

Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Lessons to be learned in relation to the 2019-20 Australian bushfire season

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: National Resilience and Recovery Agency

Topic: Preparing Australia Program – Consultation

Senator: Ayres

Question reference number: 0014

Type of question: Hansard page 23, 27 July 2021

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 August 2021

Number of pages: 2

Question:

CHAIR: We had some evidence from the Bushfire Building Council of Australia. Are they one of the organisations that you have been consulting with? Who else has been consulted in the process?

Ms Wandel: We have consulted the Bushfire Building Council of Australia and we have consulted a range of other organisations so far. I would be happy to provide you with a list of who we have consulted so far.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Ms Wandel: I would also flag that, as I mentioned, we are really eager to ensure we are consulting widely so we do still have a list of those we want to continue to consult. But we are happy to share with you who we have spoken to thus far.

Answer:

As at 30 July 2021, the National Recovery and Resilience Agency has consulted the following stakeholders to support the design of the Preparing Australia Program:

Commonwealth

- AusIndustry Business Grants Hub
- Australian Climate Service (Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Geoscience Australia)
- Australian Government Solicitor
- Australian Building Codes Board
- Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
- Department of Finance
- Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Treasury (Reinsurance Pool Taskforce, HomeBuilder Scheme)

- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- Resilience Investment Vehicle partners (NAB, Insurance Australia Group, CSIRO)

State/Territory Government

- NT Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade
- NSW Department of Customer Service (Fire Safety & External Wall Cladding Taskforce)
- SA Attorney-General's Department
- Qld. Department of Energy and Public Works
- Tas. Department of Justice (Consumer, Building and Occupational Services)
- WA Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety
- WA Department of Fire and Emergency Services

Non-Government Organisations and Industry

- Bushfire Building Council of Australia
- Housing Industry Association
- Insurance Australia Group
- Insurance Council of Australia
- James Cook University (Cyclone Testing Centre)
- JLT
- Maddocks
- Master Builders Australia
- RACQ
- Suncorp Australia

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Lessons to be learned in relation to the 2019-20 Australian bushfire season

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: National Resilience and Recovery Agency

Topic: Mitigation projects and regions supported by the Emergency Response Fund

Senator: Ayres

Question reference number: 0015

Type of question: Hansard page 25, 27 July 2021

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 August 2021

Number of pages: 3

Question:

CHAIR: Thank you. I have a couple of questions about the Emergency Response Fund, which I think is now the responsibility of the agency. Can you tell me now how much funding has been disbursed from the fund?

Mr Padovan: Yes, I can. Of the \$200 million available annually, \$50 million was made available in 2020-21 for flood mitigation projects. Prior to the recent ministerial changes, Minister Littleproud announced a further \$50 million would be made available this year for a second round of flood mitigation projects.

CHAIR: How much of that funding has been spent on mitigation projects?

Mr Padovan: The first \$50 million is fully allocated to flood mitigation projects. The second round of projects has not yet been settled.

CHAIR: So fully allocated—that is, allocated to specific projects?

Mr Padovan: Allocated to specific projects. I can certainly provide those, if you would like further detail.

CHAIR: Yes. On notice, could you outline which projects and regions have been supported, and how much is allocated and how much is disbursed by a project?

Mr Padovan: I apologise; I do not have that information at hand, and I don't think there is anyone in the room that will have that information.

CHAIR: But you could provide that to me on notice, I expect?

Mr Padovan: Absolutely.

Answer:

The National Flood Mitigation Infrastructure Program 2020 – 2021 is funded through the \$50 million pre-disaster resilience component of the Emergency Response Fund.

Funds have been allocated as listed in the table below. As yet, no funds have been disbursed. The Treasury will transfer the funds to states and territories through normal payment mechanisms (expected on or around 9 September 2021). The funding will be transferred to

each jurisdiction as a single, upfront payment and the funding will then be managed by the state or territory government with the entity responsible for delivering the project.

Project Name	Project Description	Funded amount
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY		\$3,340,000
Goliath Court Flood Mitigation	The work involves constructing raised vehicle crossings, storm water pipes, and additional inlets at Goliath Court. It also involves constructing a new discharge pipe along the Sullivan's Creek.	\$1,220,000
Mawson Stormwater Improvements	The work involves constructing new drainage to prevent flooding in the commercial precinct of Mawson.	\$2,120,000
NEW SOUTH WALES		\$13,370,000
Yoogali McCormack Levee Upgrades	This project involves construction of a levee along the northern side of McCormack Road and raising Burley Griffin Way to protect the Yoogali community.	\$1,040,000
Cessnock Levee (Bund Wall)	This project involves construction of a bund wall (levee) on the east of South Cessnock on a flat land overlying a former underground coalmine.	\$2,440,000
Holbrook Levee	The project involves levee construction on the south of Holbrook to divert floodwater and eliminate future flood damage to properties and businesses in the town in the design event.	\$4,580,000
Hanwood Stormwater Pump and Levee	The project involves construction of a levee and raising Kidman Way to prevent water from flowing back from drains. Flooding of Hanwood village is mainly due to the backwater effect.	\$1,240,000
Bellambi Gully Channel Improvement	The project involves improving the existing channel alignment, culvert reconfiguration and piping some flood flow directly to the lagoon.	\$2,150,000
Fairfield Golf Course Detention Basin Upgrade	Dam Safety NSW has declared Fairfield Golf Course detention basin as a 'high flood consequence category', which carries the highest risk of the eight declared detention basins within the Fairfield local government area. This project will upgrade the existing detention basin to increase capacity.	\$1,920,000
NORTHERN TERRITORY		\$9,400,000
Katherine Flood Mitigation Levee South	This project involves construction of a new 3km flood mitigation levee aligned along the eastern side to the southern tip of Katherine South.	\$9,400,000
QUEENSLAND		\$9,900,500
Armstrong Creek Causeway, Normanton to Burketown	This project involves removing the existing floodway and install a new concrete base slab and box culverts through Armstrong Creek on Normanton - Burketown Road. This will raise the creek crossing to improve flood resilience.	\$793,339
Floraville and Truganini Roads Upgrades, Burketown to Normanton	This project involves replacing and upgrading drainage assets urgently required to prevent further closure of the road and the imposition of load restrictions due to structural instability. A major culvert failure required the urgent replacement of two of the seven major cell culverts on Floraville Road.	\$3,353,494
Dutton Street Bridge (Palm Creek Crossing), Ingham	This project involves construction of a bridge along Dutton Street Ingham to link the north and south of the town in flood events of up to a 1 in 50 year flood event. This critical link will ensure that the entire township is accessible by fire, police and ambulance services, and that hospital facilities remain accessible to the public in the event of a flood.	\$5,753,667
SOUTH AUSTRALIA		\$3,180,000

Two Wells Township Levee	This project will construct a flood protection levee around the eastern and southern boundaries of the Two Wells township. The levee will provide protection to the township in a 1 in 100 Annual Exceedance Probability event. The works are proposed outcomes from Two Wells Stormwater Management Plan for Two Wells (2017).	\$1,660,000
Prospect Drainage Scheme Upgrade – Stage 1	This project will provide a new, high capacity drainage system by upgrade/replacement of sections of the Prospect Outfall Drain. It will also enable future upstream connections to the new outfall drain to further reduce flood risk. The works are proposed outcomes from the Barker Inlet Central Stormwater Management Plan.	\$1,520,000
TASMANIA		\$3,192,500
Latrobe Council – Latrobe Flood Levees	This project involves constructing of earth and concrete flood levees, water diversion structures and associated works.	\$1,270,000
South Hobart Primary School	This project will protect the school from significant rainfall events, and mitigate a high risk of drowning on the site for any rainfall event above a 1 in 20 year or five per cent AEP.	\$648,000
Kingsborough Council – Kingston Rivulet	This project will upgrade the historic Kingston Rivulet to maximise the amount of flood water capable of draining into existing stormwater systems.	\$274,500
Waratah – Wynyard Council – Port Creek Mitigation	This project involves widening of Port Creek as well as levee banks to hold back floodwaters in Port Creek from the surrounding airport and residential dwellings and floodwater discharge.	\$1,000,000
VICTORIA		\$6,917,000
Wangaratta Urban Flood Mitigation Infrastructure	This project involves refurbishing and upgrading levees to a one percent Annual Exceedance Probability flood level.	\$3,500,000
Castlemaine and Campbell's Ck Levee	The project will construct a new levee in Castlemaine near the Castlemaine Caravan Park, and refurbish existing levees at Elizabeth St, National School Ln & Campbell's Creek Township.	\$2,217,000
Carisbrook Township Western Levee	This project involves construction of levees and associated drainage and culvert works to protect 25 properties from flooding in the event of a one percent annual exceedance probability flood.	\$1,200,000
WESTERN AUSTRALIA		\$700,000
Warmun Community Risk Mitigation	In 2011, the Warmun Community experienced a major flood. The community has been rebuilt, however the flood warning system is not fit for purpose and will be addressed.	\$700,000

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: National Resilience and Recovery Agency

Topic: Emergency Response Fund position – end of 2020-21 financial year

Senator: Ayres

Question reference number: 0016

Type of question: Hansard page 25, 27 July 2021

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Number of pages: 1

Question:

CHAIR: I think we covered this in estimates as well: at 31 March the Emergency Response Fund had earned \$472 million in net earnings. What's the position at the end of the financial year?

Mr Padovan: Once again, we'll provide that on notice; I don't have that information at hand. I would note that, of the funds available each year, \$50 million is available for resilience projects and the remaining \$150 million component is to fund recovery activities that can't otherwise be dealt with through the DRFA and other established mechanisms.

Answer:

The investments of the Emergency Response Fund are managed by the Future Fund Board of Guardians. The Future Fund publishes quarterly updates to provide details of investment activity and performance of funds under their management, including the Emergency Response Fund, on a quarterly basis.

These updates are published and are available on the Future Fund website at:

<https://www.futurefund.gov.au/investment/investment-performance/portfolio-updates>.

The 31 March 2021 quarterly update is the most recent update published by the Future Fund. Figures for the 2020-21 financial year will be published once end of financial year processes, including audit, have been finalised.