

Submission to Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response Discussion Paper

This submission aims to provide some insights on the prevention of personal suffering for those living in parts of Australia that are prone to natural disasters.

Television footage of those fleeing their homes from fires and floods with little more than the clothes on their backs is overwhelming and distressing. It is heart wrenching for the families that are suffering through a natural disaster and its sequelae and, also, for the viewer who remains paralysed with helplessness.

For a family looking to relocate to an area prone to natural disaster, they should be able to access accurate information about the range, magnitude, and frequency of previous weather, geological, fire and other events. Given our changing climate, predictions about future potential natural disasters, including sea level rises, would be helpful for property purchasers.

Real estate agents are ideally placed to incorporate this information into glossy brochures and advertisements for every property they manage. Unfortunately, in my experience, some real estate agents are less than forthcoming when it comes to answering questions about flood risk, for example. It should be mandatory that relevant risk information is provided to every potential tenant or property purchaser. Such information is valuable in that it can mean the difference between a family living comfortably or losing all their possessions and perhaps, even their life.

The 2020 fires caused me, a distant online observer, incredible anguish to see that depth of human suffering. It has deeply concerned me that, not only did those people lose their homes and livelihoods, but they also lost all the paperwork and the technology needed to rebuild their lives.

For that reason, with my partner, we have recently launched an online document safe, Secure My Treasures. It is unique in Australia as it is secured with identity verification at every login. We built Secure My Treasures to encourage all Australians to be prepared for any unforeseen eventuality, and especially, natural disasters.

What's most important about Secure My Treasures is that everyone can upload their important documents and valuable information. If fleeing a natural disaster, our subscriber can download copies of all the information they need to kick start their life again, saving time, money and helping to reduce disruption and stress. If our subscriber is unable to access Secure My Treasures, they can nominate trustees to do so on their behalf.

We recommend that Australians living in natural disasters digitally store a copy of their passport identification pages, drivers' licence, birth certificates, copies of any item of sentimental value such as jewellery, photos and property titles, insurance policies etc.

We are committed to helping to keep our fellow Australians safe. We welcome any opportunity to further discuss any comments made in this submission.

Yours sincerely



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