

Thank you, Chair, and Committee, for giving me the opportunity to speak today.

Since before Christmas, we have seen bushfires across Southern Australia, in the Grampians of Victoria, South Western Western Australia, and currently Tasmania.

Communities have experienced record-breaking monsoon flooding across North Queensland, and a Category 5 cyclone crossing the coast in North-Western Australia. Sadly, we have lost lives.

Road and rail systems have been flooded and damaged directly impacting, supply chains. Critical infrastructure, such as power and water have also been affected by these events.

The scale of damage to homes and businesses that were impacted, directly and indirectly, because of these events is now evident.

Through each of these events, NEMA has worked closely and collaboratively with Commonwealth and State Government

Agencies, Local Governments, supermarket chains, logistics providers, and communities to ensure Commonwealth support – both financial and non-financial – has been timely, coordinated, and targeted.

In a first the strategic investment into multi-purpose aerial capabilities enabled the deployment of the Australian Government's Sikorsky S61, supporting flood-impacted communities across northern Queensland. The aircraft then redeployed to Western Australia to support emergency response in the wake of Severe Tropical Cyclone Zelia.

The other Australian Government-funded aerial assets continue to support firefighting operations in Victoria, Tasmania, and Western Australia.

NEMA officers located across the country have been part of crisis preparation and planning, response, and now recovery, embedded in State Emergency control centres, and into recovery groups working to make sure Commonwealth support is getting to where it is most needed. We have also again

deployed a senior Commonwealth Recovery Liaison Officer into Queensland to streamline Commonwealth support for North Queensland flood recovery.

Financial support is being delivered to those most impacted through several Disaster Funding programs. These include providing immediate financial support assisting people during these early stages of recovery. Already, over 24,000 individuals have received assistance. Similarly, local governments have rapidly commenced the clean-up of their communities and the rebuild of vital road networks, confident of the financial support available through our disaster arrangements.

NEMA continues to administer programs in risk reduction and resilience to better prepare Australian communities for the future. The third round of the Disaster Ready Fund is now open, offering up to \$200 million in Australian Government investment for 2025-26. The first two rounds funded around \$400 million in programs across Australia, focusing on resilience, adaptability, preparedness, and risk reduction. The

current round has additional focus on infrastructure investment to reduce natural hazard risk. A total of \$1 billion will be invested across the life of this important funding program.

The events of this season have underlined the vulnerability of the transport infrastructure that supports our essential supply chain networks. There will be a need for a whole of society approach to building the resilience of these supply chains. We will need to engage with communities as they prepare for the HRWS, business continuity plans for supermarket chains and logistics providers will need to be aligned with the challenges these events place on our transport networks. We will also look to infrastructure owners to continue to invest in betterment of vulnerable and vital road networks. This is why the betterment programs, approaching \$1 billion currently in delivery by states and territories as part of the jointly funded DRFA are vital to the resilience of our communities.

Challenges will undoubtedly continue to test our systems, people, communities, and supply chains. We will keep working

closely with our partners to ensure that we are there to help communities respond to disasters and drive risk reduction, recovery, and resilience efforts that are timely, targeted, and help us respond to the challenges that the future will present.

Thank you.