

Natural Disaster Financial Assistance

Bulletin – 29 May 2025

NDFA Bulletin 12

The Bulletin is sent out on a regular basis and includes updates and reminders around the Victorian Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) and the CMS (Claims Management System). It is emailed to all Council CMS registered users, Council contacts and Council's general email.

EoFY Claim lodgement dates for 2024-25 FY expenditure

Claims to be lodged on the CMS Portal by:	Eligible expenditure period	Claim type
31 August 2025	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025	All claims <u>excluding</u> claims associated with approved certified estimates. Additional flexibility is provided for claims relating to approved certified estimates. Claims relating to approved certified estimates are to be submitted by key project milestone stages or at 50% and 100% of project completion.

A blanket extension has been provided for the lodgement of claims for all claim types from 31 July 2025 to 31 August 2025, with additional flexibility provided beyond this date for claims associated with approved certified estimates.

Limited extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are to be discussed with your DTP Assessor at a minimum two (2) weeks prior to the lodgement deadline.

Claim lodgement dates 2025-26 FY expenditure – Change in process

Claims to be lodged on the CMS Portal by:	Eligible expenditure period	Claim type
28 February 2026	1 July 2025 to 31 Dec 2025	All claims <u>excluding</u> claims associated with approved certified estimates. Additional flexibility is provided for claims relating to approved certified estimates. Claims are to be submitted by key project milestone stages or at 50% and 100% of project completion.
31 August 2026	1 January 2026 to 30 June 2026	All claims <u>excluding</u> claims associated with approved certified estimates. Additional flexibility is provided for claims relating to approved certified estimates. Claims are to be submitted by key project milestone stages or at 50% and 100% of project completion.

For the 2025-26 financial year, claim lodgement timeframes will move towards **half year cycles** with the only exception beyond these two dates relating to claims associated with approved certified estimates.

The objective of the move to half year cycles is to reduce the claim assessment period by minimising the end of financial year claim spike that continues to be experienced at the end of each financial year. Councils are encouraged to submit claims on a regular basis throughout the financial year and before the final dates captured in the above table, thereby distributing the claim assessments throughout the year.

Limited extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are to be discussed with your Assessor at a minimum two (2) weeks prior to the lodgement deadline.

Funding advances

Councils may request advance funding in the CMS Portal at key stages of a disaster including as the disaster event unfolds and immediately after to support DRFA eligible relief and recovery activities (for major events); when claims are submitted (and longer assessment timeframes are being experienced due periods of high claim spikes); and as certified estimates are approved. As claims are assessed, the recommended assessed amount is offset from the advance provided for the event. Any remaining advance balance is required to be refunded back to ERV.

Following the June 2021 Storm event, the advance process has been simplified, and ERV will work with the Council in determining the value of the initial advance to be provided and the payment profile of the advance payment/s. Before lodging an advance request, it is recommended that you contact Joe Tigani at joe.tigani@justice.vic.gov.au (0407 834 827) or via the NDFA inbox at ndfa@justice.vic.gov.au.

Victorian DRFA Guideline and Website Review

The Victorian DRFA Guidelines were implemented following the Commonwealth DRFA Determination becoming effective on 1 November 2018. Subsequent amendments/updates have captured feedback from users including feedback provided by various members of the Victorian DRFA User Reference Group, in addition to guidance provided from the external audit process and the Commonwealth.

A comprehensive review is now being undertaken of the documentation to improve the user experience. Regular updates will be made via the Victorian DRFA User Reference Group. ERV welcomes suggestions or feedback which can be provided to Julie.Buxton@erv.vic.gov.au.

Please note that the DRFA Victorian Guidelines review scope is based within the existing Commonwealth DRFA Determination (1 November 2018) parameters.

The Australian Government is also undertaking a broader review of the DRFA following the Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding (also known as the Colvin Review) to improve disaster funding arrangements, with any reforms expected over the medium to long term.

Training on DRFA Guidelines and Eligibility

A reminder that Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Training is available in groups for all Council staff who are involved with the DRFA process and is extended beyond the registered CMS User/s. The group should include a cross section of staff involved with the DRFA activities including those from the following Council Teams: emergency management, asset management, engineering/infrastructure, parks, depot and finance. Training sessions are approximately 2 hours in length.

To arrange group training, please contact Lyndee Peters at: Lyndee.Peters@transport.vic.gov.au

User Guides and Videos

User guides and videos are available on the CMS covering how to complete an event notification, claims of various types, requests for advances etc. The 23 videos, each approximately 2 minutes in duration, should be the first point of reference for questions on the CMS.

Once logged into the CMS, this information is available under the User Guide tile from the Home screen.

New Users to the CMS

Councils wishing to add a New User to the CMS portal should email NDFA@justice.vic.gov.au and the form will be emailed. Please note the form will need to be signed by Council's CEO before access can be arranged. Access to the CMS has been capped at five (5) users per Council.

Previous versions of the Bulletin

Previous versions of the Bulletin are now available on the website at the following link:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/ndfa-bulletin-library-councils>