



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister

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Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management

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REFORMS TO NATIONAL NATURAL DISASTER ARRANGEMENTS

The Australian Government is today announcing major reforms as part of our response to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.

The Royal Commission made 80 recommendations with over 50 involving the Commonwealth, and we intend to support every recommendation for which we are responsible:

- 14 recommendations directly targeted to the Australian Government;
- 23 recommendations specific to States and Territories;
- 41 recommendations that are shared between the Commonwealth and States and Territories;
- 2 recommendations specifically focussed on the Insurance Industry and the Australian Building Code Board.

In the face of the unprecedented 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfires, the Royal Commission made clear that there is a need for a genuinely national approach and a greater role for the Commonwealth to support states and territories to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters.

While the serious work to implement each and every recommendation in a timely manner will now be a priority for all governments, we are pleased to be announcing a package of Commonwealth measures which will enhance and strengthen our emergency response and recovery capacity as soon as possible.

The package includes a number of interlinked reforms and provides strong leadership on all hazards emergency management and natural disaster risk reduction.

We will introduce legislation to give the Australian Government the power to declare a national emergency to help mobilise Commonwealth resources and help tackle the challenges states and local communities may face.

National Cabinet has also agreed to establish a National Emergency Management Ministers Meeting which will be initially responsible for driving and coordinating implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations – in consultation with the range of responsible Ministers - and ultimately ensure that Australia is preparing for future disasters at the highest levels.

We will enhance and strengthen national coordination arrangements within Emergency Management Australia (EMA) to streamline requests for Australian Government assets to assist states and territories in their preparation and response to disasters.

In addition, the Royal Commission has identified the need for a new, dedicated National Resilience, Relief and Recovery Agency, and the government will now commence the necessary work to establish this new agency.

The new agency will initially incorporate the functions of the National Bushfire Recovery Agency, which we established in response to the Black Summer bushfires. It will also integrate the functions of the National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency, and the disaster recovery and risk reduction functions within the Department of Home Affairs.

Importantly, it will drive the reduction of natural disaster risk, enhance natural disaster resilience and ensure effective relief and recovery to all hazards.

We will also establish a Resilience Services function to provide enhanced climate and disaster risk information and services to meet the information needs of the enhanced Emergency Management Australia, and the proposed National Resilience, Relief and Recovery Agency.

The government thanks and commends the Royal Commission for its examination of the events leading up to, during and following the devastating Black Summer bushfires.

The Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission's report is available at:
<https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/pmc/national-approach-national-disasters>

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