

## National Emergency Management Agency

### Senate Estimates Opening Statement

**Timing: Around 5.5 minutes – 747words**

**Reporting period 1 Sept 2022 – 1 Oct 2023 (essentially 12-months of NEMA)**

Firstly, I'd like to thank the Chair and the committee for allowing me to make an opening statement today.

Since I last addressed the committee, NEMA has prioritised supporting the 259 Local Government Areas impacted by 3 years of La Niña-fuelled flooding, cyclones and bushfires.

In the past 12 months, NEMA has focussed on 3 key areas:

1. Strengthening the way the Australian Government supports the preparation, response, and recovery efforts of states and territories, and how we coordinate international disaster relief
2. Building Commonwealth capability in the emergency management space, and
3. Focussing on designing solutions to reduce disaster risk.

The Bureau of Meteorology has officially declared that an El Niño, coupled with a positive Indian Ocean Dipole is underway. This means we are facing a hotter and drier summer with an elevated bushfire risk. This is playing out in the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales.



Recognising the forecast for this season, we've made real progress for this Higher-Risk Weather Season:

- We recently brought together nearly 300 participants here in Canberra, from 146 organisations across all jurisdictions, sectors and levels, for the first Higher Risk Weather Season National Preparedness Summit
- We are providing targeted Higher Risk Weather Season briefings to jurisdictions and local governments, as well as the charities and not-for-profit, disability, energy, supply chain and aged care sectors
- We've realigned our resources to create a Coordination and Planning Network of deployable staff, who can embed within state and territory emergency agencies, and establish a base in recovering communities to better connect them to support and services; and
- We're engaging with state and territory – and importantly, local governments - through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements roadshow; providing them with information on how those arrangements can best support them, and streamline the recovery process.

This has happened against the backdrop of 38 disaster events, deployment of personnel to overseas incidents, and more recently,

the Israel-Hamas conflict and supporting the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to get Australians home safely.

Flood recovery is happening across the country – from Northern Queensland where two thirds of the homes flooded in January are now habitable, to South East Queensland where 90 per cent of homes are now repaired.

Temporary accommodation for flood-affected people has also been delivered in Central West New South Wales and North West Western Australia.

NEMA has also coordinated the Commonwealth response and assistance to people across the country by:

- Providing over \$100 million in financial assistance to individuals and households, and over \$246 million in payments to small businesses and primary producers.
- Agreeing to a total of \$3.85 billion for extra-ordinary assistance measures (with a Commonwealth contribution of \$1.617 billion) under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.
- Working with our partners to deliver recovery and betterment projects including the New Fitzroy River Bridge in Western Australia, which will be more resilient and a critical supply chain link for the region.



- Convening more than 90 meetings through the National Coordination Mechanism, of which 9 specifically coordinated both recovery support and the provision of temporary accommodation.
- Activating a Crisis Coordination Team 7 times for domestic events, and twice for international events.
- Actioning 43 requests for non-financial Australian Government Assistance.

We continue to set the **foundations** for a more secure, stronger and resilient country, by investing in the capabilities, data and information, and partnerships we need, to strengthen Australia's emergency management system.

It has undoubtedly been a busy 12 months in the emergency management space.

We are as ready as we can be for the coming Higher-Risk Weather Season and are also planning and investing for the future.

Thank you, I now welcome your questions.

