

**Senate Estimates Opening Statement
Minister McAllister on behalf of Minister McBain
October 2025**

Good morning. I'm honoured to represent the Minister for Emergency Management, the Hon. Kristy McBain here today.

Since becoming Emergency Management Minister, Minister McBain has worked diligently in collaboration with her agencies to ensure our country is prepared when emergencies strike.

The Minister would like to particularly acknowledge the work undertaken by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to support communities before, during and after disasters.

It's clear that climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of severe weather events around the country.

The recently released **National Climate Risk Assessment** highlights the need to act if we want to avoid the worst impacts of climate change on our communities.

In just 2024-25 Australia experienced **70** declared disaster events under the **Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements**.

The Minister remains focussed on supporting communities that are still recovering, particularly those on the Mid Coast, Hunter and northern regions of New South Wales, Western Victoria, and throughout Queensland.

Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred has had a massive impact on communities across southeast Queensland and northern New South Wales. This has curtailed economic activity, harmed industries, and damaged property.

Events like this disrupt supply chains, agricultural production, construction, retail and tourism activity. And they cause incalculable damage to people's physical and mental health.

Severe weather events are becoming more frequent and intense, making it more important than ever to **undertake risk reduction activities, and bolster our resilience** so that we are prepared for the future.

The Minister has made it a real priority to work with all partners to ensure that Australia is much better prepared for disasters and responds much more quickly.

Investing in disaster preparedness is not only essential for community safety – it is fiscally responsible.

Each dollar invested in risk reduction initiatives in Australia is estimated to save **\$7**, including recovery costs.

NEMA and the Minister have been focused on delivering those investments ahead of this year's **Higher Risk Weather Season**.

At the same time, the Government is working with other jurisdictions to continue the shift towards disaster risk reduction and building resilience.

This includes \$3.6 million to fund the **Mental Health Support for Emergency Services Workers grant program** through 2026.

The Government will also soon announce **Round Three of the Disaster Ready Fund (DRF)**, which will see another \$200 million invested in disaster resilience and risk reduction initiatives.

We have already collaborated with state and territory governments to invest about **\$400 million** in more than **350 projects** through Rounds One and Two of the \$1 billion DRF.

The investments we have made over the past three years, and will continue to make, place us in the best possible position to respond to whatever may eventuate.

NEMA and Minister McBain will continue leading and coordinating the Australian Government's efforts in managing crises through preparedness, response and recovery.

Thank you for your time, we now welcome your questions.