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Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Background Brief

For information

PDMS Number: MB19-000780

To: Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management

Subject: Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC - Northern Australia Seasonal Bushfire Outlook

Purpose

The Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC has released the *Northern Australia* Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for 2019 on the fire potential for the Northern Territory, Queensland, northern Western Australia and northern South Australia.

Background

1. The Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC normally release the *Northern Australia Seasonal Bushfire Outlook* in late July. The outlook has been released early due to requests from fire managers in Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia.
2. The reason for the earlier release of the outlook is to cover areas at risk between now and the next outlook (*Southern Australia* Seasonal Bushfire Outlook 2019), which is released in late August 2019.
3. The *Northern Outlook* is the work of the scientists from the Bureau of Meteorology and fire and land management agencies from Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory.
4. The outlook provides information to assist fire authorities in making strategic resource and planning decisions leading up to the fire season.

Key Issues

5. The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the South Australian Country Fire Service have both indicated that there is high potential that their fire seasons may have commenced before the normal release time (late July) of the *Northern Outlook*.
6. Inclusion of Queensland as a whole and northern South Australia for the first time in the *Northern Outlook* is not reflective of new areas at risk. It's just a shift to include areas that have their fire season now rather than later in the year.
7. Weather conditions for 2019 in Queensland are on trend with last year, which saw record forest fire danger indices.
8. The Bureau of Meteorology forecast suggests that the start of the 2018-19 wet season is likely to be delayed. The rainfall outlook for July to September is likely to be below average across much of Australia.
9. Record warmth and significant rainfall deficiencies have shaped the fire outlook potential across most of northern Australia this year, except for parts of northern and central Queensland that received record rainfall and flooding.

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~~For Official Use Only~~**Consultation**

10. Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC – reason for early release of *Northern Outlook* – due to request from QLD, WA and SA fire managers.

Authorising Officer	Contact Officer
Robert Cameron Director General Emergency Management Australia 27/06/2019 Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	s. 22(1)(a)(ii) Assistant Director CCC Planning & Engagement Section / Crisis Management Branch Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Background Brief

For information

PDMS Number: MB19-001081

To: Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management

Subject: Preparing for the Upcoming Severe Weather Season

Purpose

To provide information about the Australian Government's planning and preparation activities ahead of the 2019-20 severe weather season.

Background

1. Australian communities are vulnerable to seasonal hazards including severe weather, cyclones, floods and bushfires. Prolonged drought across much of Australia means that fire is likely to be the main natural hazard risk experienced by most Australian communities this summer. The Bureau of Meteorology has recorded the fifth-driest start to the year on record and forecasts a drier than average end to 2019 for much of Australia. The Bureau will release its cyclone outlook on 14 October.
2. The Australian Seasonal Bushfire Outlook, released by the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre on 28 August 2019, forecasts above normal fire potential for much of the east coast of the continent, from Gippsland in Victoria through New South Wales to South East Queensland. Parts of Tasmania, southern Western Australia and South Australia, including the Eyre Peninsular have similar outlooks.
3. An early start to the fire season has been declared in parts of NSW and this may extend to other areas across Eastern Australia.
4. State and territory governments have primary responsibility for the protection of life, property and environment within their jurisdiction but can request Australian Government disaster assistance when a crisis overwhelms their capacity and/or capabilities.
5. Emergency Management Australia (EMA) is Australia's national disaster management organisation and is the Commonwealth Government's focal point for situational awareness, emergency preparedness, crisis management, and disaster recovery.

Key Issues

6. EMA maintains a national level of preparedness across all sources of threat and risk and is well positioned to provide support to states and territories.
 - The Australian Government Crisis Coordination Centre (CCC) provides all-hazards incident monitoring and situational awareness, stakeholder notification and response coordination. The CCC is a 24/7 crisis management information and whole-of-government coordination facility that is directly connected to all state and territory emergency centres.

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- Australian Government Crisis Committee and National Crisis Committee meetings, activated and supported by the CCC, provide an effective whole-of-government approach to crisis management and is the mechanism to support and inform ministerial decision-making.
 - The Commonwealth's role during disasters and emergencies is governed by a number of plans and frameworks, principally the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework and the Australian Government Disaster Response Plan (COMDISPLAN).
7. EMA, in collaboration with the Bureau of Meteorology and Australian Defence Force, delivers Annual Preparedness briefings to all state and territory emergency management and associated agencies on the severe weather season and potential risk for disasters in Australia.
 - The briefings are valuable for strengthening relationships, information sharing arrangements and communication with jurisdictional agencies and facilitating early engagement about procedures for requesting Australian Government assistance.
 8. The Australian Government is providing \$2 million to ensure that the Commonwealth's component of the national telephone based warning system, Emergency Alert, is available during 2019-20.
 - The warning system provides emergency services agencies with immediate access to telephone and mobile phone numbers within an area impacted by a disaster to issue emergency warnings via voice and text messages.
 9. The National Aerial Firefighting Centre coordinates a fleet of highly specialised firefighting aircraft readily available to support states and territories, with almost \$15 million provided annually by the Australian Government.
 - The 2019-20 funding has contributed to the lease of 135 aircraft, including aircrews, large fixed wing airtankers, fixed wing firebombing and specialist mapping aircraft, and helicopters with night firebombing capabilities.
 10. EMA has lead the development of the Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework which provides guidance to all jurisdictions in understanding, developing and enhancing capability requirements to prepare for, manage and recovery from severe to catastrophic disasters.
 - The Framework informs the strategic governance, policy and investment required for disaster preparedness. It incorporates consideration of risk and consequence, and new and emerging ideas and technologies, across governments and the private, non-government community and international sectors.
 11. The Australian Government has developed a National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework to guide national action to address existing disaster risks and minimise new risks. The Government is investing \$130.5 million over five years from 2019 20 to deliver disaster risk reduction initiatives at the national, state and local levels

Consultation

12. Disaster Recovery Branch and Disaster Preparedness Branch within EMA were consulted in compiling this brief.

Sensitivities

13. N/A

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Authorising Officer	Contact Officer
Robert Cameron Director General Emergency Management Australia 06 / 09 / 2019 Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	Joe Buffone Assistant Secretary Crisis Management Branch Emergency Management Australia Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Background Brief

For information

PDMS Number: MB19-001240

To: Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and
Emergency Management

Subject: Background information for interview with Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Purpose

Your office requested a suggested handling strategy and comprehensive background information on a number of issues, including the national preparedness posture for the forecasted fire season, in preparation for your interview on Monday 30 September 2019 with the ABC Background Briefing program.

Background

1. Background Briefing is an investigative journalism program aired on ABC Radio National on Sunday mornings. You will do a 20 minute pre-recorded interview for a program to be aired 6 October 2019 regarding bushfire and natural hazards.
2. The Department is aware that other key emergency management stakeholders have given interviews over the past week for the same program, including: Mr Richard Thornton, Chief Executive Officer, Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre; Justice the Hon Bernard Teague, chair of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission; and Mr Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM, Commissioner, New South Wales Rural Fire Service.
3. We expect that the Australian Government's role in positioning for this fire season and future 'disaster' seasons, will be raised with you. We understand that other interviews for the program have canvassed whether the Commonwealth is doing enough, including its financial commitment to aerial firefighting. Linkages with climate change – specifically human induced climate change – will also likely be canvassed with you.

Suggested handling strategy

4. This will be a good opportunity for you to outline the forecasted fire season and its risks to the community. Further, that all levels of government are taking the forecast very seriously and, consequently, the community needs to do the same. You could emphasise that while our national preparedness posture is robust, listeners will need to take personal responsibility for being bushfire ready, even if they consider their risk is low.
5. **At the operational level**, you could describe the specific preparedness actions (incl. national projects being led) that the Commonwealth, through Emergency Management Australia, has taken (overleaf) and that you will take at the Ministerial level (overleaf). You could emphasise that Australia's emergency services are world-leading and are well-practiced and efficient at sharing resources. Regarding aerial firefighting, if it is raised, you should acknowledge its importance in saving lives, and, if it is also raised, acknowledge the business case for an increase

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in the Commonwealth's financial contribution to the standing costs of the national fleet is being considered.

6. **At the policy and program level** you could outline your priority to reduce Australia's disaster risk through practical initiatives that make a difference to Australians' lives. For example, you could say that work is underway on a new Commonwealth disaster risk information capability that will make critical information available to town planners and other key decision makers. Further, you could emphasise that you intend to soon finalise with your state and territory counterparts the terms of a \$260.1m national partnership agreement that will fund local, state and national level initiatives that implement the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework – a world-best blueprint to address Australia's climate and disaster risk.
7. Should you be drawn on matters regarding climate change, you could refer to the advice of Australian Government science agencies (CSIRO and BOM) that climate change is causing heatwaves, fire weather and drought to become more frequent and intense. Further, that the underlying trends are clear: it is likely to get hotter and drier.

Key Issues

Forecasted fire season

8. An early start to the fire season has already been declared in Queensland and NSW.
9. Above normal fire potential has been forecast by the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC for East of the Great Divide from Gippsland in Victoria through all of NSW to South East Queensland. Additionally this is the case in Tasmania, as well as parts of Western Australia and South Australia.
10. The year to date has been unusually warm and dry with below average rainfall across the southern half of the country.

National preparedness posture

11. All levels of government are taking the bushfire season very seriously.
12. There is very strong cooperation between all agencies to ensure we are as well prepared as possible.
13. Emergency Management Australia (EMA) has held comprehensive pre-season preparedness briefings with each state and territory, which was a key lesson from the Victorian bushfires of February 2009 (Black Saturday bushfires). EMA will also hold preparedness briefings with the private sector during October.
14. You will lead a roundtable discussion with state and territory emergency management ministers in November, as part of the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management, to discuss jurisdictional and national-level plans for the coming season and ensure there are no blockages/impediments to cooperation.
15. Furthermore, in 2019-20 the Australian Government is investing over \$6.2 million on the next generation **Australian Fire Danger Rating System** to deliver more accurate and local risk messaging; providing \$2 million (on top of annual commitments) to ensure the national telephone based warning system, Emergency Alert, is available during 2019-20; and has invested \$1.9 million towards the development of a Public Safety Mobile Broadband capability.

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~~For Official Use Only~~*National aerial firefighting arrangements*

16. Aerial firefighting plays an important role in protecting communities and essential infrastructure, and providing vital support to firefighters on the ground.
17. The National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC), now a business unit of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC), was established in 2003 by the Australian states and territories, with the support of the Australian Government, to provide cooperative national arrangements for aerial firefighting.
18. NAFC sources and leases specialised firefighting aircraft from around the world on behalf of state and territory fire services and land management agencies.
 - There is an ongoing debate around whether the Australian Government should purchase its own aerial assets rather than leasing aircraft. Leasing aircraft, however, provides greater flexibility to provide the right type and number of aircraft based on forecast risk, and provides a more cost effective way to introduce new technologies.
19. The Australian Government contributes almost \$15 million per year to AFAC for the leasing, standing and positioning costs of the national aerial firefighting fleet. States and territories the balance of the costs, including the operational costs, which vary depending on their respective operational activities.
20. The original Australian Government commitment in 2003 was for the Australian Government to fund 50 per cent of the standing costs of the fleet. That has dropped over time to 18 per cent as costs have risen.
21. In 2019-20, Australian Government funding will contribute to the lease of approximately 135 aircraft. This includes:
 - six (6) Erickson Air-cranes, as well as other heavy lift helicopters;
 - at least four (4) large fixed wing air-tankers, including a Boeing 737;
 - more than forty (40) other fixed wing firebombing aircraft, including two water scooping aeroplanes;
 - four (4) helicopters specially equipped with infrared sensors, mapping and communication systems;
 - four (4) fast, specialist fixed wing mapping aircraft, equipped with sophisticated infra-red scanners to rapidly locate and map bushfires; and,
 - two (2) helicopters capable of undertaking night firebombing operations.
22. The Government may also reimburse states and territories certain aerial firefighting costs under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. Such costs must be over and above the costs associated with the NAFC fleet.

Emergency warnings

23. Australian public safety agencies use Emergency Alert, Australia's national telephone-based warning system, to send warning messages about likely, or actual emergencies.
24. Emergency Management Victoria administers Emergency Alert on behalf of all states and territories. It was implemented after the Victorian Black Saturday bushfires.
25. The Government contributes \$2 million per year for the operation of Emergency Alert.
26. Warnings, such as fire and flood warnings, are also delivered through ABC radio; as the official broadcaster of emergency warnings.

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~~For Official Use Only~~*Recovery arrangements*

27. Through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), the Government provides financial assistance directly to the states to help them with the costs of certain disaster relief and recovery assistance measures.
28. Over the past decade, the Government has provided more than \$11 billion to the states under the DRFA.
29. The DRFA has two main objectives:
 - to alleviate the financial burden on the states, and
 - to facilitate the early provision of assistance to disaster affected communities.
30. There are four categories of assistance measures:
 - assistance to individuals (Category A)
 - assistance to local councils and state agencies (Category B)
 - assistance to communities and businesses (Category C) and
 - assistance for extraordinary measures (Category D).
31. States are not bound by the DRFA and can, and should, make available whatever assistance is necessary regardless of whether it is eligible for cost-sharing with the Government.

Climatic trends

32. Climate change is causing heatwaves, fire weather and drought to become more frequent and intense. Some rainfall events are also becoming more intense.
33. The underlying trends are clear: Australia is projected to experience more extremes into the future and the disaster season is longer.
 - There has been a long-term increase in extreme fire weather and the length of the fire season across large parts of Australia since the 1950s. (*Source: Bureau of Meteorology/CSIRO, State of the Climate 2018, page 5*)
 - Australia is projected to experience an increase in the number of high fire weather danger days and a longer fire season in southern and eastern Australia (*Source: Bureau of Meteorology/CSIRO, State of the Climate 2018, page 22*).
34. It has been a very early start to the bushfire season this year, with the recent fire events in NSW and Queensland examples of this trend.

Policy and programs to reduce the impact of disasters

35. The Australian Government:
 - has developed a National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework to guide national action to address existing disaster risks and minimise new risks;
 - is investing \$130.5 million over five years from 2019-20 to deliver disaster risk reduction initiatives at the national, state and local levels;
 - is considering options for establishing a national climate and disaster risk capability to ensure decision-useful information is available to those who need it;
 - has published tools to support all decision-makers take better account of disasters when they make decisions that affect our communities, across all sectors of society and the economy;

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- is helping communities recover from disasters by investing in resilience through the joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, including:
 - a \$100 million Infrastructure Betterment Fund in Queensland following the floods earlier this year;
 - \$27 million for community resilience programs, education and awareness initiatives, and improving flood mapping and warnings
 - allowing states and territories to use the savings they generate from rebuilding essential public assets under the DRFA towards mitigation projects; and
 - providing flexibility for states and territories to restore damaged assets to a more resilient standard.
- Has developed an Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework for severe to catastrophic disasters, which provides guidance to all Australian jurisdictions in understanding, developing and enhancing capability requirements to prepare for, manage and recover from severe to catastrophic disasters.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Consultation

37. N/A

Client service implications**Sensitivities**

38. Climate change – specifically human induced climate change – will likely be canvassed with you in this interview.

Authorising Officer	Contact Officer
Robert Cameron Director General Emergency Management Australia 27/9/2019 Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	Luke Brown Assistant Secretary Disaster Preparedness Branch Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Copies: Deputy Secretary, Security and Resilience Group

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Australian Government
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Background Brief

For information

PDMS Number: MB19-001321

To: Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management

Subject: Background brief and Talking Points for the Minister's Landline interview on Bushfires and bushfire preparedness

Purpose

To provide key points and background for your ABC Landline interview on bushfires and bushfire preparedness.

Key Points

Seasonal Outlook

1. It has been an unusually warm and dry start to the year with below average rainfall across the southern half of the country.
2. Australians will experience more frequent and severe heatwaves and bushfires.
3. Parts of northern New South Wales and south east Queensland are experiencing an early start to the bushfire season.
 - The impact of these fires have been catastrophic – homes and two lives have been lost.
4. Above normal fire potential has been forecast for east of the great divide from Gippsland in Victoria through all of NSW to SE Queensland. Additionally this is the case in parts of Tasmania, Western Australia and South Australia.
5. The bureau has forecast fewer cyclones, but it only takes one cyclone to impact your town to cause significant damage.

National preparedness posture for the forecast fire season

6. The Australian Government maintains a national level of preparedness, and is actively working with state and territories to limit the impact of bushfire on our communities.
7. The Australian Government:
 - has developed a National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework to guide national action to address existing disaster risks and minimise new risks;
 - is investing \$130.5 million over five years from 2019-20 to deliver disaster risk reduction initiatives at the national, state and local levels;
 - is investing over \$6.2 million on the next generation Australian Fire Danger Rating System to deliver more accurate and local risk messaging;
 - is providing \$2 million to ensure that the Commonwealth's component of the national telephone based warning system, Emergency Alert, is available during 2019-20;

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- Has invested \$1.9 million towards the development of a Public Safety Mobile Broadband capability.
 - has well rehearsed arrangements in place to provide assistance to states and territories if requested.
 - These arrangements have been used for the recent fires in northern New South Wales and south east Queensland - the Australian Defence Force provided assistance to support local firefighting operations.
8. To ensure our national preparedness posture is appropriate to respond to the current bushfire season, I will facilitate a round table discussion with my state and territory ministerial counterparts on jurisdictional and national plans at the upcoming Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Services meeting in November 2019.

Pre-season preparations with states and territories, and industry

9. The Australian Government is working with states and territories to prepare Australians for the summer's severe weather and bolster resilience across our communities.
10. In August and September, we met with states and territories to discuss the summer season outlook and potential risk for disasters in Australia.
 - These annual briefings were established following a recommendation from the Royal Commission into the Victoria Bushfires in 2009 (Black Saturday).
11. In October, the Australian Government is conducting severe weather season preparedness briefings with the private sector to ensure national preparedness efforts are connected and well-coordinated between industry and the public sector.

National aerial firefighting arrangements

12. Aerial firefighting plays an important role in protecting Australian communities and essential infrastructure, and providing vital support to firefighters on the ground.
13. This year (2019-20), the Australian Government will contribute \$14.983 million to the National Aerial Firefighting Centre, now a business unit of the Australian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC).
 - This funding will contribute to the lease of 135 aircraft.
14. The Australian Government has committed to investing a further \$14.994 million in 2020-21, to continue supporting this important emergency management capability.

International assistance

15. State and territories are responsible for developing and maintaining their respective emergency management capabilities.
16. Arrangements are in place for states and territories to share resources and where required seek international assistance for firefighting from United States of America, Canada and New Zealand.

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17. Emergency Alert is Australia's national telephone-based warning system that is used to send warnings messages about likely, or actual emergencies to people in an affected area. Telstra, Optus and Vodafone partner with the Australian, state and territory governments to deliver the technology.
18. Emergency management agencies across the country advise people to be prepared for emergencies and disasters that their communities face, this includes: being aware of local risks and hazards, seeking advice from local emergency services and local government, listening for official warnings (and know what they mean)

Recovery arrangements

19. Responding to disasters, including the provision of relief and recovery assistance to disaster affected communities, is primarily the responsibility of state and territory governments.
20. However, in recognition of the significant cost of disasters, the Australian Government established the joint Australian Government-State cost sharing arrangements to alleviate the financial burden on the states and to facilitate the early provision of assistance to disaster affected communities.
21. Through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018 (DRFA), the Australian Government provides financial assistance directly to states and territories to assist them with costs associated with certain disaster relief and recovery assistance measures.

Further background on the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements is at **Attachment A**.

Details of Recovery Assistance provided to northern NSW and southern Qld is at **Attachment B**.

Consultation

N/A

Sensitivities

1. Climate change – specifically human induced climate change – may be canvassed with you in this interview.

Authorising Officer	Contact Officer
Robert Cameron Director General, Emergency Management Australia 17/10/2019 Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	s. 22(1)(a)(ii) Executive Officer Emergency Management Australia Ph: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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~~For Official Use Only~~**Attachment A**Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements

22. The Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) make provisions for state governments to activate relief and recovery assistance immediately following a disaster without seeking approval from the Australian Government.
23. Under these arrangements, states and territories determine the type and level of assistance to make available. Importantly, states and territories are not bound by the assistance available under the DRFA.
- That is, states and territories can make available whatever assistance deemed necessary regardless of whether it is eligible for cost sharing under the DRFA. This recognises that states are best placed to identify the type and level of assistance to make available following a disaster, in accordance with their responsibility for disaster management.
24. Where the arrangements have been activated, the Australian Government may fund up to 75 per cent of the assistance available to individuals and communities. This contribution is delivered through a number of assistance measures and may include:
- personal hardship and distress assistance, including the engagement of a Community Recovery Officer to work with individuals and families receiving personal hardship and distress assistance
 - counter disaster operations
 - concessional loans or interest subsidies for small businesses and primary producers
 - transport freight subsidies for primary producers
 - loans and grants to voluntary non-profit organisations and needy individuals
 - the reconstruction of essential public assets
 - community recovery funds
 - clean up and recovery grants to assist small business, including farm businesses, to resume trading as soon as possible
25. In addition, when a major disaster has had such a significant impact on individuals and families where assistance over and above the joint Australian Government-State cost sharing arrangements is needed, the Australian Government may provide the:
- Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment - a one-off, non-means tested payment of \$1000 for eligible adults and \$400 for eligible children who have been adversely affected by a major disaster either in Australia or overseas, and/or
 - Disaster Recovery Allowance - a short-term income support payment to assist individuals who can demonstrate their income has been affected as a direct result of a disaster.

Disaster Recovery Allowance (DRA)

- Individuals may be eligible for DRA if they:
 - are an Australian resident or hold an eligible visa
 - are 16 years or older or getting a social security payment
 - receive income from one of the affected areas by working in that area, or you reside in the affected area
 - suffered a loss of income as a direct result of the bushfires

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- did not or will not receive another social security entitlement for the period you are claiming DRA
- did not or will not receive a prescribed payment for the period you are claiming DRA
- your income is less than the relevant income threshold amount in the fortnight following your loss of income
- For further information regarding the eligibility requirements, people can contact the Department of Human Services.

Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment

- Individuals may be eligible for this payment if they:
 - are at least 16 years of age
 - are an Australian resident or the holder of an eligible visa
 - have been adversely affected by a major disaster.

A person is generally considered adversely affected if, as a direct result of the disaster:

- the person is seriously injured, or
- the person is an immediate family member of an Australian who is killed, or
- the person's principal place of residence has been destroyed or has sustained major damage (for example, direct fire impact or significant smoke and ash damage), or
- the person is the principal carer of a dependent child who has experienced any of the above.

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~~For Official Use Only~~**Attachment B**Recovery Assistance provided to northern NSW and southern Qld**Jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements - DRFA**

- Disaster recovery assistance is being provided under the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) in response to the bushfires that have affected northern NSW and southern Queensland from late August 2019.
- For the northern NSW bushfires, DRFA assistance is available in the nine (9) LGAs of Armidale, Bellingen, Clarence Valley, Glen Innes Severn, Inverell, Richmond Valley, Tenterfield, Uralla and Walcha.
- For the southern Queensland bushfires, DRFA assistance is available in the five (5) LGAs of Gold Coast, Noosa, Scenic Rim, Southern Downs and Sunshine Coast.
- The assistance available includes:
 - help for eligible people whose homes or belongings have been damaged and are suffering personal hardship
 - funding to cover firefighting response operations and to restore damaged essential public assets
 - concessional interest rate loans for small businesses, primary producers and non-profit organisations, and
 - freight subsidies for primary producers.
- This assistance is administered by the state governments.
- Anyone who is suffering personal hardship and in need of assistance should contact:
 - the NSW Government Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444, or
 - the Queensland Government Community Recovery Hotline on 1800 173 349.
- The Australian Government is working closely with NSW and Queensland authorities to assess the impacts of the bushfires and to identify any further recovery assistance that may be needed.

Disaster Recovery Allowance - DRA

- The Australian Government's Disaster Recovery Allowance (DRA) has also been activated to provide additional support for people affected by the bushfires in northern NSW and southern Queensland.
- The DRA is designed to assist those who have experienced a loss of income as a direct result of the bushfires.
 - For example, this might mean an employee is unable to go to work because their business premises has been destroyed by fire.
- The DRA can assist employees, small business persons, primary producers and sole traders without waiting periods and extensive asset and activity testing.
- The DRA will provide fortnightly payments equivalent to the maximum rate of Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance.
- The Allowance can be paid for up to 13 weeks or until the individual regains their pre-disaster income.
- If required, after 13 weeks the individual can test their eligibility for another income support payment such as Newstart Allowance.
- The DRA is available in the NSW LGAs of Armidale, Bellingen, Clarence Valley, Glen Innes Severn, Richmond Valley, Tenterfield, Uralla, and Walcha and in the Queensland LGAs of Noosa, Scenic Rim, Southern Downs and Sunshine Coast.

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- Anyone whose income has been affected because of the bushfires to contact the Department of Human Services (DHS) and test their eligibility for the payment.
- Claims for DRA can be made now.
 - Customers can call DHS on 180 22 66, visit www.humanservices.gov.au or visit a DHS Service Centre.

Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment – AGDRP

- The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) has also been activated to provide additional support for people affected by the bushfires in northern NSW and southern Queensland.
- The AGDRP provides a non-means tested payment of \$1000 for eligible adults and \$400 for eligible children.
- The AGDRP is available to people whose homes have been lost or directly damaged, and people who have been seriously injured, or are an immediate family member of someone who has lost their life.
- The AGDRP is available in the NSW LGAs of Armidale, Clarence Valley, Richmond Valley, and Tenterfield and the Queensland LGAs of Noosa, Scenic Rim, Southern Downs and Sunshine Coast.
- Anyone whose has been adversely affected by the bushfires can contact DHS and test their eligibility for the payment.
- Claims for DRA can be made from Thursday 17 October 2019.
 - Customers can call DHS on 180 22 66, visit www.humanservices.gov.au or visit a DHS Service Centre.



Adelaide, 20 November 2019

Commonwealth – Ministerial Meeting Paper

Item No. 3

PREPAREDNESS POSTURE FOR THE 2019-20 SUMMER SEASON

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commonwealth recommends that Council Members:

- (a) **note** the national Preparedness Posture for the 2019-20 Summer Season outlook briefing provided by Emergency Management Australia;
- (b) **note** the update on resource prioritisation principles; and
- (c) **endorse** the Guiding Principles detailed in the *Australian Arrangement for Interstate Assistance 2019* (AIA).

PROPOSED PUBLIC COMMUNIQUE TEXT

The Hon David Littleproud MP, Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management, facilitated a discussion with the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management on the national Preparedness Posture and discussed jurisdictional and national plans for the current season.

Australia and New Zealand continue to experience the impact of more frequent and intense disasters, as evidenced in the early start to the bushfire season this year. The Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management endorsed a number of initiatives and the continuation of ongoing work in recognition of this ongoing challenge.

KEY ISSUES

- The early start to the Summer Season has highlighted the need to ensure that Australian jurisdictions are well prepared for the challenges ahead. This includes ensuring that national arrangements such as the AIA and those for resource prioritisation are in place to enable collaborative jurisdictional response if needed.

Preparedness Posture

- The Australian Government is actively working with states and territories, industry and the private sector to confirm preparedness arrangements ahead of the summer season.
- Generally, over the longer term Australians will continue to experience more frequent and severe natural hazards including bushfires, cyclones, floods and severe weather.

Date cleared for distribution to all jurisdictions: 6 November 2019

Contact Officer: Mr Robert Cameron OAM, Director General Emergency Management Australia

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 47E(g) @homeaffairs.gov.au

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POLICE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Already this year we have witnessed the impact of widespread drought and bushfires on communities in New South Wales and Queensland.

- It has been the 4th driest January – September period on record and the driest on record for the southern half of the country. The drier outlook continues into December for southern Australia, eastern Queensland, far northeast New South Wales and much of the Northern Territory.
- Rainfall is likely to be below average across most of the country, excluding northern Western Australia, for the remainder of October and November. The dry outlook for southern and north-eastern Australia continues into December.
- Daytime temperatures are likely to be above average across Australia for the remainder of 2019 and early 2020. December to February nights are also likely to be warmer nationwide.
- These factors mean that significant areas of the country will be subject to elevated fire danger risk, heightened risk from heatwave and dust storms, but, due to specific meteorological conditions likely fewer tropical cyclones.

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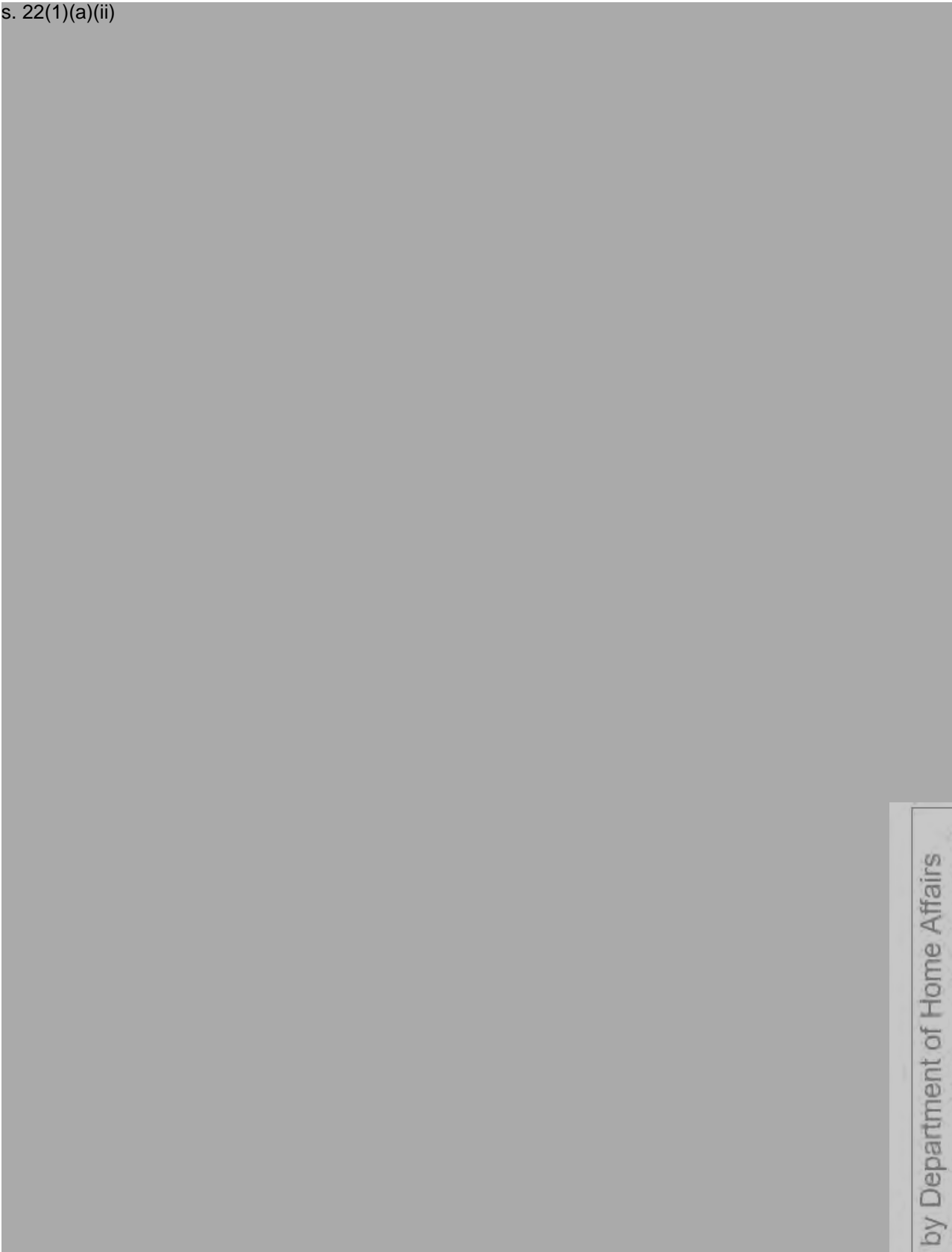
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CONSULTATION

Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee

Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee

ATTACHMENTS

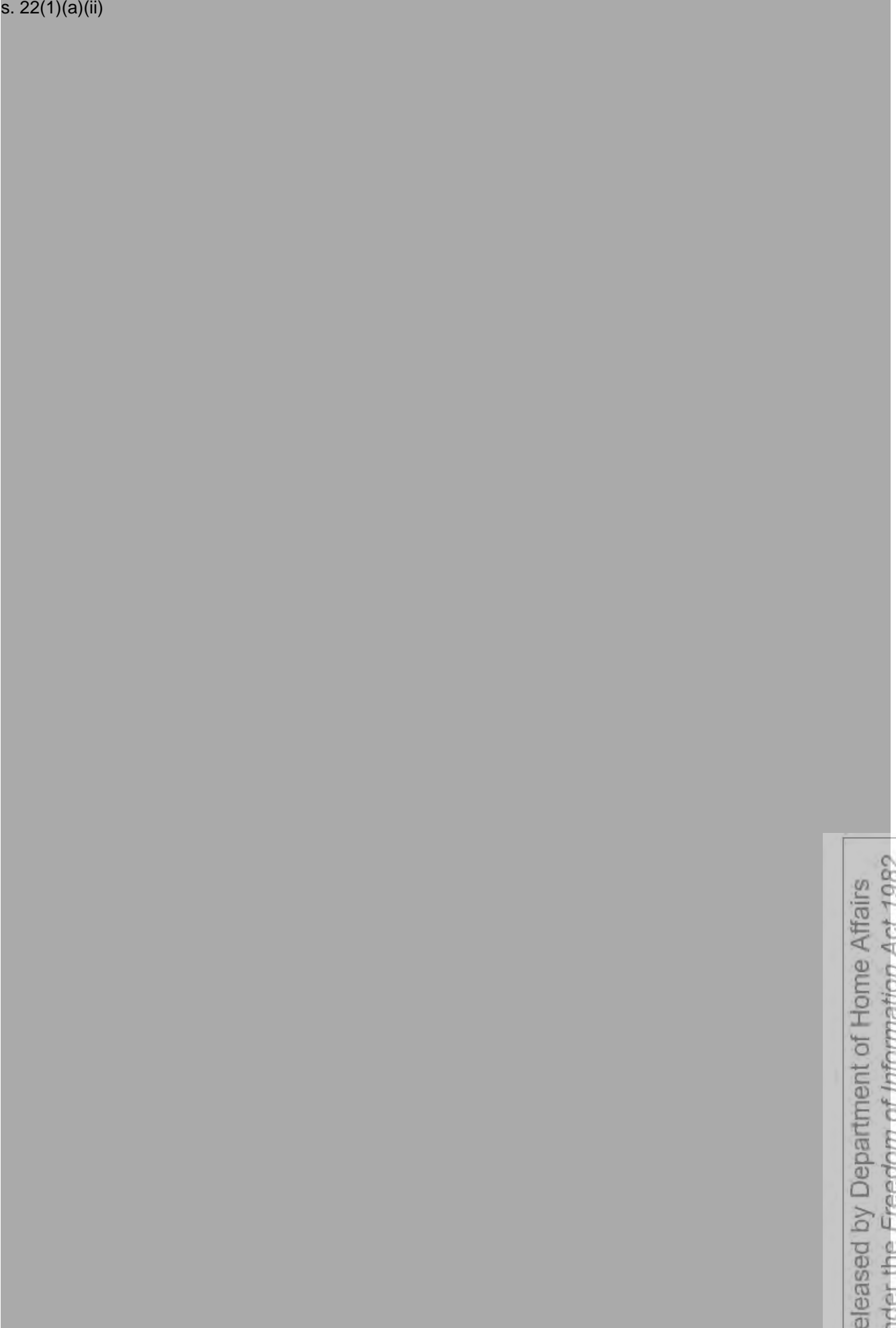
Attachment A: Extract: Guiding Principles of the *Australian Arrangement for Interstate Assistance*

Attachment B: Australian Arrangement for Interstate Assistance [2019 version]

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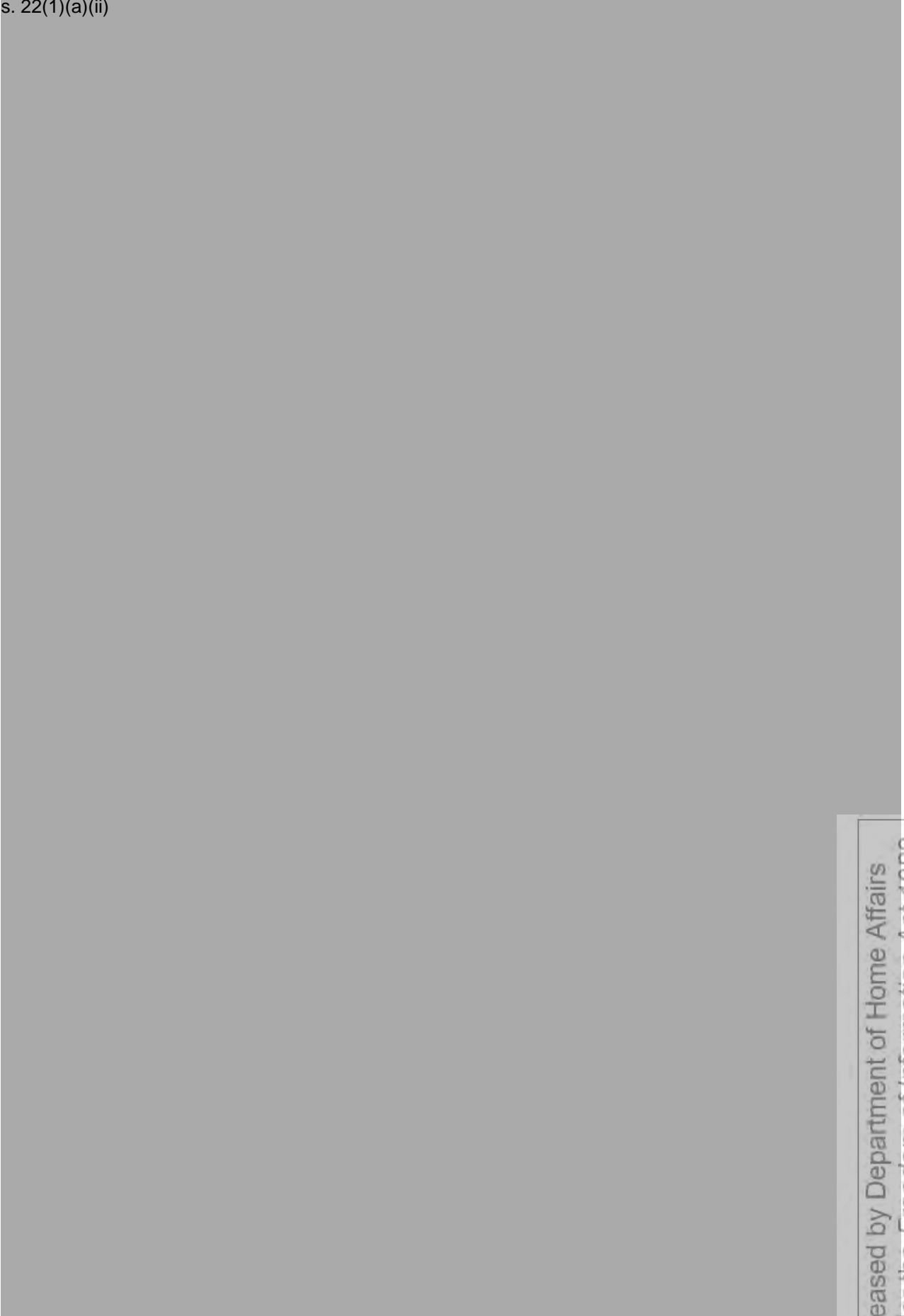
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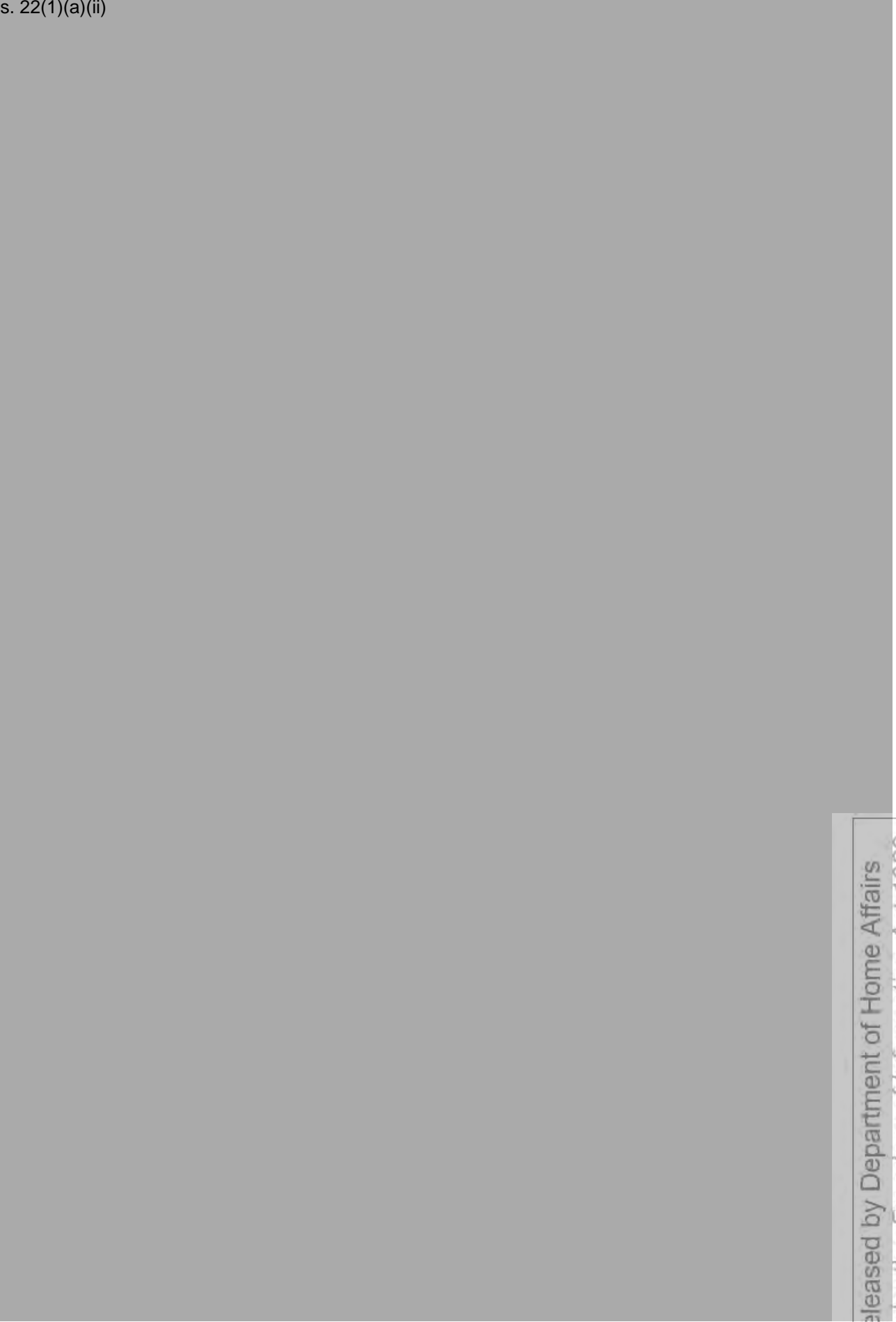
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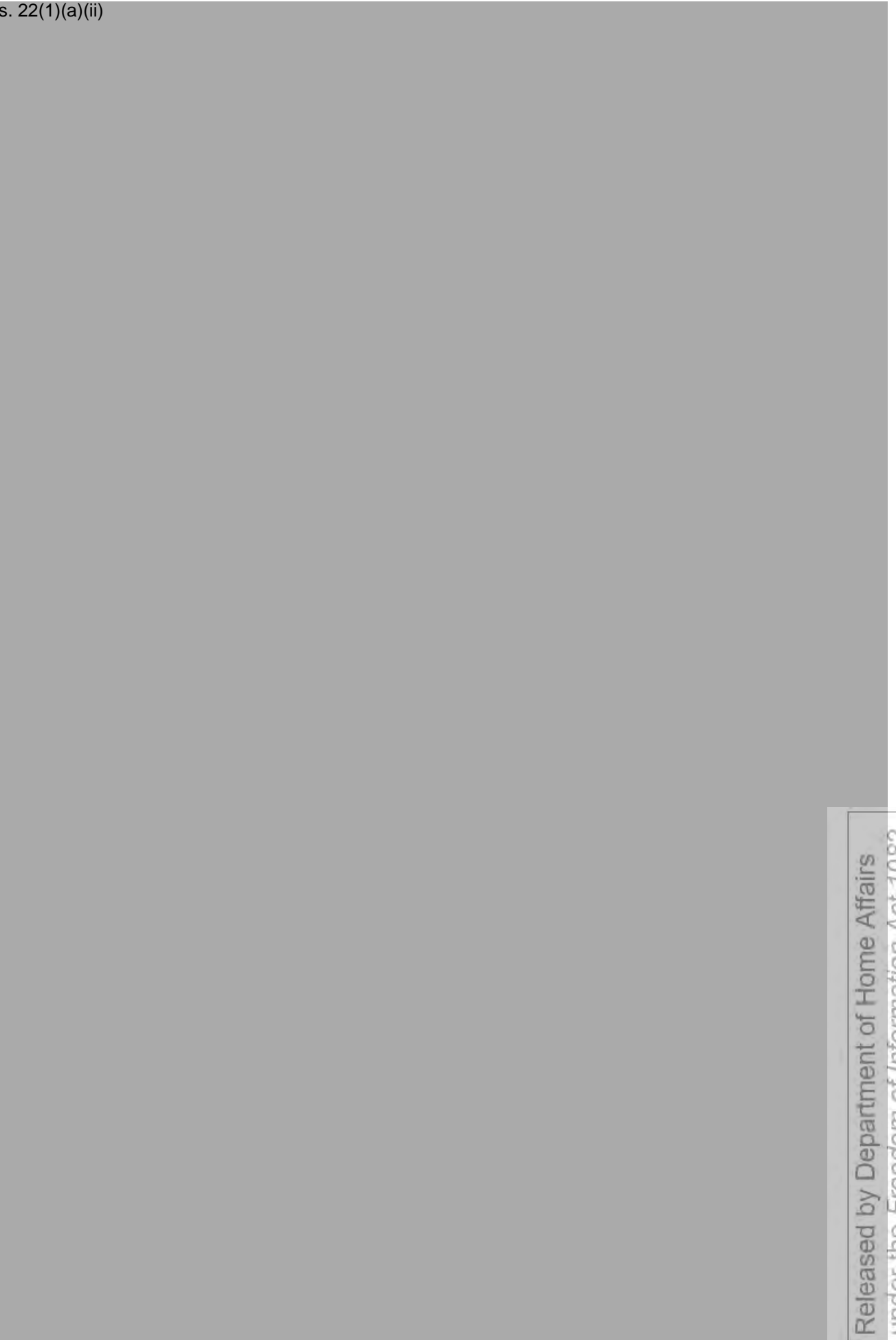
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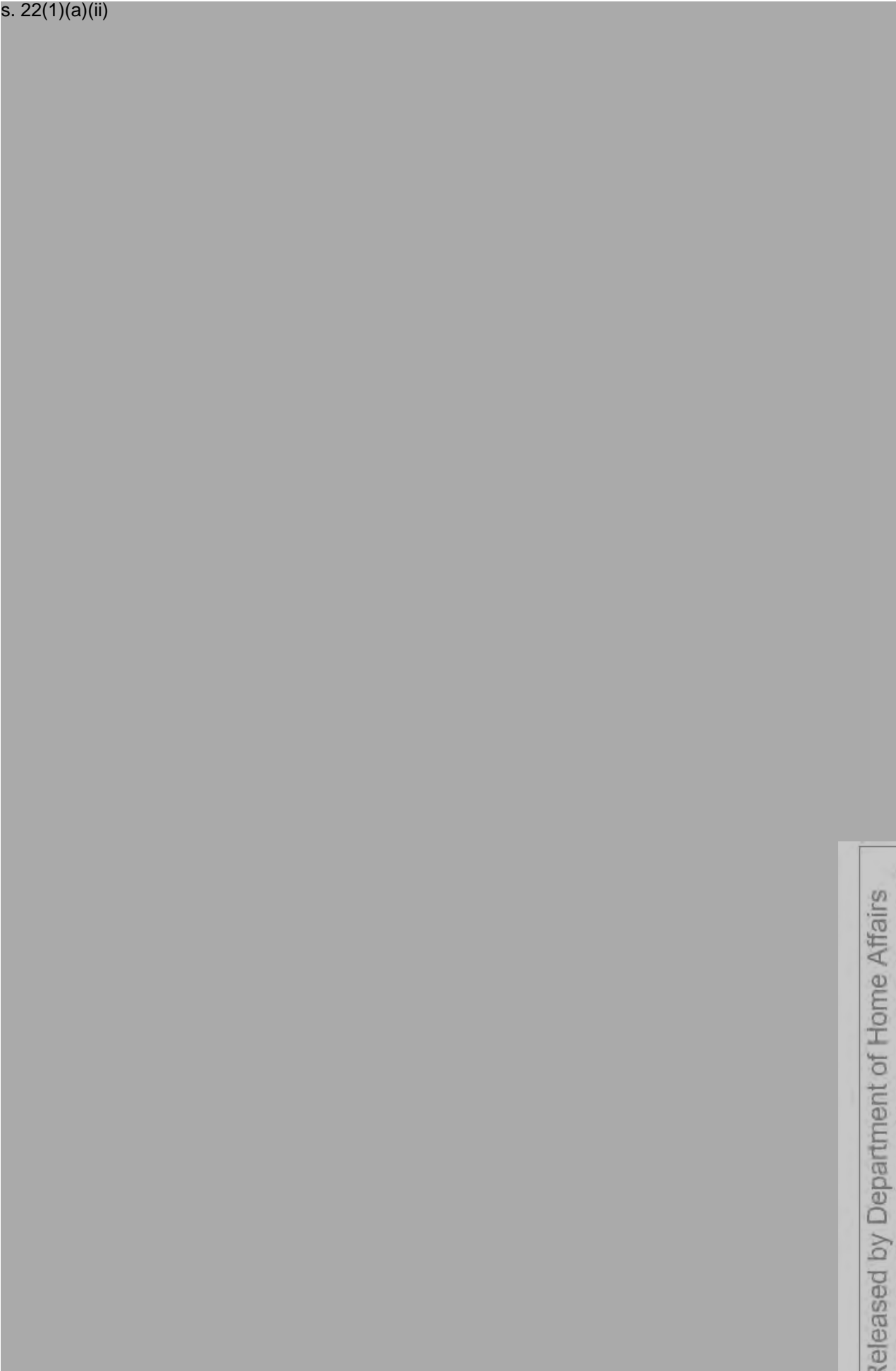
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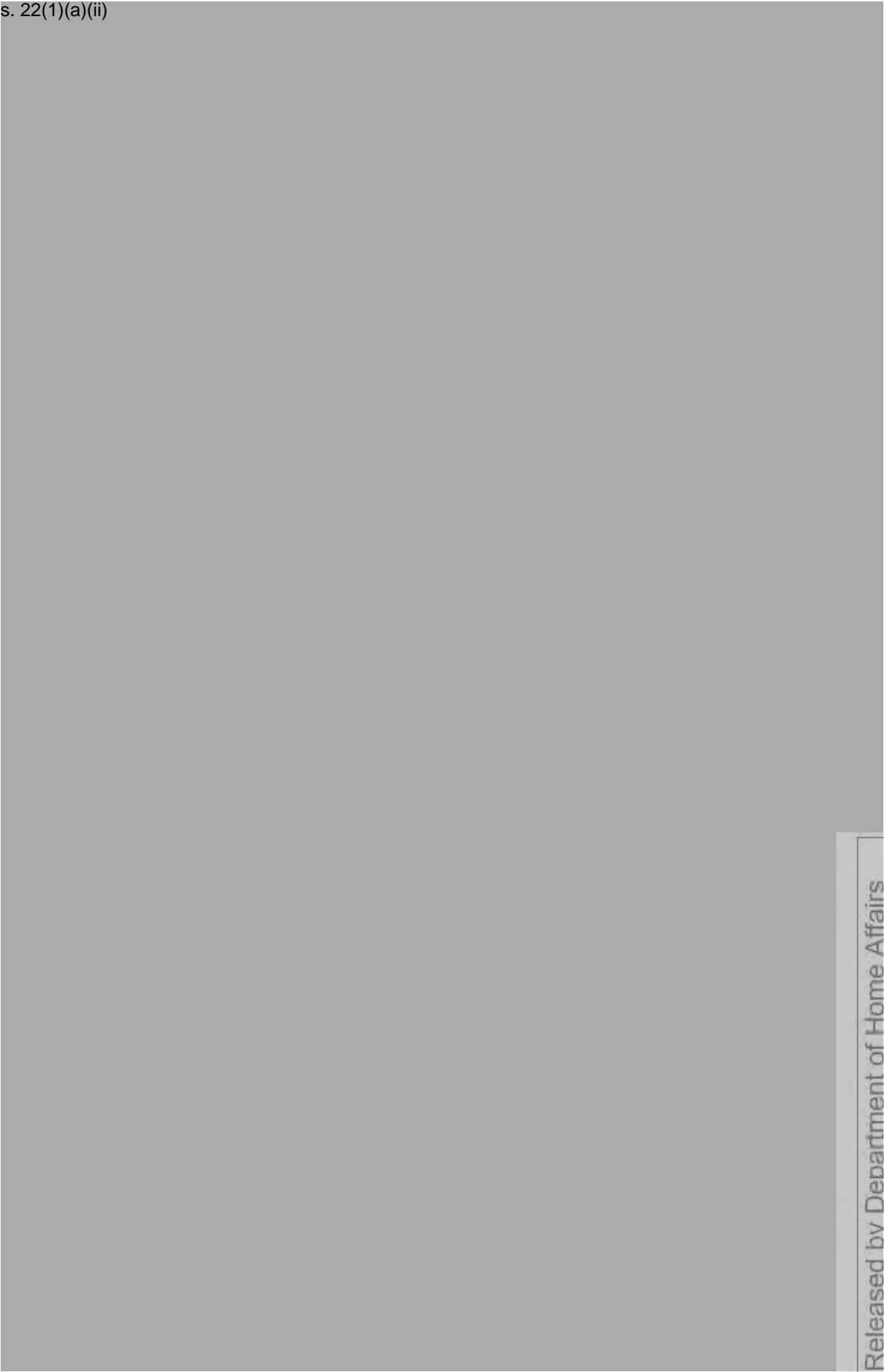
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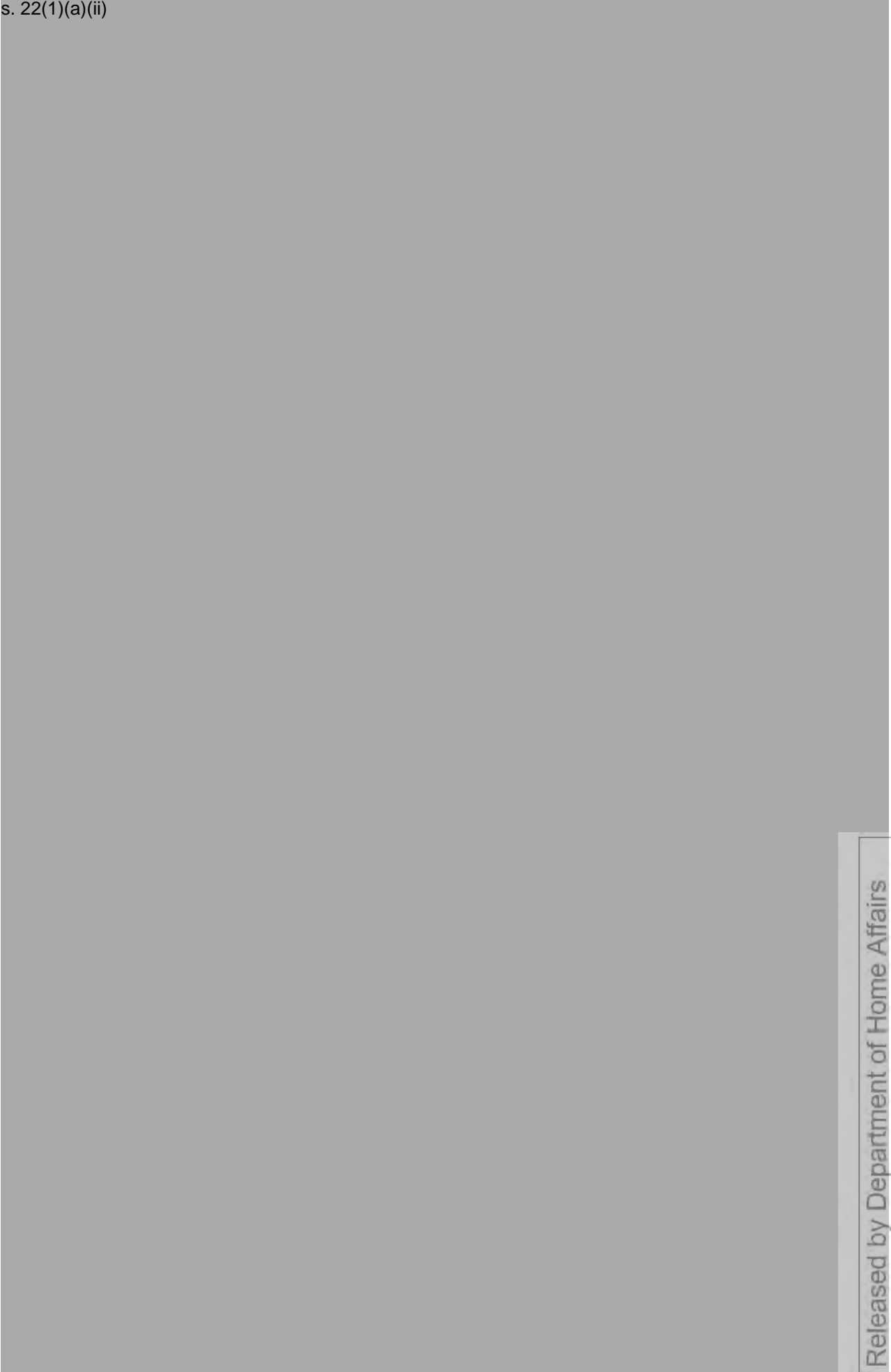
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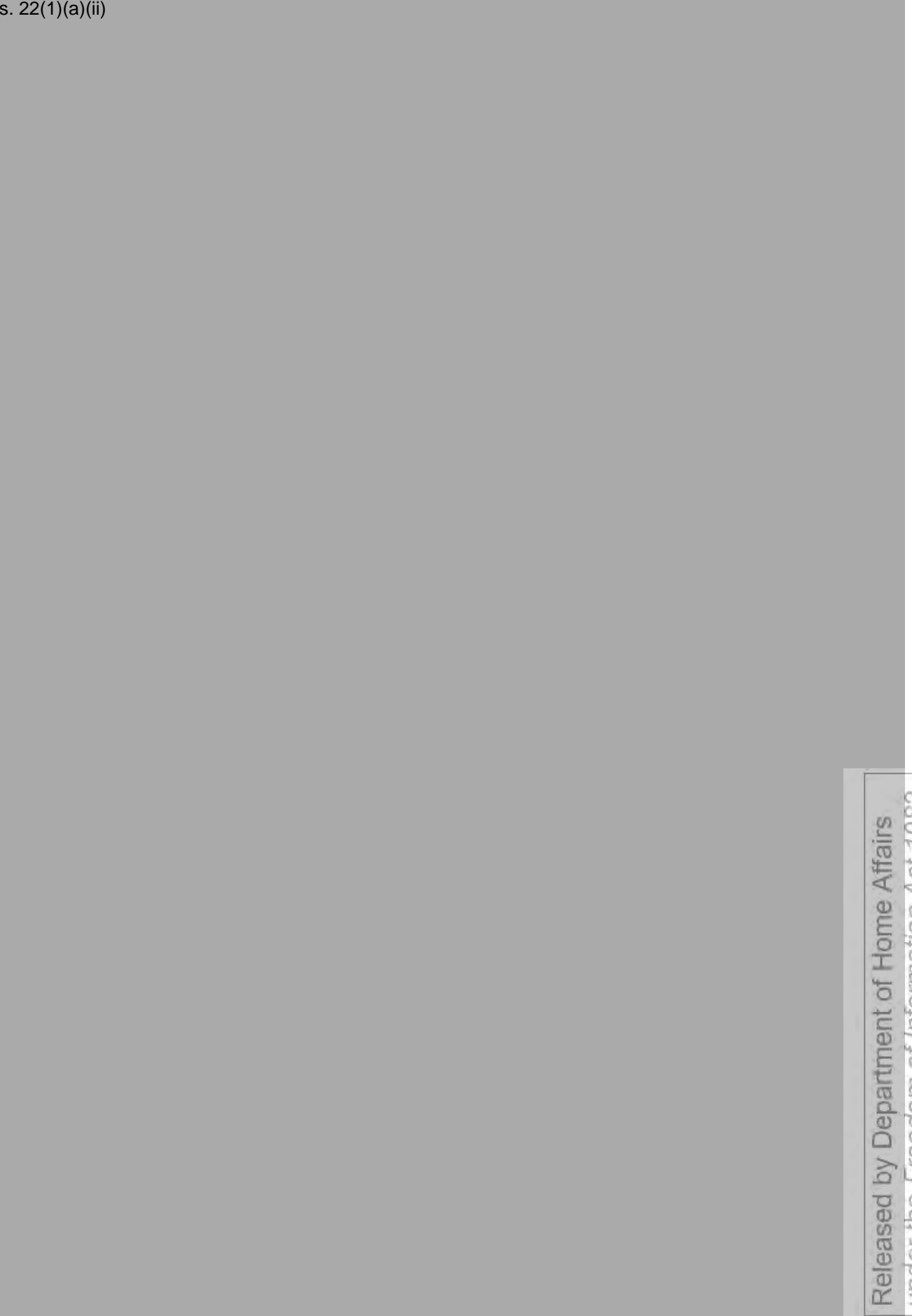
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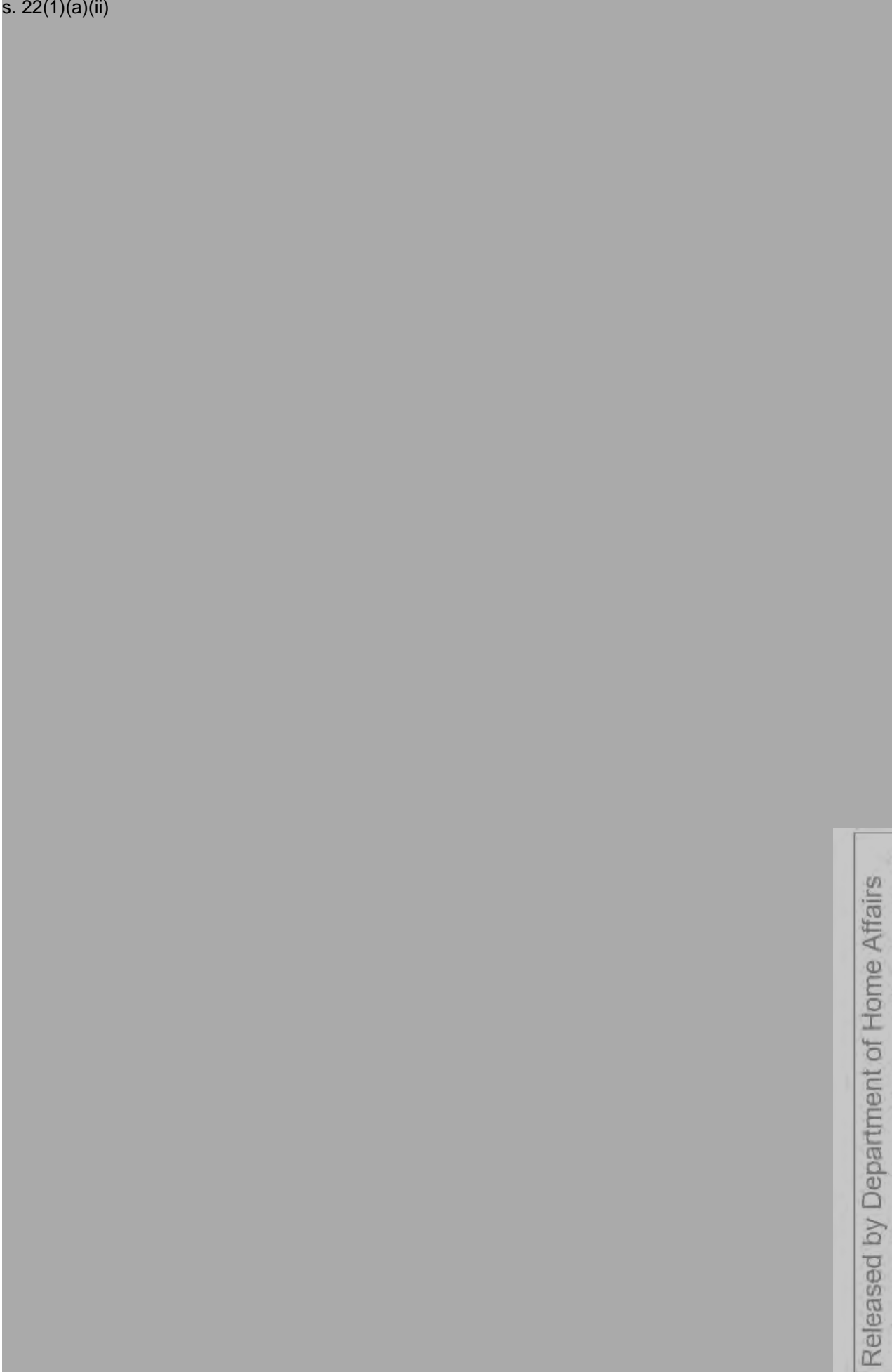
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Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

MEETING BRIEF

MINISTER: David Littleproud

ADVISERS: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Meeting with the Emergency Leaders for Climate Action
11:30am Tuesday 3 December 2019, Parliament House

Organisation

Emergency Leaders for Climate Action

Has the Minister met with this person/organisation in the past?

No

Purpose of Meeting

- Emergency Leaders for Climate Action will communicate concerns relating to the threat of climate change and the impact of worsening extreme weather events on emergency services and communities.
- The Australian Government is committed to reducing disaster risk and enhancing disaster preparedness, including through addressing the impacts of climate change.

Key Messages

- The climate is changing. The Australian Government takes its advice on climate science from the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO. In *State of the Climate 2018* they describe how the climate is changing, including that climate change is causing heatwaves, fire weather and drought to become more frequent and intense. Some rainfall events are also becoming more intense.
- These changes are affecting vulnerability to natural hazards, and changing exposure patterns.
- You [Minister Littleproud], the Prime Minister and other Ministers have been thoroughly briefed by current emergency management leaders, of the risks of the current fire season and the long term trends.
 - The Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management has met twice this year and considered the trends.
 - There is unity of effort to sustain current and future emergency responses through senior officials via the Australia New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) and the current Commissioners and Chiefs.
 - All relevant agencies also work together through the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC) including the National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC).
- AFAC advised on 19 November 2019 (**Attachment B**) that it is not practical or economically feasible for each jurisdiction to equip itself to meet all likely scenarios, with effective and efficient sharing of resources to meet surges in demand.
 - This is especially relevant in the case of aviation resources, which are in limited supply, specialised, expensive, but also mobile.
 - Current national capabilities have met previous requirements in past seasons, but you are conscious that fatigue from a long season, and concurrent incidents, will likely impact services.
- The CEO of AFAC has advised you that there are enough aerial firefighting assets at present, but the Government remains open to requests for further assistance, and you have committed to securing a sustainable budget footing for aerial firefighting.

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Reducing Disaster Risk

- The Australian Government is committed to reducing the risk and impacts of disasters on Australian communities.
 - Disasters are a product not only of being exposed to the hazard, but our ability to cope and endure. Reducing disaster risk is essential to increasing our resilience into the future.
 - The Government recognises the need for more coordinated and targeted action across jurisdictions and sectors to reduce disaster risk and losses.
- The Government:
 - has developed a *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework*, and has published decision making tools, to guide national action to address existing disaster risks and minimise new risks;
 - is investing \$130.5 million over five years from 2019-20 to deliver disaster risk reduction initiatives at the national, state and local levels;
 - is helping communities recover from disasters by investing in resilience through the joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, including:
 - i. a \$100 million Infrastructure Betterment Fund in Queensland following the floods earlier this year;
 - ii. \$27 million for community resilience programs, education and awareness initiatives, and improving flood mapping and warnings
 - iii. allowing states and territories to use the savings they generate from rebuilding essential public assets under the DRFA towards mitigation projects; and
 - iv. providing flexibility for states and territories to restore damaged assets to a more resilient standard.
 - has developed an *Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework for Severe to Catastrophic Disasters*, which provides guidance in understanding and developing capability requirements to prepare for, manage and recover from severe to catastrophic disasters.
- The Government has also established an Emergency Response Fund.
 - Up to \$150 million will be available each year, if the Government determines existing recovery programs are insufficient to meet the scale of the response required;
 - Up to \$50 million per year to build preparedness to future natural disasters, and build the long-term sustainability of communities that are at risk of being affected by a future natural disaster.
- EMA, in partnership with the states, is developing a new national disaster intelligence capability to capture, create, share and explain climate and disaster risk information.
 - A pilot project in the supply chain and freight sector is currently underway to demonstrate the benefits and feasibility of the new national capability.
 - In 2020 the capability will also support the development of authoritative climate and disaster risk scenarios and climate projections as well as initiatives to standardise information, data and modelling and risk tools.
 - Over the longer term, the capability will provide a knowledge brokerage function to assist multiple sectors and jurisdictions to understand and use the information.
- EMA held comprehensive pre-season preparedness briefings with each state and territory, which was a key lesson from the 2009 Black Saturday bushfire in Victoria, and with the private sector.

Aerial Firefighting

- Stuart Ellis (AFAC CEO) has advised you that there are enough aerial firefighting assets at present, but the Government remains open to requests for further assistance, and you have committed to securing a sustainable budget footing for aerial firefighting.
 - The Government has committed to providing \$14.98 million in 2019-20, and \$14.99 million in 2020-21
 - Last year, the Government made an additional one-off payment of \$11 million for aerial firefighting.
- In 2019-20, Australian Government funding will contribute to the lease of over 140 aircraft.
- The Government may also reimburse states and territories certain aerial firefighting costs under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. Such costs must be over and above the costs associated with the NAFC fleet.

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Background

Emergency Leaders for Climate Action

- Emergency Leaders for Climate Action is a project of the Climate Council.
 - Greg Mullins, a founding member of the Emergency Leaders for Climate Action group, is also a councillor with the Climate Council.
 - The group was established in 2019 and comprises 23 former senior Australian fire and emergency service leaders.
- The aim of the group is to communicate concerns around the seriousness of the threat of climate change and advocate for action to tackle climate change, prepare for worsening extreme weather events and advocate for resources for fire and emergency services.
- The group has released a statement calling for action by the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments. Actions called for at the national level include (at **Attachment C**):
 - meeting with a delegation of former emergency services leaders to hear their concerns about escalating climate change risks;
 - committing to a parliamentary inquiry into whether Australian emergency services are adequately resourced in the face of increasing natural disaster risks;
 - analysing current aerial firefighting arrangements and how strategic needs can be best met and funded in consultation with the National Aerial Firefighting Centre; and
 - ensuring continued funding for stakeholder-driven research into how we can respond to, mitigate and increase resilience to bushfires and other disaster risks.

Sensitivities

- There has been recent media coverage relating to the efforts of the Emergency Leaders for Climate Action group to meet with Prime Minister Scott Morrison and public scrutiny over perceived inaction.

s. 47C(1)

Climate Change and natural hazards

- Australia is projected to experience more extremes into the future and the disaster season is longer.
 - further increase in temperatures, with more extremely hot days and fewer extremely cool days;
 - continuing sea level rise;
 - a decrease in cool-season rainfall across many regions of southern Australia, with more time spent in drought;
 - more intense heavy rainfall throughout Australia, particularly for short-duration extreme rainfall events;
 - an increase in the number of high fire weather danger days and a longer fire season for southern and eastern Australia.
- There may be fewer tropical cyclones, but more high-intensity storms (*Source: Bureau of Meteorology/CSIRO, State of the Climate 2018, page 22*).
- Under the Paris Agreement the Australian Government has committed to reducing emissions by 26 to 28 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030.
 - Australia has a comprehensive suite of policies to meet emissions reduction commitments, encourage innovation and expand the clean energy sector.

- The *National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2015* contains a set of principles to guide effective adaptation across Australia, and outlines the different but complementary roles of the Australian, state and local governments.
 - The Australian Government's responsibilities are to provide access to national climate science and adaptation information to support government, business and communities in managing climate risks; and to manage the climate risks of Australian Government policies, programs and assets.
 - State and territory governments play a major role in mitigating against climate change risks. For example, state governments provide regulatory frameworks like land-use planning, and regional climate science and information.
 - Local governments manage climate change risks to the services, assets and infrastructure they control.

National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework

- The Framework was publicly released in April 2019 and was endorsed at the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management on 28 June 2019. The Framework sets the priority areas for the five years from 2019-2023 to address systemic disaster risk in all sectors.
- Implementing the Framework continues to be a priority. The Department of Home Affairs is working with states and territories as well as the private and community sectors to finalise a National Action Plan to implement it.

List of Attendees

- Mr Greg Mullins AO, Emergency Leaders for Climate Action; former Commissioner Fire & Rescue NSW, former President AFAC
- Mr Lee Johnson AFSM, Member of the Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC Board of Directors; former Commissioner Queensland Fire & Emergency Services, former AFAC President, Director on the Board of National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC)
- Mr Mike Brown AM, AFSM; former Chief Officer Tasmania Fire Service, former Chair of NAFC
- Mr Ewan Waller AFSM; former Chief Fire Officer, Victorian Department of Water, Environment, Land and Planning

Clearance

Clearance officer: Robert Cameron, Director General Emergency Management Australia Phone: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) Date: 26 November 2019	Contact officer: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) Acting Assistant Secretary Disaster Risk Reduction Branch Division: Emergency Management Australia Branch: Disaster Risk Reduction Mobile Phone: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
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Attachments:

A: Biography

B: Letter dated 19 November 2019 from Stuart Ellis AM, Chief Executive Officer of AFAC, 'Response to the questions raised by the Minister on 17 November 2019'

C: Emergency Leaders for Climate Action group statement

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Attachment A: Biography



Name: Greg Mullins AO, AFSM

Title: Former Commissioner Fire & Rescue NSW, and Climate Councillor.

Organisation: Emergency Leaders for Climate Action

Brief work history: After starting as a bushfire brigade volunteer in 1972, Greg Mullins became a full time firefighter with NSW Fire Brigades in 1978. In 2003 he was appointed both Chief Fire Officer and CEO (Commissioner) of NSW Fire Brigades (now Fire & Rescue NSW). Mr Mullins retired in 2019 as the second longest serving chief in the organisation's history. Upon retirement, he re-joined the volunteer bushfire brigade where he started in 1972, and Chair of the NSW Ambulance Service Advisory Board. In 2018 Mr Mullins was invited to become a councillor with the Climate Council and in 2019 formed Emergency Leaders for Climate Action together with 22 other former fire and emergency chiefs.

Mr Mullins worked with bushfire fighting authorities in the USA, Canada, France and Spain during a Churchill Fellowship in 1995, studied at the US National Fire Academy in 2001-02, and represented Australian emergency services at many international forums.

Personal details: Awards include Officer of the Order of Australia, Australian Fire Service Medal, Commissioner's Commendation for Courageous Action (rescue during 1994 bushfires), Chief Officer's Commendation, NSW Police Commissioner's Commendation for Service, St Johns Ambulance Emergency Services Award.



Name: Lee Johnson AFSM

Title: Director Bushfire & Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (BNHCRC), former Commissioner Queensland Fire & emergency Services,

Organisation: Emergency Leaders for Climate Action

Brief Work History: Lee is the former Commissioner of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and throughout his career has held firefighting, officer and management positions throughout Queensland. Lee is a former President of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) and a former Director on the Board of the National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC). Lee currently serves as a Director of the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (BNHCRC) Lee also currently sits on the Advisory Board for Locatrix, a company specialising in delivering Emergency and Safety training, including Emergency Preparedness.

Lee was also involved in the establishment of Australia's urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability in conjunction with Fire and Rescue New South Wales and Emergency Management Australia.

Personal Details: Lee is a Fellow of the Institution of Fire Engineers (FIFireE) and was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM).

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Name: Mike Brown, AM, AFSM

Title: Former Chief Officer Tasmania Fire Service

Organisation: Emergency Leaders for Climate Action

Brief Work History: Mike worked with Tasmania Fire Service for 39 years in roles ranging from operations, brigade management, district and regional management and Chief Operating Officer and Chair of the State Fire Commission. At a national level, Mike has also served as a Director on the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC), Chair of the National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) and as the Deputy President of the Australasian Road Rescue Organisation. Mike now undertakes limited consultancy work in partnership with a Tasmanian consultancy company.

Personal Details (if known): Mike holds a Bachelor of Science in Emergency Management / Crisis from Charles Sturt University and is a member of the institution of Fire Engineers. He has also completed the Executive Fire Officer Program run by the United States Fire Administration and has been a White Ribbon Ambassador since 2014.

Mike was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) in 2009 and was recognised as a member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2017 for significant service to the community of Tasmania through fire and emergency management. Mike was also awarded Tasmanian Fire Service Volunteer Medal (2011) and National Medal (2nd clasp, 2012) for recognition of long and diligent service by members of recognised government and voluntary services.

[No photo available]

Name: Ewan Waller AFSM

Title: Former Chief Fire Officer, Victorian Department of Water, Environment, Land and Planning

Organisation: Emergency Leaders for Climate Action

Brief Work History: Ewan served as Chief Fire Officer for the Department of Water, Environment, Land and Planning (formerly the Department of Sustainability and Environment) from 2005-2012. Ewan then served as a Director Glenloch Management Services offering general consulting from 2012-2014 before becoming self-employed. Ewan has over 40 years of experience in land, forest and bushfire management consulting, having advised state governments, agencies and companies across Australia on strategic and practical approaches to reducing bushfire risk. Areas of expertise include land use planning, management and conservation of natural values.

Personal Details: Ewan has a Bachelor's degree in Forestry from the University of Melbourne and was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM).

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Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Submission

For information

PDMS Ref. Number MS19-004139

Date of Clearance: 20/12/2019

To Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management

Subject APS Responsibilities for Managing Climate and Disaster Risk

Timing At your convenience

Recommendations

That you:

1. note the *Australian Public Service responsibilities for managing climate and disaster risk statement* (**Attachment A** refers); and noted / please discuss
2. note that the Department of Home Affairs will commence an internal examination of climate and disaster risk to ensure compliance with responsibilities. noted / please discuss

Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management

Signature

Date: 6/1/20

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Minister's Comments				
Rejected Yes/No	Timely Yes/No	Relevance <input type="checkbox"/> Highly relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Significantly relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant	Length <input type="checkbox"/> Too long <input type="checkbox"/> Right length <input type="checkbox"/> Too brief	Quality Poor 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Excellent Comments:

Key Issues

1. Climate risk management is gaining momentum across private and public sectors in Australia and internationally. There is legal opinion, and growing pressure from regulators and shareholders, for businesses to disclose and manage climate-related risks, including the physical risks posed by natural hazards.
2. Similar obligations exist in the Australian Public Service to understand and appropriately manage climate and disaster risks where they are relevant to Australian Government policies, programs and operations.

s. 42(1)

4. s. 42(1) the Australian Public Service responsibilities for managing climate and disaster risk statement (the Statement, at **Attachment A**) sets out simple and consistent expectations for Australian Public Service officials in managing climate and disaster risk.

- Secretaries agreed to circulate the Statement internally within each department at the 4 December 2019 Secretaries' Board Meeting, and agreed that relevant ministers should be briefed on the Statement.

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s. 34(3)

- Adoption of the Statement across the Australian Public Service provides a significant opportunity to progress the Framework's implementation by promoting action to understand and address climate and disaster risk within Australian Government policies, programs and operations.
6. Emergency Management Australia leads the Department's work across multiple sectors and jurisdictions to promote climate and disaster risk reduction work, and encourages entities to better understand the risks associated with climate change. However, a comprehensive assessment of the risks and opportunities associated with climate change and disasters has not taken place within the Department itself. We intend to scope this work in the next few months and will advise you further.

Background

7. In 2018, the Department of the Environment and Energy released *Climate Compass*, a framework designed to help manage the risks from the changing climate to policies, programs and asset management. The Department of Home Affairs would use this tool to assess its own risks.
8. A number of Australian Government agencies have begun assessing their climate and disaster risks, including the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, the Department of Defence and the Department of Health.
9. The Department of Defence recently developed guidance material for climate adaption on the Defence estate with the Department of the Environment and Energy, CSIRO and the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility. Lessons learnt from this process could be applicable to the Home Affairs portfolio and estate.

Consultation – internal/external

10. Nil

Consultation – Secretary

11. The Secretary was consulted on the approach in the submission.

Client service implications

12. Nil

Sensitivities

13. There has been recent media coverage surrounding the investigation into private sector management of climate related risks. The Government may be subject to public scrutiny if action is not taken within Departments and other government agencies to manage climate related risk.

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14. In accordance with our long standing practices, should you wish for unclassified media lines to be prepared in relation to this issue please contact the Home Affairs Media Coordination team – media@homeaffairs.gov.au.

Financial/systems/legislation/deregulation/media implications

15. Nil

Attachments

Attachment A *Australian Public Service responsibilities for managing climate and disaster risk statement*

Authorising Officer

Cleared by:

Robert Cameron
Director General, Emergency Management Australia
Security and Resilience Group
Department of Home Affairs

Date: 20 December 2019

Mob: S. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Contact Officer S. 22(1)(a)(ii), Acting Assistant Secretary, Disaster Risk Reduction Branch, Ph: S. 22(1)(a)(ii)

CC Secretary
Deputy Secretary Policy
Deputy Secretary Corporate and Enabling

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Australian Public Service responsibilities for managing climate and disaster risk Statement

Australian Public Service officials should consider climate risks and disaster risk where they intersect with officials' duties and obligations.

Climate and disaster risk

The changing climate

In the *State of the Climate 2018*, the CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology report that Australia is experiencing ongoing, long-term climate change, and has warmed by just over 1°C since 1910. In the future Australia is projected to experience further increases in sea and air temperatures, with more hot days and marine heatwaves, fewer cool extremes; further sea level rise and ocean acidification; and decreases in rainfall across southern Australia with more time in drought, but an increase in intense, heavy rainfall throughout Australia.

Australia is planning for and adapting to its changing climate.

Climate risk

Climate risk refers to risks that result from climate change and affect natural and human systems and regions. Climate risk is made up of two primary types of risk, physical and transitional, but also gives rise to secondary risks including liability and reputational risks.

- Physical risks are associated with the physical impacts of the changing climate. For example, direct impacts to the built environment from increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather, or more gradual changes like rising sea levels.
- Transition risks are associated with activities that may or may not occur in the process of adjusting towards a lower-emissions economy. For example, a movement towards a new mix of different types of energy generation can impact the value of assets in that sector.

These risks can be direct or indirect. An example of an indirect risk s. 47C(1)

Liability risks can arise when a person or entity may be held responsible for not acting sufficiently according to their duties on physical or transition risks.

A failure to adequately consider climate and disaster risks could have serious reputation impacts for agencies and government, such as if a major piece of infrastructure fails in extreme weather.

Disaster risk

Disaster risk is the potential loss of life, injury or destroyed or damaged assets that could occur to a system, society or community. It is a product of a hazard (a sudden event or shock); exposure (the people and things in the path of potential hazards), vulnerability (the potential for those people and things to be adversely impacted by a hazard) and capacity (the ability for those people and assets and systems to survive and adapt).

Climate change increases disaster risk in a number of ways, primarily by altering frequency and intensity of natural hazards, affecting vulnerability to natural hazards, and changing exposure patterns. Natural hazards are those such as bushfires, storms, floods, cyclones, and heatwaves. Not all natural hazards, such as earthquakes, are affected by climate risk.

The role of Australian Public Servants

Managing the physical impacts from the changing climate and meeting Australia's international obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions requires active management of climate and disaster risks, including by Australian Government agencies. There are three primary drivers for Australian Public Servants to understand and manage climate and disaster risks.

1. Government mandate to consider climate and disaster risks

In 2012, the Select Council for Climate Change, comprising Ministers from the Australian Government and all state and territory governments, [agreed on roles and responsibilities for climate change adaptation](#) in Australia. Under this agreement, the Australian Government is to:

- Manage climate risks to its assets, investments and infrastructure; including the delivery of critical government services.
- Support business and communities to manage their climate risks by providing appropriate national science and information.
- Provide leadership on national adaptation reform.
- Maintain a strong, flexible economy and well-targeted social safety net.

This role was reinforced in the Government's 2015 [National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy](#).

In 2019, the Australian Government agreed to a [National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework](#) outlining foundational actions to be taken across all sectors to address existing disaster risk, minimise creation of new risk, and deliver improved climate and disaster risk information to those who need it.

s. 42(1)

3. Driving better policy outcomes through addressing climate and disaster risk

The benefits of considering and addressing climate and disaster risks extend beyond avoided impacts.

Considering climate and disaster risk in the same manner as all other relevant strategy and enterprise risks will help to ensure that policies, programs, and investments are fit for the future, and are likely to achieve more effective and efficient policy, strategic and investment outcomes.

Investing in climate and disaster risk reduction can reduce future costs and enable broader economic and social benefits to be realised. For example, investing in resilience of the built environment to climate and disaster risk can also help to deliver productivity and connectivity outcomes. Climate change can present new opportunities. For example, taking advantage of new market trends that may come with adjusting to a lower-emissions economy.

Enabling structures

Guidance for managing climate and disaster risks in the APS

The Australian Government Disaster and Climate Resilience Reference Group was established in 2015 to provide strategic direction for climate and disaster risk management and support cross-agency collaboration. The Group includes all Departments, the Bureau of Meteorology, Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation, and Geoscience Australia.

Managing climate and disaster risks requires all agencies to develop an understanding of the risks and build capability. The Resilience Reference Group is a forum to share, learn and collaborate on these issues. The Resilience Reference Group continues to work on activities to improve the guidance and support available for climate and disaster risk.

The *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* guides coordinated action across policy, program and investment decisions to limit the impact of natural hazards on communities and economies. Implementation of the Framework is progressed through the Resilience Reference Group.

Climate Compass: A climate risk management framework for Commonwealth agencies was endorsed by the Resilience Reference Group in 2018. *Climate Compass* provides guidance to agencies on identifying and managing climate risks from a strategic through to operational level.

The Department of Home Affairs developed a set of *Guidance for Strategic Decisions on Climate and Disaster Risk* to support implementation of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework.

Further information and advice

The Department of the Environment and Energy can provide advice on climate-related risks.

Contact: s. 47E(d) [@environment.gov.au](mailto:s.47E(d)@environment.gov.au)

The Department of Home Affairs can provide advice on disaster risks.

Contact: s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.47E(d)@homeaffairs.gov.au)

Endorsement

This statement was endorsed by the **Australian Government Disaster and Climate Resilience Reference Group** on 6 March 2019 and noted by the **Secretaries Board** on [6 November 2019].