

Senate Estimates Opening Statement
Brendan Moon
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Thank you Chair and Committee for allowing me to make a statement.

Over the past 12 months, Australia experienced one of its most complex and demanding Higher Risk Weather Seasons to date. Communities across the country were affected by a series of severe, and often unprecedented, events.

From destructive tropical cyclones and record-breaking rainfall to catastrophic bushfires, extreme heatwaves and severe storms. These events tested our emergency management systems and underscored the importance of national coordination, preparedness and resilience.

My team at the National Emergency Management Agency, or NEMA, continues to support communities recovering from consecutive events, particularly across northern New South Wales and Queensland.

Since the start of this calendar year, the Australian Government has provided over **\$605 million** through the **Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment**, and almost **\$215 million** through the **Disaster Recovery Allowance**, helping Australians in early recovery.

At this stage of the season, NEMA is focussed on preparedness ahead of the coming months of higher risk weather. Last month, we held our **Higher-Risk Weather Season Summit** as part of our annual **National Preparedness Program**, and earlier this year, we delivered **Exercise Convergence**, bringing together crisis management specialists from across governments, not-for-profits and the private sector to plan for scenarios and test our systems. We are also delivering **Higher Risk**

Weather Season briefings to our state and territory counterparts, making sure we are connected and prepared.

From an operational perspective, Australia's **aerial firefighting fleet** is now better equipped than ever, with 5 multi-role aircraft read to support response efforts. **Disaster Relief Australia** continues to strengthen its capacity through government funding for recruitment, equipment and training. Our **National Joint Common Operating Picture**, now used by over 1,000 users across 55 government agencies, has significantly improved national crisis awareness. Work on the **National Messaging System** is progressing strongly, and the **National Emergency Management Stockpile** is providing states with a pipeline of essential supplies.

As Senator McAllister said, we remain focussed on building national resilience. Round Two of the \$1 billion **Disaster Ready Fund** has been finalised, Round Three assessed, and Round Four design has commenced. This flagship program continues to deliver benefits nationwide.

Finally, I would like to highlight the **Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative**, particularly CSIRO's hydrodynamic modelling of the Richmond River catchment in northern New South Wales. This was a significant piece of work and the first of its scale and complexity for the region, enhancing flood preparedness and resilience.

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