step in a long-term, evolving process to deliver sustained behavioural change and enduring partnerships.

National Policy Governance Arrangements

The Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management (SCPEM) promotes a coordinated national response to law enforcement and emergency management issues; provides a framework for cooperation and shared strategic directions for the policing and emergency services of Australia and New Zealand, and encourages and shares best practice in police policy and operations, and in emergency management, across jurisdictions.

SCPEM comprises ministers responsible for Police and Emergency Management from the Federal Government, States and Territories, New Zealand, along with a representative of the Australian Local Government Association. It oversees the implementation of the Strategy.

The Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) is Australia's national consultative emergency management forum. It supports the SCPEM aim of strengthening the nation's resilience to disasters by providing strategic leadership on nation-

^[1] Attorney-General's Department Portfolio Budget Statements 2010-11, p.1

wide, whole-of-government emergency management policy and through supporting related capability and capacity development activities. The ANZEMC has been tasked by COAG to implement the Strategy.

The ANZEMC is co-chaired by the Secretary, Attorney-General's Department and the Deputy National Security Adviser, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Membership of the ANZEMC comprises two senior representatives from the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, a representative from the Australian Local Government Association, and a senior official from the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, New Zealand.

The ANZEMC has four Sub-committees, the Capability Development Sub-committee, Community Engagement Sub-committee, Recovery Sub-committee, and the Risk Assessment, Measurement and Mitigation Sub-committee. Each Sub-committee is chaired by a State or Territory member of the ANZEMC and Deputy Chaired by a First Assistant Secretary from the Attorney-General's Department.

SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

(a) recent trends on the frequency of extreme weather events, including but not limited to drought, bushfires, heatwaves, floods and storm surges

The Attorney-General's Department has no contribution against this element.

(b) based on global warming scenarios outlined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation of 1 to 5 degrees by 2070:

- (i) projections on the frequency of extreme weather events, including but not limited to drought, bushfires, heatwaves, floods and storm surges
- (ii) the costs of extreme weather events and impacts on natural ecosystems, social and economic infrastructure and human health, and
- (iii) the availability and affordability of private insurance, impacts on availability and affordability under different global warming scenarios, and regional social and economic impacts

Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements

The Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) are the Commonwealth Government’s primary funding mechanism for assisting with the social and economic impacts of extreme weather events and other natural disasters on individuals and communities. The NDRRA does not cover expenditure relating to the natural environment or human health. The NDRRA provides partial reimbursement to the states and territories for expenditure on certain relief and recovery measures (e.g. personal hardship and distress assistance, restoration or replacement of essential public assets, and loans, subsidies and grants for affected communities, small businesses and primary producers). The Commonwealth may reimburse up to 75 per cent of actual expenditure by the state/territory for expenditure in a financial year.

To be eligible for NDRRA assistance, states and territories are required to have public assets insured or to have access to adequate capital to restore public assets if commercial insurance is not available or is not cost effective. States and territories are also required to undertake effective mitigation strategies to reduce the impact of natural disasters.

Commonwealth expenditure on NDRRA in recent years is detailed in the following table.

Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements payments, \$ million^a

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
2011-12	–	–	2 951.0	1.7	–	–	–	7.9	2 960.6
2010-11	–	500.0	2 256.0	–	–	–	–	2.4	2 758.4
2009-10	6.1	4.3	104.5	–	–	0.6	–	2.7	118.3
2008-09	–	270.5	–	–	–	–	–	9.6	280.0
2007-08	7.7	–	–	–	2.0	–	–	7.2	16.9

^a The data presented are the total cash payments in financial years since 2007-08. State/Territory expenditure for NDRRA eligible events can be made within 24 months after the end of the financial year in which the relevant disaster occurred unless an extension is granted. Therefore, costs reported for any given financial year may include payments for events that occurred in the previous years. Costs for specific events are not finalised until the claim period has passed. For accounting purposes, the Australian Government budget paper calculates expenditure as the present value of future payments expected to be made to the States and Territories governments under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements.

Dollars displayed are actual (then-year) dollars and have not been adjusted for changes in purchasing power over time.

In the table “–“ equates to nil payment or payment rounded to zero. Discrepancies in totals are due to rounding.

Source: 2011-12 numbers: The Treasury (2012) *Final Budget Outcome 2011-12*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. 2007-08 to 2010-11 numbers: AGD records.

For certain severe events, the Commonwealth Government may also provide assistance directly to individuals, through the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) and ex gratia assistance such as the Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy (DIRS). For further information, see section (e).

(c) an assessment of the preparedness of key sectors for extreme weather events, including major infrastructure (electricity, water, transport, telecommunications), health, construction and property, and agriculture and forestry

The Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy

The Attorney-General's Department is currently leading a significant body of work aimed at ensuring the resilience of Australia's critical infrastructure. Critical infrastructure is defined by the Australian, State and Territory governments as:

those physical facilities, supply chains, information technologies and communications networks which, if destroyed, degraded or rendered unavailable for an extended period, would significantly impact on the social or economic wellbeing of the nation or affect Australia's ability to conduct national defence and ensure national security.

The Australian Government's Critical Infrastructure Resilience (CIR) Strategy (the Strategy) was launched by the Attorney-General on 30 June 2010. This Strategy builds on the previous Critical Infrastructure Protection program. The Strategy encourages critical infrastructure owners and operators to better manage both foreseeable and unforeseen or unexpected risks to the continuity of their operations.

The Australian Government's policy aim with this body of work is the continued operation of critical infrastructure in the face of all hazards, and the continuity of essential services to other businesses, government and the community. Extreme weather events are one of the hazards addressed under the all hazards approach.

The Australian Government has a complex set of roles, responsibilities and interests in relation to CIR. These include, amongst others, being an owner and operator of a relatively small proportion of our critical infrastructure, the primary source of security threat assessments, and a source of research, scientific and technical advice relevant to the resilience of critical infrastructure.

However, a significant proportion of Australia's critical infrastructure is owned by the private sector or operated on a commercial basis. Accordingly, the Australian Government recognises that the best way to enhance the resilience of critical infrastructure is to partner with owners and operators to share information, raise the awareness of dependencies and vulnerabilities, and facilitate collaboration to address any impediments. The CIR Strategy contains a suite of initiatives and activities involving engagement with critical infrastructure stakeholders. These range from the development of guidance materials, through to the conduct of exercises.

The Australian Government has established the Trusted Information Sharing Network (TISN) for CIR as its primary mechanism to build a partnership approach between business and government to increase the resilience of our critical infrastructure. The TISN is a forum in which the owners and operators of critical infrastructure work together with government and share information on threats and vulnerabilities, and develop strategies and solutions to mitigate risk. See TISN diagram at Figure 1.

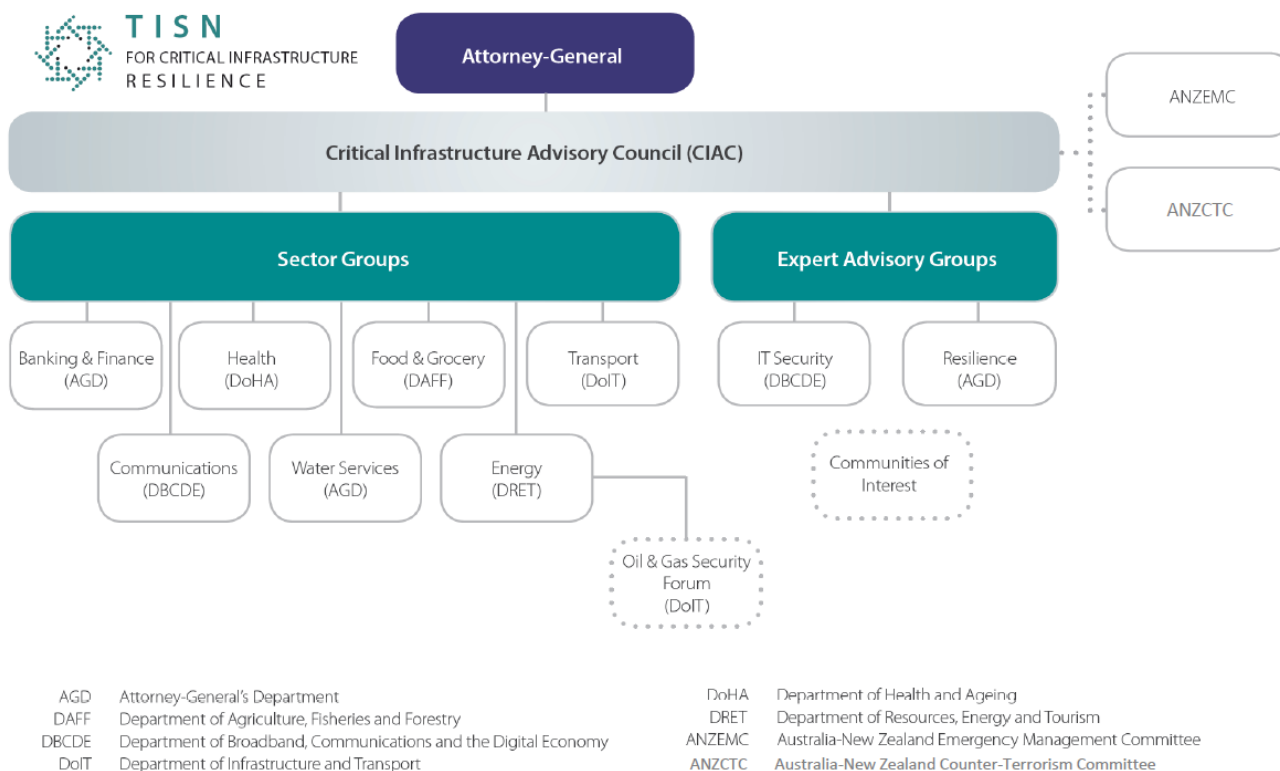


Figure 1: The Australian Government’s Trusted Information Sharing Network (TISN) for critical infrastructure resilience.

As part of the CIR Strategy, the Attorney-General’s Department also manages the Critical Infrastructure Program for Modelling and Analysis (CIPMA). CIPMA uses a broad range of data and information to model and simulate the behaviour of critical infrastructure systems and how they interrelate. This information can be used by owners and operators of critical infrastructure, or those that are dependent on it, to prepare for, respond to, or recover from, a natural or human-caused hazard, including extreme weather events such as bushfires and floods. It can also help governments shape policies on national security and CIR.

Wherever possible, the Australian Government takes a non-regulatory approach to critical infrastructure. This approach recognises that in most cases the owners and operators of critical infrastructure are best placed to manage risks to their operations and determine the most appropriate mitigation strategies. This has proven to be an effective approach to enhancing the resilience of Australia’s critical infrastructure in the face of all hazards, including extreme weather events.

Provided below are a series of case studies that show the Australian Government’s critical infrastructure arrangements in action.

The Banking and Finance Sector Group response to the 2010-11 disaster season

An example of the TISN in action was the response of the Banking and Finance Sector Group during the 2010-11 disaster season. Daily teleconferences were held to gain an understanding of what the sector was doing to ensure banking service continuity, including the pre-positioning of mobile ATMs and cash in advance of the Brisbane Floods and Cyclone Yasi. The teleconferences were also used to share information with the Australian Government about the effect of the floods on their services, and to validate information and response arrangements within the banking and finance sector so that services could be maintained and restored efficiently.

The Australian Water Sector Mutual Aid Guidelines

The Australian Water Sector Mutual Aid Guidelines were jointly developed in 2009-2010 by the Water Services Sector Group of the TISN and the Water Services Association of Australia. The guidelines are designed to streamline the process of requesting, coordinating and deploying resources across the water sector in times of crisis, saving time in planning and administration and in locating specialist personnel and equipment.

The guidelines were activated for the first time during the Queensland floods of January 2011, with Queensland water companies requesting assistance from the Australian water sector. A coordination cell for mutual aid requests was established in Victoria to jointly manage the response to the Queensland floods. The mutual aid guidelines facilitated the rapid provision of assistance that helped to restore water services faster than would otherwise be the case.

CIPMA projects

There have been a number of CIPMA projects undertaken in relation to extreme weather events, including:

- A hazard analysis in a major Australian city of key water sector assets and their associated energy and telecommunications suppliers, exposed to extreme bushfire, storm winds and sea level rise events. The project also explored the cross-sector network dependencies for those assets.
- An analysis of the impacts of a simultaneous disruption to electricity (20 hours) and gas (3 days) in two Australian states. The project analysed the level of unserved demand of electricity and gas, the direct impacts on the telecommunications and banking and finance sectors, and the resulting flow-on effects for the Australian economy.
- A cyclone impact analysis, which modelled a severe cyclone to determine economic impacts, infrastructure resilience and interdependencies on an Australian state.

Australian Government Crisis Coordination Centre

The Australian Government Crisis Coordination Centre (CCC), discussed further in response to matter (e), provides all-hazards situational awareness to whole-of-government. The CCC connects relevant Australian Government, State and Territory agencies to centralise Australian Government actions during complex national crises in order to develop a single, timely and

consistent picture or understanding of a crisis incident, its implications and national capacity to respond.

The CCC assists with the national capacity to respond and actively communicates with a vast array of stakeholders. These include state, territory and Australian Government stakeholders and specialised industry groups through the membership of the TISN.

(d) an assessment of the preparedness and the adequacy of resources in the emergency services sector to prevent and respond to extreme weather events

The Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department (AGD) is not an emergency services delivery agency. AGD contributes to the development of State and Territory emergency management capability by funding and facilitating the development of national capabilities.

National Partnership Agreement on Natural Disaster Resilience

The Commonwealth contributes approximately \$26 million per annum to the States and Territories under the National Partnership Agreement on Natural Disaster Resilience (NPA) as part of a whole-of-nation, resilience-based approach to emergency management policy and programs. The NPA is an agreement between the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments, that establishes the mechanism through which the Commonwealth provides the States and Territories with funding to support their disaster management grants programs. Projects under this arrangement are prioritised in accordance with state/territory-wide natural disaster risk assessments. The NPA recognises that the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments have a mutual interest in reducing the impact of, and increasing resilience to, natural disasters. It formalises the commitment to work together with other parties, such as volunteers, the private and non-government sectors and local governments to achieve agreed outcomes. Through this NPA, States and Territories have increased flexibility to effectively meet the requirements of local communities threatened by disasters in the strategic context of their risk priorities. This recognises that different jurisdictions have different priorities and that these may change over time.

National Emergency Management Projects

Australian Government funding is also provided through the National Emergency Management Projects (NEMP). These national level projects lead to increased emergency management capability by strengthening the ability of communities, individuals, business and institutions to minimise the adverse effects of disasters in Australia. NEMP expenditure of \$3.8m in 2012-13 will be used to develop 29 emergency management capability projects including: a National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines practice guide; developing a process and tools for building resilience in vulnerable households; developing a Triple Zero Kids Challenge Smartphone and Tablet Application and a regional and remote volunteer leadership development program.

National Aerial Firefighting Arrangements

Each year the Australian Government provides approximately \$14 million to assist the States and Territories in leasing a fleet of highly specialised fire-fighting aircraft, through the National Aerial Fire-fighting Arrangements. Funds are provided to the National Aerial Fire-fighting Centre Ltd, a joint company formed by the States and Territories in association with the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council Inc. The funding is provided to meet the costs of Standing and Positioning Charges for aircraft deployed within Australia for aerial fire-fighting. The fleet supplements existing State and Territory aerial fire-fighting

resources and plays an important role not only in fighting bushfires, but also in flood, storm and cyclone relief.

National telephone-based emergency warning capability - Emergency Alert

To assist States and Territories to enhance their emergency warning capability, the Australian Government contributed close to \$60 million to develop and enhance the national telephone-based emergency warning system, Emergency Alert. This includes \$26.3 million to assist the States and Territories to establish Emergency Alert, as well as \$33.2 million towards establishing the location-based mobile telephone emergency warning capability.

Emergency Alert commenced operation in December 2009. The system enables State and Territory emergency services agencies to issue telephone-based warnings to landline and mobile telephones linked to properties in an area identified as being at risk. The location-based mobile telephone enhancement to Emergency Alert allows warnings to be sent to mobile telephones based on the last known location of the handset at the time of an emergency.

Telstra's location-based capability began operation in November 2012. Optus and Vodafone's location-based capability will be operational by November 2013. All landlines and mobile phones, regardless of the carrier, are still able to receive Emergency Alert messages based on the handset's registered service address.

Further information about Emergency Alert can be found at www.emergencyalert.gov.au.

The Attorney-General's Department continues to operate the Location Based Number Store (LBNS), Emergency Alert's data source for registered service addresses, at a cost of approximately \$1.6 million per annum.

Some of the key benefits of telephone-based warnings are that they can:

- be intrusive and can be delivered 24/7 as telephony-based components are not reliant on the radio, television or computer being turned on; or being in hearing range of a fixed or mobile public address system
- augment existing State and Territory warning capability through providing an additional mechanism or warning tool
- supplement the emergency warnings and information delivered by the primary broadcast communication mechanisms of television and radio
- be delivered quickly, accurately and to mass numbers; and to more people than existing mechanisms
- be sent to phones linked to properties (and progressively to mobile phones across all carriers based on the location of the handset by December 2013) within a specifically targeted geographical location (minimising over-warning to individuals and communities not at risk, which can result in complacency)
- be cost effective with fewer personnel resources required (as opposed to door knocking)

- protect the safety of emergency service personnel, by minimising the need to enter a dangerous area to warn the public (door knocking) warn tourist and transient populations (the location-based mobile telephone emergency warning capability facilitates this)
- improve access to emergency warnings to people with a disability, through incorporating two different communication formats - voice warnings to fixed line telephones and text warnings to mobile telephones
- be audited and verified, and
- take advantage of the increasing trend to mobile phone ownership and emerging technology options and ensure that Australia keeps pace with and capitalises on next-generation capability and international developments, best practice and technological advances.

However, telephone-based warnings should not be relied upon in isolation as no single warning mechanism is able to reach all individuals who may be at risk in an emergency. This technology can only supplement emergency warnings and information that are delivered primarily through television and radio, and also through a number of other mechanisms. Warnings delivered through the mediums of television, radio, emergency services websites and information hotlines, and increasingly, social media websites, have the benefit of being able to be regularly updated.

National Flood Risk Information Project

In response to the Natural Disaster Insurance Review the Government has committed \$12m (from July 2012) over four years to the National Flood Risk Information Project (NFRIP). The NFRIP is a collaborative initiative between AGD and Geoscience Australia (GA) - with AGD providing the policy and whole-of-government coordination and GA providing the technical expertise and project implementation lead.

NFRIP aims to improve the quality, availability and accessibility of flood risk information across Australia, and raise community awareness and will deliver the following initiatives in support of the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (NSDR):

- develop and populate a Portal to provide a central point of access to publicly-funded flood hazard data and flood related imagery
- develop guidelines and standards - including an update of the current national document for estimating flood characteristics (Australian Rainfall and Runoff), and
- process earth observation imagery to extract historical flood extents.

A new national Fire Danger Rating System

The Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) is used by the Bureau of Meteorology to communicate fire danger warnings to the public and for fire agencies to determine the need for "Total Fire Bans". This in turn enables them to determine the resource levels necessary to protect people and community assets and manage the fire.

Australia's FDRS is being comprehensively revised to improve the science underpinning the system and to ensure it is fit for purpose. This will improve fire and emergency service agencies' ability to provide public warnings, engage with the community generally about fire danger, to set levels of fire preparedness and to support fire protection decision making.

The former National Emergency Management Committee (NEMC) undertook a comprehensive review of the national fire danger rating arrangements in the wake of the 2009 Victorian bushfires. To address the requirements from the NEMC review of the FDRS, the National Fire Rating Danger Working Group was formed to coordinate a comprehensive review of the National Framework for Scaled Advice and Warnings to the Community and provide expert advice on the science underpinning the FDR system.

National Registration and Inquiry System

The National Registration and Inquiry System (NRIS) was created following Cyclone Tracy in 1975. This disaster highlighted the need for a national system to register disaster affected persons and answer inquiries about their whereabouts. It was first used in 1983 during the Ash Wednesday bushfires. Its role in disaster recovery has become increasingly recognised, especially since the completion of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

AGD is currently working with the Australian Red Cross to update the technology and increase the interoperability of the system to police and disaster recovery agencies. Funding from the NEMP appropriation will ensure this update facilitates interoperability during the response and recovery phases of disasters. Upgrade of the NRIS is due for completion by June 2013.

AGD also supports this national capability by providing Secretariat support for the NRIS Working Group, which provides guidance and direction in the future development of the NRIS capability.

Common Alerting Protocol

The Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) is an international standard that allows consistent and easy to understand emergency messages to be broadcast across a variety of communication systems. The CAP can be used to alert and inform emergency response agencies, media and the general public. The CAP ensures that messages remain consistent and clearly indicate to the recipient the severity of the threat and best response.

The AGD introduced the Australian Government standard for the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP-AU-STD) in June 2012. The introduction of the CAP-AU-STD provides a formal national agreement on CAP, enabling all Australian governments to improve the exchange and interoperability of hazard alerting messages between systems. Development was governed by the requirements of the National Standards Framework. AGD continues to manage the future development of CAP to meet the needs of emergency management authorities seeking to communicate alert messages with the community regarding hazards and emergencies.

Emergency Management volunteers

Emergencies and disasters are common occurrences in Australia. Fortunately, emergency management volunteers are willing to freely give their time to be active in disaster preparedness

and community education activities while maintaining community safety or helping communities recover from tragic events. Emergency management volunteers are a vital and significant component of our emergency management and community recovery processes.

The Australian Government recognises the contribution of emergency management volunteers and is committed to supporting the attraction and retention of emergency management volunteers into the future.

As a component of the implementation of the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience, AGD is working to improve the efficient and effective coordination of volunteer effort in the immediate clean up stage post-disaster. The emphasis of this work is to streamline and harness the efforts of volunteers responding to extreme weather events and disaster-recovery efforts, particularly spontaneous or 'unaffiliated' volunteers.

In June 2012, SCPEM endorsed the National Emergency Management Volunteer Action Plan 2012. This plan includes recommended actions that focus on issues such as volunteer training and qualifications, recognition, legal issues and measures to strengthen volunteer attraction and retention. AGD is responsible for implementing a number of the Plan's recommended actions.

Australian Emergency Management Volunteers Forum

AGD is also responsible for the high-level executive and secretariat support to the Australian Emergency Management Volunteers Forum (AEMVF). This working group, which sits under the Community Engagement Sub-committee of the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee, is the peak national body representing the interests of the emergency management volunteer sector within Australia. The AEMVF advocates for the continual support and development of the emergency management volunteer sector, ensuring the sector is recognised and valued by all levels of government and the community, in accordance with the National Volunteer Strategy and National Emergency Management Volunteer Action Plan, 2012.

Voice and mobile broadband communications

To meet evolving operational requirements and to respond to all types of emergencies, public safety agencies (PSAs) working in multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional environments are required to communicate in real time through a mix of high capacity video, voice and data services to assist in better protecting lives and property. The AGD (through a number of national committees) is working with federal, state and territory PSAs who provide security, law enforcement and emergency services in support of their critical role in Australian communities. This interaction supports the development of standard operating protocols and adoption of new technologies that will improve voice communications interoperability in the 400MHz band and implement a nationally interoperable priority based mobile broadband capability in the 800MHz band for mission critical communications.

This work supports the implementation of the National Framework to Improve Government Radio Communications Interoperability 2010-2020 endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in December 2009.

Promotion of national numbers

At the meeting of the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management (SCP EM) on 11 November 2011, Ministers agreed to endorse a Work Plan for the implementation of national numbers for the State and Territory Emergency Service (SES – 132 500) and Police Assistance (PA – 131 444). Promoting the appropriate use of these national numbers will assist in reducing non-urgent calls to Triple Zero, particularly in disasters where a significant number of calls are for information only.

The AGD selected the IPSOS Social Research Institute (a leading international market and social research company specialising in the conduct of social and government research) to research and develop concepts that will assist States and Territories to promote the proper use of national numbers, and to assist in reducing the number of non-urgent calls to Triple Zero (particularly during disasters).

A multi-jurisdictional workshop will be held in 2013 to evaluate the findings from the IPSOS Social Research Institute and develop a Work Plan to take these findings forward to promote national numbers in each State and Territory.

The AGD also contributes to a number of national initiatives to educate the public and raise awareness about the Triple Zero Emergency Call Service, such as the development of the National Numbers Smart Phone Application and Games for children such as the Triple Zero Kids Challenge.

Physical assistance

From an operational perspective, the Australian Government conducts national planning to enhance the response capabilities of the States and Territories. In addition to this, Australian Government physical assistance can be provided to States and Territories when the resources (government, community and commercial) of an affected State or Territory cannot reasonably cope with the needs of the situation. The Australian Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Emergency Management Australia (advising the Attorney-General's Department) can also source, request or accept any international offers of assistance when this assistance meets the needs of the situation.

(e) the current roles and effectiveness of the division of responsibilities between different levels of government (federal, state and local) to manage extreme weather events

While the Commonwealth has a national coordination role, primary responsibility for the protection of life and property rests with the States and Territories in their capacity as first responders to emergencies in their jurisdictions. States and Territories determine if, and in what form, assistance is required to deal with an event - either from the Australian Government or another Australian jurisdiction.

Australian Government Crisis Coordination Centre

The Australian Government provides national coordination to manage domestic all-hazard events through the Australian Government Crisis Coordination Centre (CCC). Australian Government agencies, including operational areas such as the CCC, are mandated under the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (AGCMF) to assist with response to crises. The AGCMF guides the Australian Government response and ensures that officials are equipped to support their ministers in making appropriate decisions in the discharge of their responsibilities.

The Australian Government Disaster Response Plan (COMDISPLAN) is the mechanism to provide Australian Government physical assistance in the event of a disaster or emergency within Australia or its offshore territories. When the resources (government, community and commercial) of an affected State or Territory cannot reasonably cope with the needs of the situation the nominated Jurisdictional Official can seek assistance from the Australian Government.

The CCC monitors and informs on domestic and international weather events which may impact, or cause disruption to, Australians, approved foreign nationals as well as our close neighbours. For domestic weather events, where the Bureau of Meteorology provides weather intelligence, the CCC enhances this product through the addition of further operational information or specific information regarding potential impacts or disruptions. The CCC provides advice on incidents which are on or offshore to the whole-of-government through various communications and dissemination of products, such as CCC Incident Notifications.

Financial assistance

For certain severe events, the Australian Government may provide assistance directly to individuals in addition to the assistance available from the state/territory under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA). The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) provides a one-off payment to individuals affected by a major disaster to assist with their recovery.

Commonwealth expenditure on AGDRP in recent years is detailed in the following table.

Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment, \$ million.

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
2012-13	2.3	–	0.7	–	–	–	–	–	3.0
2011-12	45.1	7.9	20.0	0.2	–	–	–	–	73.3
2010-11	13.4	39.1	767.2	8.1	–	–	–	–	827.7

Figures are included in the year payment was approved by DHS. Some payments may have been made in a different financial year.

\$9m paid in 2011-12 for 2010-11 events, but precise data not available to show payments as at 30 June 2011.

Pro-rata application was used to determine the approximate State breakdown of the \$9m for 2010-11 events that was paid in 2011-12.

Dollars displayed are actual (then-year) dollars and have not been adjusted for changes in purchasing power over time.

Ex gratia assistance may also be made available for certain severe disasters including the Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy (DIRS). Following the flooding that occurred in many states across Australia during 2010-2011, an ex gratia DIRS payment was made available to individuals, small businesses and farmers who had been impacted by the flooding and could demonstrate a loss of income. The DIRS is generally an equivalent payment to the Newstart Allowance and made available for up to 13 weeks.

(f) progress in developing effective national coordination of climate change response and risk management

The Attorney-General's Department has no contribution against this element.

(g) any gaps in Australia’s Climate Change Adaptation Framework and the steps required for effective national coordination of climate change response and risk management

The Attorney-General’s Department has no contribution against this element.

(h) any related matter

The Attorney-General's Department has no contribution against this element.