

Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements

Victorian Government Implementation Progress Report
– December 2021

Recommendation		Government Response	Progress as at December 2021
3.1 Forum for Ministers	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 in-principle	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) and the National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting (NEMMM) to consider national governance arrangements.
3.2 Establishment of an authoritative disaster advisory body	<p>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.</p>	Support in-principle	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to consider national governance arrangements.
3.3 Revise COMDISPLAN	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. 	Support	<i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Commonwealth Government.</i>
3.4 Integrating disaster management in the role of the Australian Government	<p>Australian Government agencies should work together across all phases of disaster management.</p>	Support	<i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Commonwealth Government.</i>
3.5 Establishing a standing resilience and recovery entity	<p>The Australian Government should establish a standing entity that will enhance national natural disaster resilience and recovery, focused on long-term disaster risk reduction.</p>	Support	<i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Commonwealth Government.</i>

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3.6	Enhanced national preparedness and response entity The Australian Government should enhance national preparedness for, and response to, natural disasters, building on the responsibilities of Emergency Management Australia, to include facilitating resource sharing decisions of governments and stress testing national disaster plans.	Support in-principle	<i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Commonwealth Government.</i>
4.1	National disaster risk information Australian, state and territory governments should prioritise the implementation of harmonised data governance and national data standards.	Support	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments to implement this recommendation through the Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing that was signed at National Cabinet on 9 July 2021.
4.2	Common information platforms and shared technologies 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	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments to implement this recommendation through the Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing that was signed at National Cabinet on 9 July 2021.
4.3	Implementation of the National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability 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 Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.
4.4	Features of the National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability 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 Victorian Government notes the role of the Commonwealth in leading implementation of this recommendation. Victoria welcomes tools and systems that support operational and strategic decision-making.
4.5	National climate projections Australian, state and territory governments should produce downscaled climate projections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 	Support	The Victorian Government has invested to deliver downscaled climate projections in order to meet this recommendation. This includes the production of local scale climate projections for the whole state and tailored information for the water sector and bushfire management.

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	(3) subject to regular review.		The Victoria Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments on securing additional funding and further engagement to facilitate this action.
4.6	Consistent impact data standards Australian, state and territory governments should work together to develop consistent data standards to measure disaster impact.	Support in-principle	<p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.</p> <p>At a State level, the Victorian Government has engaged the Victorian Centre for Data Insights to develop a Data Strategy for the Victorian Emergency Management Sector which will provide a pathway to inform data reform within Victoria over the next six years. The Victorian Government is also in the process of finalising a review of current impact assessment guidelines.</p>
4.7	Collection and sharing of impact data 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	<p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is also a partner organisation in the National Biodiversity Information Governance Committee and is working with the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments to resolve unified data standards with the intent to enable future interjurisdictional data sharing.</p> <p>At a State level, the Victorian Government has engaged the Victorian Centre for Data Insights to develop a Data Strategy for the Victorian Emergency Management Sector which will provide a pathway to inform data reform within Victoria over the next six years. The Victorian Government is also making improvements to current impact data storage and visualisation through the EM-Impact portal project.</p>
5.1	Make provision for a declaration of a state of emergency The Australian Government should make provision, in legislation, for a declaration of a state of national emergency. The declaration should include the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 	Do not support	<p><i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Commonwealth Government.</i></p> <p>The National Emergency Declaration Act 2020 (the Act) commenced on 16 December 2020. The Victorian Government welcomes further engagement with the Commonwealth on implementation of the Act. As the Victorian Government noted in its Government Response, the circumstances in which a declaration may be made and the actions that the Commonwealth can take must be clear and understood, in line with the Royal Commission's recommendations.</p>

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	(3) the power to take action without a state or territory request for assistance in clearly defined and limited circumstances.		
6.1	<p>Assessment of the capacity and capability of fire and emergency services in light of current and future natural disaster risk</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>	Support	<p>The Victorian Preparedness Framework supports Victorian Government agencies and sector partners to assess capability and inform capacity requirements.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is also currently implementing related actions in response to the Victorian Inspector-General for Emergency Management's (IGEM) Review of 10 Years of Reform in the Emergency Management Sector and the IGEM Inquiry into the 2019-20 Victorian Fire Season Phase 1. This includes the delivery of the Emergency Management Operating Model Review, which will assess the core capabilities and capacity required to manage emergencies and identify opportunities to better leverage private and not-for-profit sector emergency management resources.</p>
6.2	<p>A national register of fire and emergency services personnel and equipment</p> <p>Australian, state and territory governments should establish a national register of fire and emergency services personnel, equipment and aerial assets.</p>	Support in-principle	<p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.</p> <p>In its response to the IGEM Inquiry into 2019-20 Victorian Fire Season Phase 1, the Victorian Government also committed to examine the application and constraints of resource management, with a view to developing a standing state strategic resource plan in Victoria. Delivery of this work will support implementation of this recommendation.</p>
6.3	<p>Interoperable communications for fire and emergency services across jurisdictions</p> <p>State and territory governments should update and implement the National Framework to Improve Government Radio Communications Interoperability, or otherwise agree on a new strategy to achieve interoperable communications across jurisdictions.</p>	Support	<p>Victoria would welcome a federally funded and nationally coordinated program to achieve interoperable systems across jurisdictions.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has committed \$133.4 million in the 2021-22 State budget to deliver enhanced communications for forest firefighters during emergencies.</p>
6.4	<p>Delivery of a Public Safety Mobile Broadband capability</p> <p>Australian, state and territory governments should expedite the delivery of a Public Safety Mobile Broadband capability.</p>	Support	<p>The Victorian Government continues to be a key advocate and financial contributor in the development of a PSMB capability in Australia.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments on securing affordable, adequate spectrum to allow for the delivery of PSMB.</p>

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6.5	Multi-agency national-level exercises Australian, state and territory governments should conduct multi-agency, national-level exercises, not limited to cross-border jurisdictions. These exercises should, at a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.
6.6	Employment protections for fire and emergency services volunteers 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.	Support	<i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Commonwealth Government.</i>
7.1	Improve understanding of Australian Defence Force capabilities 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	Victoria has taken deliberate steps to strengthen its understanding of ADF planning and capability and continues to work closely with the ADF before, during and after emergencies. Victoria is also currently undertaking a review of the emergency management sector's operating model which will help inform broader considerations about opportunities to access and leverage ADF assistance.
7.2	Review of Defence Assistance to the Civil Community manual 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.	Support	<i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Commonwealth Government.</i>
7.3	Legal protections for Australian Defence Force members 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.	Support	<i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Commonwealth Government.</i>
8.1	A sovereign aerial firefighting capability 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:	Support in-principle	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations. The Victorian Government has participated in a series of procurement activities coordinated by NAFC during 2021.

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	<p>(1) A modest, very large air tanker/large air tanker, and Type-1 helicopter capability, including supporting infrastructure, aircrew and aviation support personnel; and</p> <p>(2) Any other aerial firefighting capabilities (e.g. Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), line-scanning, transport and logistics) that would benefit from a nationally coordinated approach.</p>		The outcome of the procurement has resulted in an increase of Australian owned Type 1 helicopters within the Victorian fleet, in addition to a LAT (shared with Queensland on a dovetailed contract arrangement) that will be based in Australia. This will provide the ability to utilise the aircraft outside of contract periods with adequate notice to ensure air crew and engineers are available to support the operations.
8.2	<p>Research and evaluation into aerial firefighting</p> <p>Australian, state and territory governments should support ongoing research and evaluation into aerial firefighting. This research and evaluation should include:</p> <p>(1) assessing the specific capability needs of states and territories, and</p> <p>(2) exploring the most effective aerial firefighting strategies.</p>	Support	<p>The Victorian Government fire and emergency management aviation member agencies have developed a 3-year Strategic Action Plan for fire, emergency and land management aviation</p> <p>The Plan will build the evidence needed to ensure Victoria has access to the aviation capabilities needed based on sector-wide outcomes. It includes actions to drive innovation and research, set baseline capabilities for aviation, develop an outcomes-based Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework for aviation.</p>
8.3	<p>Developing the aerial firefighting industry's capability</p> <p>Australian, state and territory governments should adopt procurement and contracting strategies that support and develop a broader Australian-based sovereign aerial firefighting industry.</p>	Support in-principle	
9.1	<p>Supply chains – government review</p> <p>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.</p>	Support	<p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.</p> <p>At a State level, the Victorian Government has further developed its review of supply chain risks through delivery of annual critical infrastructure sector resilience plans for 2021, including for telecommunications, and food and grocery.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is also investing heavily in industry recovery, including through support and grant programs for businesses seeking to build the resilience of supply chains and strengthen sovereign capabilities.</p> <p>Through this work, Victoria is seeking to continuously improve capability and planning for emergencies, including for relief operations.</p>
9.2	<p>Comprehensive information</p> <p>State and territory governments should include road closure and opening information on all roads within their borders on public apps.</p>	Support	In the 2021-22 Budget, the Victorian Government allocated \$22.6m over four years to upgrade the VicTraffic App and website. The Victorian Government has onboarded specialist resources for this

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		project and work has commenced on project design, scope and validation for both the app and website.
9.3 Provision of information 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.	Support	The Victorian Government is progressing this recommendation as a part of the VicTraffic app and website upgrades, noted in Recommendation 9.2
9.4 Collective awareness and mitigation of risks to critical infrastructure The Australian Government, working with state and territory governments and critical infrastructure operators, should lead a process to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. 	Support	<p>The Victorian Government Critical Infrastructure Resilience Framework has been in place since 2015. This includes an annual Resilience Improvement Cycle for critical infrastructure in energy, water and transport sectors, the Victorian Register for Critical Infrastructure, and annual Sector Resilience Plans completed by Victoria's eight critical infrastructure sectors. The Sector Resilience Plans inform the development of Victoria's Critical Infrastructure All Sectors Resilience Report, which is published annually.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments on the proposed Protecting Critical Infrastructure and Systems of National Significance (CI/SONS) reforms, which seek to enhance the security and resilience of Australia's most important infrastructure.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is also supporting the Commonwealth Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND) program, which includes the rollout of 344 public WiFi sites across the state.</p>
9.5 Improving coordination arrangements between critical infrastructure sectors and with government 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) between critical infrastructure operators, and (2) between critical infrastructure operators and government. 	Support	<p>The Victorian Government continues to engage with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and industry on opportunities for better information sharing before and during emergencies, including through its membership on the Critical Infrastructure Advisory Council (CIAC).</p> <p>The Victorian Government has created Emergency Management Liaison Officers (EMLOs) for critical infrastructure, which have been deployed in the State Control Centre during emergencies.</p> <p>To enhance preparedness, the Victorian Government has also:</p> <p>Hosted monthly webinars for the Sector Resilience Networks to enhance understanding of key emergency risks and preparedness</p>

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			<p>opportunities to better respond to emergencies with the potential to impact services</p> <p>Hosted a Pre-Season Critical Infrastructure Industry Preparedness Briefing on 5 October 2021 to brief critical infrastructure owners and operators ahead of the high-risk weather season.</p>
10.1	Disaster education for individuals and communities <p>State and territory governments should continue to deliver, evaluate and improve education and engagement programs aimed at promoting disaster resilience for individuals and communities.</p>	Support in-principle	<p>The Victorian Government is continuing to implement and strengthen its existing suite of education and engagement programs aimed at promoting disaster resilience for individuals, communities and industry.</p> <p>Currently, fire and land management agencies and the Department of Education and Training are working together to develop curriculum resources for higher primary school levels (Grades 5 and 6) to educate students on bushfire risk, risk mitigation, preparedness and shared responsibility.</p>
11.1	Responsibility for local government disaster management capability and capacity <p>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.</p>	Support-in-principle	<p>Victoria has completed the third and final phase of the Councils and Emergencies Project which aims to enhance the emergency management capability and capacity of local governments to meet their emergency management obligations in the managing emergencies.</p> <p>Phase Three has been successfully completed through a consultation process with councils and the wider emergency management sector. The consultation provided a clear understanding of the issue's councils face in undertaking their emergency management responsibilities. It also produced a set of proposed actions to address those issues.</p> <p>In addition, Victoria delivered a project that considered possible assurance models for local government capability and capacity in consultation with all 79 Victorian councils and stakeholders.</p> <p>Victoria is working to prepare a refreshed framework that will set out the role of councils in an emergency. It is being framed around a central concept of consequence-based planning to reduce community impacts from emergencies into the future. It will incorporate the actions identified in the Councils and Emergencies Project and address matters recommended for consideration in the Royal Commission and other various inquiries and reviews.</p>
11.2	Resource sharing arrangements between local governments	Support	<p>Victoria has completed a review of resource sharing arrangements for local government emergency management.</p>

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	<p>State and territory governments should review their arrangements for sharing resources between their local governments during natural disasters, including whether those arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) provide sufficient surge capacity, and (2) take into account all the risks that the state or territory may face during a natural disaster. 		<p>Considerations included whether there was sufficient surge capacity, and if the risks identified by that state had been considered in the resource sharing protocols currently in place.</p> <p>Next steps for this recommendation will be progressed as part of the response to recommendation 11.1.</p>
12.1	<p>Roadside vegetation management</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) priority access and egress routes (2) road priority, utility and strategic value (3) cost, and (4) residual risk to national natural disasters. 	Support	<p>The Victorian Government has expanded the Safer Together program to support better collaboration on roadside bushfire risk management and improve and preserve rapid access for firefighters and fire fighting vehicles.</p> <p>Under the program the Victorian Government has delivered 3,791km of roading upgrades and maintenance actions, 229 km of roadside vegetation management, and 123km of hazardous tree treatment.</p> <p>Through 2021-22 State Budget, the Victorian Government also provided four-year initiative funding plus ongoing funding for key bushfire management programs (Reducing Bushfire Risk and Safer Together) which will support investment in elements of this recommendation.</p>
12.2	<p>Evacuation planning – Evacuation routes and seasonal populations</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 in-principle	<p>The Victorian Government is in the process of delivering 22 training sessions for Victoria Police on evacuation planning. The Victorian Government has also delivered additional training to 22 police divisions in the State to outline awareness of the roles and responsibilities of evacuation managers and traffic management managers in incident control centres.</p> <p>Regional Emergency Management Inspectors (REMI) have conducted evacuation exercises in each of Victoria's eight government regions involving participation from across relevant agencies, local government, and local communities.</p>
12.3	<p>Evacuation planning – Essential services and supplies</p> <p>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:</p>	Support in-principle	

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	<p>(1) key risks that essential service outages have on communities during a severe or catastrophic natural disaster (particularly communications and power)</p> <p>(2) availability of essential supplies, including food and water, and</p> <p>(3) consequence management and compounding events such as the loss of essential services or health impacts.</p>		
12.4	<p>Sheltering terminology should be made nationally consistent</p> <p>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.</p>	Support in-principle	The Victorian Government continues to manage programs and policies in relation to shelter options such as Neighbourhood Safer Places and Community Fire Refuges.
12.5	<p>National community education</p> <p>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.</p>	Support in-principle	Information about Neighbourhood Safer Places was updated on the Country Fire Authority website in November 2021. The Country Fire Authority also continues to provide community information on Community Fire Refuges.
12.6	<p>Evacuation planning – Evacuation Centres</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) the capacity of a centre to handle seasonal population variation (2) the suitability of facilities to cater for diverse groups, including vulnerable people, and those evacuating with animals, and (3) the existence of communications facilities and alternate power sources. 	Support in-principle	<p>The Victorian Government has worked to progress this recommendation as part of local government emergency management planning, and regional emergency management planning.</p> <p>The Victorian Government continues to work with Regional Emergency Management Planning Committees and with local councils, to ensure that planning for evacuation and relief centres consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cross-border arrangements where appropriate seasonal population variation inclusion and accessibility
12.7	<p>Evacuation planning – Planning for evacuations across boundaries</p> <p>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.</p>	Support	<p>The Victorian Government has worked to progress this recommendation as part of local government emergency management planning, and regional emergency management planning.</p> <p>The Victorian Government continues to work with Regional Emergency Management Planning Committees and with local councils, to ensure that planning for evacuation and relief centres consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cross-border arrangements where appropriate

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			seasonal population variation inclusion and accessibility
13.1	Development and implementation of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System 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 Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to deliver the Australian Fire Danger Rating System. At a State level, the Victorian Government has established a dedicated project management team to manage AFDRS implementation in Victoria. The project team is working with the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) to ensure that the AFDRS implementation in Victoria is consistent with the national program. The Victorian Government will also be actively contributing to the testing of the pilot AFDRS this season.
13.2	Education on the Australian Fire Danger Rating System 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 Victorian Government continues to engage with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments on the funding and resourcing required to contribute to a nationally consistent community education campaign for the new system.
13.3	The Australian Warning System State and territory governments should urgently deliver and implement the all-hazard Australian Warning System.	Support	The Victorian Government is leading the national implementation of this recommendation. Roll-out of the Australian Warning System for all five hazards will be undertaken in Victoria in December 2021.
13.4	An education campaign on the Australian Warning System State and territory governments should ensure that the implementation of the Commission's recommendation Australian Warning System is accompanied by a carefully developed national education campaign that considers the needs of all Australians.	Support in-principle	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.
13.5	The development of national standards for mobile applications 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 Victorian Government is engaging with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments on the challenges associated with the implementation of this recommendation due to different methods of data capture across jurisdictions. The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth to ensure that this reform should align with the function of the existing

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			VicEmergency app (which displays 50km into NSW & SA) and VicEmergency platform.
13.6	Exploring the development of a national, all-hazard warning app Australian, state and territory governments should continue to explore the feasibility of a national, all-hazard emergency warning app.	Support in-principle	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.
14.1	Nationally consistent air quality information, health advice and interventions Australian, state and territory governments should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) develop close to real-time, nationally consistent air quality information, including consistent categorisation and public health advice (2) greater community education and guidance, and (3) targeted health advice to vulnerable groups. 	Support	<p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.</p> <p>At the State level, the Victorian Government introduced a near real-time (hourly) reporting of fine particle concentrations as part of its Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA Victoria) AirWatch program prior to the 2019-20 summer season.</p> <p>A small upgrade was made by the Victorian Government in January 2021, to implement the new nationally consistent air quality categories and associated health advice, developed by enHealth and approved by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee in 2020.</p>
14.2	National Air Quality Forecasting Capability 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 Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.</p> <p>At a State level, the Victorian Government has an ongoing agreement with the Bureau of Meteorology to provide bushfire and planned burn smoke forecasting.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has increased the monitoring capability across the state. Both forecasting and monitoring are used to inform impacts to communities and operational decision making about planned burning.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is also a member of the Air Quality Forecasting System (AQFx) working group, supporting the nationally coordinated approach to quality forecasting and capability for bushfire and planned burning smoke.</p>
15.1	Australian Medical Assistance Teams	Support in-principle	The Victorian Government is working with the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre (NCCTRC) who oversee the AUSMAT

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	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.		<p>program, on the continued development of training and exercising for Victorian AUSMAT members.</p> <p>Planning by the NCCTRC for an upcoming virtual exercise has commenced - the first since the COVID-19 pandemic commenced.</p> <p>A significant number of AUSMAT deployments have occurred to date both internationally and domestically.</p>
15.2	Inclusion of primary care in disaster management <p>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.</p>	Support in-principle	<p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.</p> <p>At a State level, the Victorian Government has emergency response arrangements in place with the Primary Health Networks (PHN) and is working towards greater inclusion of primary care in disaster management.</p> <p>The Victorian Government can facilitate access to the PHNs through existing agreements (and by extension, to the broader primary care sector).</p> <p>The Victorian Government has been funding the Emergency Response Planning Tool in Victorian general practice since 2019 with the aim of building resilience, business continuity and emergency response capability in general practice that could support the Department of Health responsibilities under the State Health Emergency Response Plan and strengthen the departments primary care response in emergencies. The project has been very well received by Victorian general practice and to date approximately 700 general practices across the State are using the tool to create an emergency response plan.</p>
15.3	Prioritising mental health during and after natural disasters <p>Australian, state and territory governments should refine arrangements to support localised planning and the delivery of appropriate mental health services following a natural disaster.</p>	Support in-principle	<p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.</p>
15.4	Enhance health and mental health datasets <p>Australian, state and territory governments should agree to:</p>	Support in-principle	<p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.</p>

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	<p>(1) develop consistent and compatible methods and metrics to measure health impacts related to natural disasters, including mental health, and</p> <p>(2) take steps to ensure the appropriate sharing of health and mental health datasets.</p>		
16.1	<p>Environmental data</p> <p>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.</p>	Support in-principle	<p>The Victorian Government is a partner organisation in the National Biodiversity Information Governance Committee and the National Sensitive Data Pathways Project working group designed to resolve unified data standards and sensitive data handling procedures. These projects are at the early stages but the intent is to enable future interjurisdiction data sharing.</p> <p>Through Bushfire Recovery funding, the Victorian Government has implemented a process to operationalise environmental data for non-experts to utilise in the emergency management context, to highlight high priority biodiversity areas to protect from fire or actions to avoid in fire suppression.</p>
17.1	<p>Public availability of fuel load management strategies</p> <p>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.</p>	Support	<p>The Victorian Government has developed methods to measure the specific contribution of fuel management to risk reduction, improving the State's ability to measure the effectiveness of fuel management in reducing bushfire risk. In addition, Victoria has established an Office of Bushfire Risk Management to lead and coordinate the implementation of evidence-based fuel management policy, practice, assurance and reporting across all land tenures.</p> <p>In 2020, the Victorian Government released six updated regional Bushfire Management Strategies to guide fuel management activities across public and private land and to help communities understand bushfire risk at a landscape level.</p> <p>Bushfire risk is publicly reported in the FFMVic Annual Fuel Management Report, with the 2020-21 report due for release by the end of 2021.</p>
17.2	<p>Assessment and approval processes for vegetation management, bushfire mitigation and hazard reduction</p> <p>Australian, state and territory governments should review the assessment and approval processes relating to vegetation management, bushfire mitigation and hazard reduction to:</p> <p>(1) ensure that there is clarity about the requirements and scope for landholders and land managers to undertake bushfire hazard reduction activities, and</p>	Support	<p>The Victorian Government is working with road and rail managers, local government and other stakeholders to ensure clarity on regulatory controls and increase the efficiency of approval processes relevant to activities to reduce bushfire risk.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has also established formal project governance and work has commenced to review fuel management legislative frameworks, including clarification of fuel management accountabilities.</p>

Recommendation	Government Response	Progress as at December 2021
(2) minimise the time taken to undertake assessments and obtain approvals.		
17.3 Classification, recording and sharing of fuel load data Australian, state and territory governments should develop consistent processes for the classification, recording and sharing of fuel load data.	Support in-principle	<p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments to implement this recommendation through the Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing that was signed at National Cabinet on 9 July 2021.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC to progress the development of the Hazard Reduction Information Sharing and Transparency Framework.</p> <p>At a State level, the Victorian Government has also developed a Strategic Science Investment Plan, which presents key science investment areas across the themes of Bushfire Risk, Predictive Capability and Ecosystem Values. This will be used to inform the development and implementation of efficient and effective land, fire and ecosystem management strategies.</p>
18.1 Indigenous land and fire management and natural disaster resilience 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	<p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.</p> <p>At a State level the Victorian Government, working in partnership with Traditional Owners, released the <i>Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy</i> (the Strategy) in 2018. Individual plans have also been developed with participating Traditional Owner Corporations. The Victorian Government has established the Cultural Fire Leadership Authority to guide implementation of the Strategy.</p>
18.2 Indigenous land and fire management and public land management 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	<p>Through the 2020-21 State budget, the Victorian Government committed:</p> <p>\$23.7m over four years and \$6.3 million ongoing to support the implementation of the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy implementation actions</p> <p>\$11m to implement the Cultural Landscape Strategy on Country.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has also strengthened the role and connection of Traditional Owners and traditional land management practices through the addition of new clauses in the recently renewed Regional Forest Agreements.</p>

Recommendation	Government Response	Progress as at December 2021
<p>19.1 Communication of natural hazard risk information to individuals</p> <p>State and territory governments should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. 	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Victorian Government has updated and communicated new guidance notes on bushfire planning. The Victorian Government is also in the process of including this updated information as web content. In December 2020, the Victorian Government released Regional Bushfire Management Strategies which set out the long-term approach for fuel management on public land, as well as identifying key areas of risk on private land. The Victorian Government has also developed StoryMAP, an innovative digital product to communicate bushfire risk and the outcomes of bushfire planning processes to the public in an interactive and compelling way. StoryMAP is being used to communicate updated Bushfire Management Strategies.</p>
<p>19.2 Guidance for insurer-recognised retrofitting and mitigation</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p><i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Insurance Council of Australia.</i></p>
<p>19.3 Mandatory consideration of natural disaster risk in land-use planning decisions</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Victorian Government gazetted amendment VC171 on 6 September 2021. This amends the Victoria Planning Provisions and all planning schemes by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementing Victoria's Marine and Coastal Policy (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2020) in state planning policy updating the flood and erosion management planning provisions to further support coastal hazard planning and sea level rise adaptation requirements.
<p>19.4 National Construction Code</p> <p>The Australian Building Codes Board, working with other bodies as appropriate, should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. 	<p>Support</p>	<p><i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Australian Building Codes Board.</i></p>

Recommendation		Government Response	Progress as at December 2021
20.1 Debris clean-up arrangements	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	<p>The Victorian Government led the delivery of a state clean-up program from the 2019-20 Eastern Victorian Fires and is currently implementing clean-up from the June 2021 Storms and Floods event.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will continue to work with the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to progress this action.</p>
21.1 Arrangements for donated goods	<p>State and territory governments should develop and implement efficient and effective arrangements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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	<p>The Victorian Government notes that this recommendation aligns with findings from the Victorian Inspector General for Emergency Management's (IGEM) Inquiry into the 2019-20 Victorian Fire Season Phase 2.</p> <p>The Victorian Government implemented updated processes and systems to manage donated goods to support the recovery of communities impacted by the 2019-20 Eastern Victorian Fires.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is continuing to explore opportunities to improve management of donated goods in both the immediate aftermath of a disaster and in longer term recovery.</p>
21.2 Reform fundraising laws	Australian, state and territory governments should create a single national scheme for the regulation of charitable fundraising.	Support in-principle	<p>The Victorian Government is working closely with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments on the development of the cross-border recognition model.</p> <p>On 30 August 2020, the Victorian Government made amendments to the <i>Fundraising Act 1998</i> (Vic) which mean a charity registered with the ACNC can be registered as a fundraiser in Victoria by a simple online notification process. Once registered, they are no longer required to provide annual reports on their fundraising activity to the Director of Consumer Affairs if they comply with their annual reporting obligations to the ACNC.</p>
21.3 National Coordination forums	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.	Support in-principle	<i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Commonwealth Government.</i>
21.4 National recovery resource sharing arrangements		Support in-principle	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.

Recommendation		Government Response	Progress as at December 2021
	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.		
21.5	National level recovery exercises 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.	Support	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.
22.1	Evaluation of financial assistance measures to support recovery 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.	Support	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations. The Victorian Government has participated in the Commonwealth's trial for the streamlined activation process for activating recovery financial assistance over the 2020-21 season.
22.2	Appropriate sharing of personal information 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 services, taking account of all necessary safeguards to ensure the sharing is only for recovery purposes.	Support	<p>The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to deliver shared recommendations.</p> <p>At a State level, the Victorian Government has engaged the Victorian Centre for Data Insights (VCDI) to develop a Data Strategy for the Victorian Emergency Management Sector to provide a pathway to inform data reform over the next six years.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is also exploring options for appropriately sharing impact assessment data.</p>
22.3	Review the thresholds and activation process for the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 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 Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to strengthen disaster recovery funding arrangements.
22.4	Nationally consistent Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements assistance measures	Support in-principle	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to strengthen disaster recovery funding arrangements.

Recommendation		Government Response	Progress as at December 2021
	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.		
22.5	Develop nationally consistent, pre-agreed recovery programs 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 in-principle	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to strengthen disaster recovery funding arrangements.
22.6	Better incorporate 'build back better' within the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Australian, state and territory governments should incorporate the principle of 'build back better' more broadly into the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.	Support in-principle	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to strengthen disaster recovery funding arrangements.
22.7	Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements recovery measures to facilitate resilience 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 in-principle	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to strengthen disaster recovery funding arrangements.
22.8	Streamline the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements processes Australian, state and territory governments should create simpler Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements application processes.	Support in-principle	The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments through ANZEMC and NEMMM to strengthen disaster recovery funding arrangements. The Victorian Government notes that this recommendation aligns with findings from the Victorian Inspector General for Emergency Management's (IGEM) Inquiry into the 2019-20 Victorian Fire Season Phase 2.
24.1	Accountability and assurance mechanisms at the Australian Government level The Australian Government should establish accountability and assurance mechanisms to promote continuous improvement and best practice in natural disaster arrangements.	Support	<i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Commonwealth Government.</i>
24.2	An independent accountability and assurance mechanism for each State and Territory 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	The Victorian Inspector-General for Emergency Management was established on 1 July 2014. IGEM is an independent statutory role providing assurance to government and the community in respect of emergency management arrangements in Victoria and fostering their continuous improvement.

Recommendation		Government Response	Progress as at December 2021
24.3	A public record of national significance 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.	Support	<i>The Victorian Government notes this recommendation is directed at the Commonwealth Government.</i>