

# Natural Disaster Financial Assistance

Bulletin 16, 23 March 2026

## NDFAs Bulletin 16

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.

## Extension of time for Emergency Works, Category A and Cat B CDO – AGRN 1242

The Commonwealth Government has now approved our request to extend the emergency works allowable time period to **30 June 2026** for the Victorian Bushfire event (AGRN 1242).

Also for this event, the NDFAs Team have approved an extension of time for all Category A activities as well as Category B, Counter Disaster Operations (CDO) to be completed by **30 June 2026**. The CMS has been updated to the revised timeline for these measures.

Should further extensions past these revised dates be required, Councils should lodge a request in the Extension of Time module in the CMS.

No extension has been provided for the Immediate Reconstruction Works (IRW) allowable time period. IRW not able to be completed within the 3-month period (**by 5 April 2026**) are to be undertaken under the certified estimate process for the Reconstruction of Essential Public Assets (REPA).

## Commonwealth Road to Recovery Program

Please note claims cannot be made for the same scope of works approved and funded under Category B of the DRFA from other State and Commonwealth funding sources, including the Commonwealth's Road to Recovery Program.

The Commonwealth has recently reaffirmed that this be checked as part of the State's claim assessment process, as well activities of the state appointed auditor's engagement.

## New DRFA events

The following new DRFA events were activated in January-March 2026:

- Victorian Bushfires (commencing 7 January 2026) AGRN 1242;
- Wye River – Lorne Flood Event (commencing 15 January 2026) AGRN 1248;
- Victorian Storms (commencing 7 January 2026) AGRN 1256;
- Goomalibee Bushfires (commencing 18 December 2025) AGRN 1257;
- Charlton – Jeffcott Bushfires (commencing 18 December 2025) AGRN 1259;
- North-West Victorian Storms (commencing 24 February 2026) AGRN 1270; and
- North-East Victorian Storms (commencing 22 February 2026) AGRN 1271

The Commonwealth did not support the merging of the bushfire events that occurred in December 2025 into the Victorian Bushfires commencing 7 January 2026 (AGRN 1242) on the grounds of separate weather patterns and the lapse of time between events.

## Updating estimates in the CMS portal

Noting that initial estimates captured as part of the event notification are high level, it is important to continue to review and update these estimates as additional information becomes available and damage assessments are undertaken, particularly for the event AGRN 1242.

Estimates are not funding commitments and can be updated at any time with the only exception being when a certified estimate is approved for essential public asset reconstruction works. Timely updates of the estimates will assist with budgeting and will also provide data insights into the volume of claims and assessor resourcing requirements.

Please review and update your estimates on a regular basis on all active events. A 'how to' guide was included in the email with this Bulletin.

## N DFA Team update

Emergency Recovery Victoria has merged into Emergency Management Victoria from 23 March 2026. Formal communication on this will be communicated by the Executive Team. There are no changes to current roles or processes.

## Standing Items

### DRFA User Reference Group (URG)

If your Council is currently not represented in the Victorian DRFA User Reference Group, we encourage that you join the conversation. The time commitment is around 1 hour per month and is a great way for sharing challenges and experiences, providing feedback on the CMS and Victorian DRFA Guidelines and also networking amongst councils (community of practice). Please send an email to [chad.ryan@erv.vic.gov.au](mailto:chad.ryan@erv.vic.gov.au) or [ndfa@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:ndfa@justice.vic.gov.au) to be included in the invitation list.

### Training on DRFA Guidelines and Eligibility

A reminder that group training sessions on the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements is available for all Council staff 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](mailto:Lyndee.peters@transport.vic.gov.au)

### New Users to the CMS

Councils wishing to add a New User to the CMS portal should email [NDFA@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto: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.

### 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.



## 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>