



**Minister for Emergency Services; Innovation and the Digital Economy;  
Medical Research; Volunteering;  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council**

Our Ref: 62-32640

Senator the Hon Perin Davey  
Deputy Leader of the Nationals  
Senator for New South Wales

[senator.davey@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.davey@aph.gov.au)

Dear Senator <sup>Perin</sup>

Thank you for your correspondence dated 13 January 2023 regarding the Senate inquiry into Australia's Disaster Resilience and the invitation to provide a submission. Each submission will contribute to the inquiry on Australia's preparedness, response and recovery workforce models in times of natural disasters and alternative models to disaster recovery.

Western Australia's (WA's) recent and ongoing experiences with natural hazards including devastating bushfires, cyclones and floods have emphasised the importance of effective arrangements to avert disasters caused by natural hazards.

The current flood emergency in WA has had a devastating effect on many communities in northern WA. The delivery of emergency relief is ongoing and reconstruction and recovery of the region will take years.

WA is currently in the middle of the high threat period when the state is most likely to be impacted by natural hazards. The state is responding to multiple emergency events, including numerous bushfires of which the southern half of WA is prone to at this time of year. It is all hands-on deck for our emergency services workers, volunteers and staff from across as they respond to and prepare for, the next emergency.

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) is the lead agency for Emergency Management in WA. DFES has advised that it has limited capacity to provide a comprehensive submission to the Senate inquiry by 20 February 2023 due to current high operational demand. WA will continue to work with jurisdictions through the National Emergency Management Ministers Meeting and the National Emergency Management Agency on national priority actions.

I am pleased to advise that WA has thorough, robust, and detailed emergency management arrangements, which have served the state well during past and current emergencies. Our state emergency management framework comprises legislation, policy, plans, procedures, and guidelines. This suite of emergency management

documents is available at <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/state-emergency-management-committee/state-emergency-management-framework> and at <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/state-emergency-management-plan>

Additionally, the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) is currently leading a review of the WA Local Emergency Management Arrangements. In 2023, SEMC will be conducting a review of District and Local Emergency Management Committees, as well as the development of a Framework for Engagement with Philanthropic and Private Organisations for the WA Emergency Management Sector. The reviews and framework development outcomes are to be finalised later in the year.

I note your goal of the Senate Select Committee visiting communities impacted by recent emergencies and would welcome such a visit to our state. This initiative will assist with developing a deeper understanding of preparedness, resilience and recovery in a WA context. The recent flooding caused by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie in WA's Kimberley region has presented a current example of WA's challenges in emergency management and with disaster management models and arrangements. Some of these challenges may be unique to this disaster event. However, future disasters could pose similar challenges and all jurisdictions would benefit from practical, flexible models that can deliver on the specific response and recovery needs of any disaster-impacted community.

Should the Senate Select Committee seek detailed information on WA emergency management arrangements, please contact DFES Deputy Commissioner Melissa Pexton

Yours sincerely

Hon Stephen Dawson MLC  
**MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES**

14 FEB 2023