

COMMUNIQUÉ

Emergency management ministerial meeting

4 December 2020

An emergency management ministerial meeting was held on 4 December 2020. Emergency management ministers and nominated senior official proxies from Australian, state and territory governments, the New Zealand government, and the Australian Local Government Association, participated in the meeting.

The Hon David Littleproud MP, Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management chaired the meeting.

The meeting focused on the national preparedness posture for the upcoming high risk weather season and associated nationally-significant preparedness activities. Ministers also discussed the *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements* (the Royal Commission) Report and other government reviews into the 2019-20 bushfires.

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Preparedness posture for the 2020-21 high risk weather season

The Hon David Littleproud MP, Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, facilitated a discussion at the emergency management ministerial meeting on the national preparedness posture and discussed national and state and territory plans for the current season.

The Australian Government is proactively working with state and territory governments, industry and the private sector to confirm preparedness arrangements ahead of the high risk weather season, with additional consideration to COVID-19 restrictions and state and territory borders.

Aerial capability

The Western Australian Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Francis Logan MLA, noted an increase of tropical cyclones and wet weather for the north coast of Western Australia. Minister Logan noted that the Western Australian Government would like to request that a heavy lift aircraft is pre-positioned. The Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, the Hon David Littleproud MP, agreed to facilitate with the Australian Defence Force assistance, with a pathway for the approval of heavy lift aircraft into Western Australia for this season.

Hazard reduction cooperation

Ministers noted the importance of information sharing to inform a nationally consistent picture of bushfire hazard and risk reduction, and agreed-in-principle to the sharing of hazard reduction information through the National Bushfire Intelligence Capability, and that it be based on the principles of data sharing as senior officials work through the detail of this item.

National emergency management recovery priorities

Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Review

Ministers agreed to trial a new streamlined process for activating community recovery assistance under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements during the 2020-21 high-risk weather season. The new process will ensure that assistance can be activated in a more appropriate and timely manner following a disaster.

Interim National Recovery Framework

Ministers agreed to the interim National Recovery Framework and its use as a guidance document for any national recovery interventions, should they be required in the 2020/2021 disaster season.

This agreement will remain in place until 30 September 2021, or until it is finalised and reflects relevant agreed recommendations from the Royal Commission and other jurisdictional reviews and inquiries.

This interim Framework provides principle guidance and outlines the extant arrangements for national recovery governance and coordination arrangements for disaster events of national consequence. Its intended audience includes senior officials and emergency management officials, and recovery practitioners nationally.

Verbal update on the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements final report and other inquiries

Ministers discussed the Australian Government and state and territory government positions on recommendations of the Royal Commission. Ministers agreed to continue to work together to implement recommendations, noting the need for further consultation.

Ministers extended their thanks to Commissioners, Fire Chiefs and emergency services for their exceptional service and dedication to their work during the past year.