

Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements- Western Australia's final response to the recommendations

Royal Commission Recommendation	WA Government Response	Comment
<p>Recommendation 3.1 Forum for ministers Australian, state and territory governments should restructure and reinvigorate ministerial forums with a view to enabling timely and informed strategic decision-making in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) long-term policy improvement in relation to natural disasters (2) national preparations for, and adaptation to, natural disasters, and (3) response to, and recovery from, natural disasters of national scale or consequence including, where appropriate, through the National Cabinet or equivalent intergovernmental leaders' body. 	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation and will work with the Australian and state and territory governments on this matter.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3.2 Establishment of an authoritative disaster advisory body Australian, state and territory governments should establish an authoritative advisory body to consolidate advice on strategic policy and relevant operational considerations for ministers in relation to natural disasters.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation, noting that rather than establishing an additional advisory body, Western Australia sees value in strengthening and refocusing existing advisory bodies. This is consistent with the Australian Government's response to this recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3.3 Revise COMDISPLAN The Australian Government should revise the COMDISPLAN thresholds to provide that a request for Australian Government assistance, including Defence assistance, is able to be made by a state or territory government when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) it has exhausted, or is 'likely to exhaust', all government, community and commercial resources (2) it cannot mobilise its own resources (or community and commercial resources) in time, or (3) the Australian Government has a capability that the state or territory does not have. 	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes this recommendation and that this is a matter for the Australian Government.</p> <p>Western Australia supports the Australian Government clarifying and lowering the thresholds for the provision of Australian Government assistance.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 3.4 Integrating disaster management of the Australian Government Australian Government agencies should work together across all phases of disaster management.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes this recommendation and that this is a matter for the Australian Government.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3.5 Establishing a standing resilience and recovery entity The Australian Government should establish a standing entity that will enhance national natural disaster resilience and recovery, focused on long-term disaster risk reduction.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes this recommendation and that this is a matter for the Australian Government.</p> <p>The Western Australian Government emphasises the Royal Commission's acknowledgement that states and territories are responsible for responding to and recovering from natural disasters. Any arrangements the new entity considers putting in place in relation to resilience and recovery, which impacts states and territories, should be done in consultation with and the agreement of the states and territories.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3.6 Enhanced national preparedness and response entity The Australian Government should enhance national preparedness for, and response to, natural disasters, building on the responsibilities of Emergency Management Australia, to include facilitating resource sharing decisions of governments and stress testing national disaster plans.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes this recommendation and that this is a matter for the Australian Government.</p> <p>The Western Australian Government agrees with the Royal Commission's unequivocal statement that states and territories must be able to coordinate and direct their own resources. Any departure from this could deliver suboptimal outcomes to the community. Any arrangements Emergency Management Australia considers putting in place in relation to resource sharing must be done in consultation with, and the agreement of, the states and territories which have the operational expertise in and statutory responsibility for emergency management.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 4.1 National disaster risk information Australian, state and territory governments should prioritise the implementation of harmonised data governance and national data standards.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation.</p> <p>Western Australia notes that the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council already have a national data standard for recording of Incident Information (Australian Incident Reporting System - AIRS), which can form the foundation for this work.</p> <p>As with this and all the recommendations in Chapter 4 of the Royal Commission's report (outlined below), Western Australia acknowledges the value of access to data in emergency management but notes this is complex and resource intensive to achieve.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4.2 Common information platforms and shared technologies Australian, state and territory governments should create common information platforms and share technologies to enable collaboration in the production, analysis, access, and exchange of information, data and knowledge about climate and disaster risks.</p>	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>The Western Australian Government will continue to work with the Australian and other state and territory governments in the long term on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4.3 Implementation of the National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability Australian, state and territory governments should support the implementation of the National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability and aligned climate adaptation initiatives.</p>	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>The Western Australian Government will consider the intent of this recommendation in the long term noting this will be complex and resource intensive to achieve.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4.4 Features of the National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability The National Disaster Risk Information Services Capability should include tools and systems to support operational and strategic decision making, including integrated climate and disaster risk scenarios tailored to various needs of relevant industry sectors and end users.</p>	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government will consider the intent of this recommendation in the long term noting this will be complex and resource intensive to achieve.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 4.5 National climate projections Australian, state and territory governments should produce downscaled climate projections: (1) to inform the assessment of future natural disaster risk by relevant decision makers, including state and territory government agencies with planning and emergency management responsibilities (2) underpinned by an agreed common core set of climate trajectories and timelines, and (3) subject to regular review.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>A Climate Science Program is a key component of the recently released Western Australian Climate Policy. This program will provide downscaled regional climate change projections for Western Australia and enhance the understanding of climate risk and support disaster preparedness. Western Australia considers there are benefits to be achieved from the use of an agreed set of climate trajectories and timelines and the Australian Government should prioritise the development of agreed national climate trajectories and timelines. This would support better comparison and aggregation of risk assessments and analysis. Western Australia's specific climate science needs are not currently being met by national climate science programs.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4.6 Consistent impact data standards Australian, state and territory governments should work together to develop consistent data standards to measure disaster impact.</p>	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and will work with other state and territory governments on this recommendation.</p> <p>This recommendation is likely to have significant implementation timeframes, noting that the Western Australia bushfire sector is a diverse group of stakeholders with various data owners. It will take time to achieve a consistent data set within the State, which will be needed before considering any national alignment.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4.7 Collection and sharing of impact data Australian, state and territory governments should continue to develop a greater capacity to collect and share standardised and comprehensive natural disaster impact data.</p>	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and will work with other state and territory governments on this recommendation.</p> <p>The Western Australia bushfire sector is a diverse group of stakeholders with various data owners.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 5.1 Make provision for a declaration of a state of emergency The Australian Government should make provision, in legislation, for a declaration of a state of national emergency. The declaration should include the following components: (1) the ability for the Australian Government to make a public declaration to communicate the seriousness of a natural disaster (2) processes to mobilise and activate Australian Government agencies quickly to support states and territories to respond to and recover from a natural disaster, and (3) the power to take action without a state or territory request for assistance in clearly defined and limited circumstances.</p>	<p>Do not support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government acknowledges that the Australian Government has already implemented this recommendation.</p> <p>Western Australia has robust emergency management arrangements. Western Australia has previously expressed concerns with the application of a declaration of a state of national emergency and is currently seeking clarification from the Australian Government on how this will work in practice, with the objective of ensuring on the ground emergency response operations are not disrupted. This clarity is particularly important in an emergency, where it is imperative that time critical communications are coordinated and managed and that there is single source of truth/messaging.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6.1 Assessment of the capacity and capability of fire and emergency services in light of current and future natural disaster risk State and territory governments should have a structured process to regularly assess the capacity and capability requirements of fire and emergency services, in light of both current and future natural disaster risk.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation and notes that State agencies in Western Australia comply with this recommendation.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 6.2 A national register of fire and emergency services personnel and equipment Australian, state and territory governments should establish a national register of fire and emergency services personnel, equipment and aerial assets.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation noting that the Royal Commission has acknowledged this will not be a short term project.</p> <p>Western Australia will work with the Australian and other state and territory governments in the long term on this recommendation and notes that the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council commenced considering this matter prior to the Royal Commission recommendation.</p> <p>Maintaining volunteer information will be extremely difficult as their availability is unknown from day to day and is only accurate at a point in time. A significant amount of work is likely to be required to establish a system that is consistent with a national approach, works across relevant agencies, and is able to be maintained accurately.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6.3 Interoperable communications for fire and emergency services across jurisdictions State and territory governments should update and implement the National Framework to Improve Government Radio Communications Interoperability, or otherwise agree a new strategy, to achieve interoperable communications across jurisdictions.</p>	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>Achieving interoperable communications through implementing a new system is not supported, but rather through continuing the existing lower-cost approach the State already successfully uses. This involves having locally based equipment (configured to local radio networks) available to personnel deploying into the State from other jurisdictions for emergencies or major planned events. This approach has also been used successfully when Western Australian personnel deploy into other jurisdictions. It also reduces logistical risk if personnel have to be urgently recalled to their home jurisdiction.</p> <p>This approach addresses the intent of this recommendation, which considers Western Australia's geographical context. Whilst it may make sense to integrate systems between jurisdictions where there is a high degree of cross border activity, this is not the case for Western Australia. The Western Australian government suggests that a flexible approach to achieving communications interoperability is required and will work with the Australian and state and territory governments on this matter.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 6.4 Delivery of a Public Safety Mobile Broadband capability Australian, state and territory governments should expedite the delivery of a Public Safety Mobile Broadband capability.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and is committed to progressing the development of this important national capability, noting that the costs of the National Public Safety Mobile Broadband Roadmap are yet to be determined.</p> <p>Public Safety Mobile Broadband (PSMB) has been under consideration for more than a decade. Western Australia's position remains that the Commonwealth should provide the dedicated radiofrequency spectrum at no costs to States and Territories. This is based on the expected public benefit and the significant infrastructure-related costs States and Territories will incur in implementing PSMB, and that States and Territories will not be using the spectrum to generate revenue.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6.5 Multi-agency national-level exercises Australian, state and territory governments should conduct multi-agency, national-level exercises, not limited to cross-border jurisdictions. These exercises should, at a minimum: (1) assess national capacity, inform capability development and coordination in response to, and recovery from, natural disasters, and (2) use scenarios that stress current capabilities.</p>	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>This recommendation aligns with the Western Australian State Emergency Management Committee State Emergency Management Exercise Framework.</p> <p>Western Australia notes the timing and logistical arrangements for any national-level exercises should be carefully considered around high threat periods in various jurisdictions and not be overly resource intensive or onerous on jurisdictions.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6.6 Employment protections for fire and emergency services volunteers The Australian Government should consider whether employment protections under the <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> (Cth) are sufficient to ensure that fire and emergency services volunteers will not be discriminated against, disadvantaged or dismissed for reasons associated with their volunteer service during natural disasters.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes this recommendation and that this is a matter for the Australian Government.</p> <p>The <i>Emergency Management Act 2005</i> (WA) incorporates employment protection provisions for volunteers in Western Australia.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 7.1 Improve understanding of Australian Defence Force capabilities State and territory governments should take steps to ensure that there is better interaction, planning and ongoing understanding of Australian Defence Force capabilities and processes by state and territory fire and emergency service agencies and local governments.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation.</p> <p>As acknowledged by the Royal Commission, Western Australia already incorporates arrangements for requesting Australian Government assistance in its State Emergency Management Framework.</p> <p>Western Australia is geographically isolated, meaning it is more difficult to deploy east-coast assets to Western Australia in a timely manner during an emergency. Western Australia strongly supports the pre-positioning of Australian Government (ADF) resources. This is provided for under clause 2.4.2 of COMDISPLAN.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7.2 Review of Defence Assistance to the Civil Community manual The Australian Government should review the content of the Defence Assistance to the Civil Community manual to ensure consistency of language and application with a revised COMDISPLAN.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes this recommendation. It supports the Australian Government clarifying and lowering the thresholds for the provision of Australian Government assistance, which will assist the State to access appropriate assistance during an emergency.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7.3 Legal protections for Australian Defence Force members The Australian Government should afford appropriate legal protections from civil and criminal liability to Australian Defence Force members when conducting activities under an authorisation to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes that this is a matter for the Australian Government.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 8.1 A sovereign aerial firefighting capability Australian, state and territory governments should develop an Australian-based and registered national aerial firefighting capability, to be tasked according to greatest national need. This capability should include: (1) a modest, very large air tanker/large air tanker, and Type-1 helicopter capability, including supporting infrastructure, aircrew and aviation support personnel, and (2) any other aerial firefighting capabilities (e.g. Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), line-scanning, transport, and logistics) that would benefit from a nationally coordinated approach.</p>	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>This recommendation, however cannot be implemented without the Australian Government’s support and funding. Western Australia notes the Australian Government has not supported this recommendation.</p> <p>The Western Australian Government will continue to support the existing National Aerial Firefighting Centre arrangements and considers the existing arrangements work well and provide the required flexibility for Western Australia.</p> <p>A significant proportion of the current aerial firefighting capability used in Western Australia is Australian based.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8.2 Research and evaluation into aerial firefighting Australian, state and territory governments should support ongoing research and evaluation into aerial firefighting. This research and evaluation should include: (1) assessing the specific capability needs of states and territories, and (2) exploring the most effective aerial firefighting strategies.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation and will work with other state and territory governments on this recommendation.</p> <p>The Western Australian Government welcomes the Australian Government’s commitment to fund this research and evaluation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8.3 Developing the aerial firefighting industry’s capability Australian, state and territory governments should adopt procurement and contracting strategies that support and develop a broader Australian-based sovereign aerial firefighting industry.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation noting that a significant proportion of current aerial firefighting capability used in Western Australia is Australian based.</p> <p>Any contracting approach should be flexible enough to ensure that all appropriate and necessary aerial assets needed to meet emergency services needs are available, be it from within Australia or external.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 9.1 Supply chains – government review Australian, state and territory governments, in consultation with local governments and the private sector, should review supply chain risks, and consider options to ensure supply of essential goods in times of natural disasters.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and will work collaboratively with the Australian and other state and territory governments on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9.2 Comprehensive information State and territory governments should include road closure and opening information on all roads within their borders on public apps.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation but does not support its implementation in its entirety.</p> <p>Information on road closures/incidents is currently published and publicly available through the Main Roads Western Australia public website 'Travel Map' page. Information on this page is updated in real time and covers main roads and highways. The Travel Map is optimised for mobile viewing.</p> <p>Information in relation to the closure of local roads is not captured within this platform. There are 137 local governments in Western Australia many of which are remote and capturing real time and accurate information from all these sources is not practicable.</p> <p>Improvements to the provision of incident related road closures information will be explored in the next iteration of the EmergencyWA platform consistent with Western Australia's approach to continually review and improve emergency management.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9.3 Provision of information State and territory governments should provide information to the public on the closure and opening of roads. Information should be provided in real-time, or in advance based on predictions, where possible.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>As above in relation to recommendation 9.2.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 9.4 Collective awareness and mitigation of risks to critical infrastructure The Australian Government, working with state and territory governments and critical infrastructure operators, should lead a process to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) identify critical infrastructure (2) assess key risks to identified critical infrastructure from natural disasters of national scale or consequence (3) identify steps needed to mitigate these risks (4) identify steps to make the critical infrastructure more resilient, and (5) track achievement against an agreed plan. 	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>Western Australia notes the Australian Government supported this recommendation in principle, noting that an ‘all hazards’ approach to protecting critical infrastructure is already in place for many critical sectors, such as telecommunications.</p> <p>The Western Australian Government also supports this recommendation in principle, noting that the Australian Government’s Department of Home Affairs is currently leading reform of the <i>Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018</i> (Cth). Any implementation of Recommendation 9.4 should not duplicate these existing reforms.</p> <p>Western Australia will work with the Australian and state and territory governments on this matter.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9.5 Improving coordination arrangements between critical infrastructure sectors and with government The Australian Government should work with state and territory governments and critical infrastructure operators to improve information flows during and in response to natural disasters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) between critical infrastructure operators, and (2) between critical infrastructure operators and government. 	<p>Support</p>	<p>Western Australia supports this recommendation. Enhanced engagement between critical infrastructure sectors and government to improve information sharing before, during and after natural disasters is beneficial. However, the coordination of information flows should be led by states and territories who have existing relationships and protocols with critical infrastructure owners and operators in their jurisdictions. Therefore, the Western Australian Government will work collaboratively with the Australian and state and territory governments on this matter.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 10.1 Disaster education for individuals and communities State and territory governments should continue to deliver, evaluate and improve education and engagement programs aimed at promoting disaster resilience for individuals and communities.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation and advises that this is standard practice in Western Australia.</p> <p>Western Australia has an extensive range of community engagement initiatives and tools, which are evaluated and improved as necessary. Examples include the Bushfire Ready Program, which is focused on increasing community resilience and encourages residents to form a Bushfire Ready Group, supported by a trained Volunteer Bushfire Ready facilitator and local fire services personnel. Other examples include, the Fire Chat program and Australian- first My Bushfire Plan App, which encourages community resilience and the Burn Smart program, which is designed to assist property owners in planning and implementing planned burns. State agencies also conduct ongoing research with federal, state and local government stakeholders for a range of hazards, including earthquake, tropical cyclones, and storm surge. This research informs a range of public facing informational tools, such as preparedness guides, fact sheets and evacuation maps, all aimed at promoting disaster resilience for individuals and communities.</p> <p>Western Australia has seen a significant increase in course enrolments in training for emergency and response services.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11.1 Responsibility for local government disaster management capability and capacity State and territory governments should take responsibility for the capability and capacity of local governments to which they have delegated their responsibilities in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from natural disasters, to ensure local governments are able to effectively discharge the responsibilities devolved to them.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and advises that this occurs in practice in Western Australia.</p> <p>Local governments are integrated and embedded into the emergency management framework in Western Australia and have clear legislated functions. As a result, local governments are subject to certain State-level oversight and support arrangements in carrying out their functions under the State Emergency Management Framework and emergency management/services legislation.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 11.2 Resource sharing arrangements between local governments State and territory governments should review their arrangements for sharing resources between their local governments during natural disasters, including whether those arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) provide sufficient surge capacity, and (2) take into account all the risks that the state or territory may face during a natural disaster. 	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes the intent of this recommendation but does not support it in its entirety. Local governments should have the discretion to enter into arrangements they consider appropriate for their local context.</p> <p>The State will continue to support local governments in understanding risks and capability.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12.1 Roadside vegetation management State and territory governments, working with local governments and fire and emergency service agencies, should ensure that there are appropriate arrangements for roadside vegetation management that take into account, among other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) priority access and egress routes (2) road priority, utility and strategic value (3) cost, and (4) residual risk to national natural disasters. 	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>The Bushfire Risk Management Planning program is a local government focused program that is the primary mechanism for the identification of specific assets (human settlement, economic, cultural and environmental) and infrastructure at risk from bushfire across the State. This program incorporates a tenure blind process through which assets are identified and their bushfire risk assessed for appropriate treatment.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 12.2 Evacuation planning – Evacuation routes and seasonal populations State and territory governments should ensure that those responsible for evacuation planning periodically review those plans, and update them where appropriate, including in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) roles and responsibilities of state and territory governments, local governments and local communities (2) education and signage about evacuations and evacuation routes, including education of seasonal populations (3) the adequacy of evacuation routes; including contingencies if evacuation routes or centres are assessed as not being able to cope, and (4) the potential inability to evacuate, either by reason of circumstances or personal characteristics. 	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>The State Emergency Management Committee – Community Evacuation in Emergencies Guideline, which assists emergency management agencies in planning for and conducting community evacuations identifies many of the matters included in this recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12.3 Evacuation planning – Essential services and supplies State and territory governments should ensure that those responsible for evacuation planning periodically review those plans, and update them where appropriate, including in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) key risks that essential service outages have on communities during a severe or catastrophic natural disaster (particularly communications and power) (2) availability of essential supplies, including food and water, and (3) consequence management and compounding events such as the loss of essential services or health impacts. 	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation. Western Australia continually reviews emergency management arrangements in the context of continuous improvement and best practice.</p> <p>The State Emergency Management Committee – Community Evacuation in Emergencies Guideline, which assists emergency management agencies in planning for and conducting community evacuations identifies many of the matters noted in this recommendation.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 12.4 Sheltering terminology should be made nationally consistent State and territory governments should, as a priority, adopt nationally consistent terminology and functions for the different sheltering facilities, including evacuation centres, Neighbourhood Safer Places, places of last resort and natural disaster shelters.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation and will work with other state and territory governments on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12.5 National community education State and territory governments should provide further community education on the function and limitations of different sheltering facilities, including evacuation centres, Neighbourhood Safer Places, places of last resort and natural disaster shelters. This education should be nationally consistent.</p>	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation noting that nationally consistent education will only be achievable if nationally consistent terminology is used across jurisdictions.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12.6 Evacuation planning – Evacuation centres State and territory governments should ensure those responsible for evacuation planning periodically review these plans, and update them where appropriate, to account for the existence and standard of any evacuation centres and safer places (however described) in the community, including: (1) the capacity of a centre to handle seasonal population variation (2) the suitability of facilities to cater for diverse groups, including vulnerable people, and those evacuating with animals, and (3) the existence of communications facilities and alternate power sources.</p>	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and notes that in practice in Western Australia suitable municipal facilities identified as potential evacuation centres are reviewed annually against a standard checklist of requirements.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 12.7 Evacuation planning – Planning for evacuations across boundaries State and territory governments should ensure those responsible for evacuation planning periodically review those plans, and update where appropriate, to provide for coordination between states and territories in cross-border areas and to provide cross-border access to evacuation centres.</p>	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation noting there is minimal need for cross border planning in Western Australia.</p> <p>Western Australia continually reviews emergency management arrangements in the context of continuous improvement and will continue to make improvements where necessary.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13.1 Development and implementation of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System State and territory governments should expedite the development and implementation of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System. It should ensure that there is national consistency in the visual display of the AFDRS and action to be taken in response to each rating.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation.</p> <p>Western Australia is on track to Implement the Australian Fire Danger Rating System in 2022.</p> <p>Western Australia notes that successful implementation will require an extensive body of change management and communications work to be undertaken, which should not be compromised for the sake of implementing the system within a short timeframe. This could lead to significant risk if communities are not appropriately engaged and educated in relation to the new system.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13.2 Education on the Australian Fire Danger Rating System State and territory governments should deliver education to ensure that the public understands the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System ratings, the potential danger attached to each rating, and the action that should be taken in response to each rating.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation.</p> <p>The community education components of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System project in Western Australia include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - removal and replacement of local government roadside signs; and - a crucial two-year, State wide community education campaign to support the community to understand and apply the required behavioral changes.
<p>Recommendation 13.3 The Australian Warning System State and territory governments should urgently deliver and implement the all-hazard Australian Warning System.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 13.4 An education campaign on the Australian Warning System State and territory governments should ensure that the implementation of the Australian Warning System is accompanied by a carefully developed national education campaign that considers the needs of all Australians.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation, subject to resourcing.</p> <p>Western Australia is currently developing an AWS implementation plan to identify key stakeholders, change management strategies, communications strategies and risks associated with the project's rollout. This preliminary work has identified a number of strategies that will be required to reach different community groups including vulnerable people, people from CaLD communities and those for whom the current warning system is deeply entrenched. For example, the current cyclone warning system in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13.5 The development of national standards for mobile applications The Australian Government should facilitate state and territory governments working together to develop minimum national standards of information to be included in bushfire warnings apps.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australia Government supports this recommendation.</p> <p>The Western Australian Government will work with the Australian and state and territory governments on this matter, however, notes there are complexities associated with different emergency management/emergency services arrangements in jurisdictions which make reaching consensus on national standards difficult.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13.6 Exploring the development of a national, all-hazard warning app Australian, state and territory governments should continue to explore the feasibility of a national, all-hazard emergency warning app.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Governments supports the intent of this recommendation and will continue exploration of a national, all-hazard emergency warning app.</p> <p>Given the complexities involved with reaching national consensus around consistent data collection and aggregation, it is highly unlikely a national all-hazards app will be able to meet the unique needs of Western Australians in the short to medium term.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 14.1 Nationally consistent air quality information, health advice and interventions Australian, state and territory governments should: (1) develop close to real-time, nationally consistent air quality information, including consistent categorisation and public health advice (2) greater community education and guidance, and (3) targeted health advice to vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation noting that projects have begun across state jurisdictions that will contribute to nationally consistent modelling criteria and messaging for smoke from planned burns and bushfire.</p>
<p>Recommendation 14.2 National Air Quality Forecasting Capability Australian, state and territory governments should develop national air quality forecasting capabilities, which include broad coverage of population centres and apply to smoke and other airborne pollutants, such as dust and pollen, to predict plume behaviour.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and will work with the Australian and other state and territory governments on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15.1 Australian Medical Assistance Teams Australian, state and territory governments should review Australian Medical Assistance Team capabilities and procedures and develop necessary training, exercising and other arrangements to build capacity for domestic deployments.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation and notes that this is an area that requires urgent work.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15.2 Inclusion of primary care in disaster management Australian, state and territory governments should develop arrangements that facilitate greater inclusion of primary healthcare providers in disaster management, including: representation on relevant disaster committees and plans and providing training, education and other supports.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation in relation to including primary healthcare providers in emergency planning processes and already practices this.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 15.3 Prioritising mental health during and after natural disasters Australian, state and territory governments should refine arrangements to support localised planning and the delivery of appropriate mental health services following a natural disaster.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and notes that in practice state provided mental health services comply with this recommendation.</p> <p>Mental health services as part of the normal course of business can be scaled up if appropriate and as needed following a natural disaster event. In particular, funded services in the affected region are enhanced to meet an anticipated increase in demand.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15.4 Enhance health and mental health datasets Australian, state and territory governments should agree to: (1) develop consistent and compatible methods and metrics to measure health impacts related to natural disasters, including mental health, and (2) take steps to ensure the appropriate sharing of health and mental health datasets.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and will work with the Australian and other state and territory governments on this recommendation.</p> <p>Initially, the focus should be on currently available and collected data rather than new data sources.</p> <p>Significant resources would be required at a national level with state participation to ensure consistent and comparable methodologies and metrics are adopted to measure the impact of natural disasters on health.</p>
<p>Recommendation 16.1 Environmental data Australian, state and territory governments should ensure greater consistency and collaboration in the collation, storage, access and provision of data on the distribution and conservation status of Australian flora and fauna.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation noting that work has commenced in this area following the 2019-2020 fires in the eastern states. Western Australia is represented on the Wildlife and Bushfire Recovery Expert Panel and the Fire Response Coordination Group which are currently considering these matters.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Information Office (BIO) Data Repository has been established as a custodian and manager of the biodiversity data collected and used by the Western Australian biodiversity community.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 17.1 Public availability of fuel load management strategies Public land managers should clearly convey and make available to the public their fuel load management strategies, including the rationale behind them, as well as report annually on the implementation and outcomes of those strategies.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation noting in practice public land managers, such as the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, already report annually on fuel management activities.</p> <p>Western Australia is currently developing a State Bushfire Management Policy which will complement the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>Western Australia invested heavily in the creation of the Rural Fire Division within the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to increase the focus on bushfire management, particularly mitigation. There has never been a greater level of fuel load reduction and mitigation activity in Western Australia. This included the establishment of a Bushfire Centre of Excellence to ensure Western Australia has access to the best bushfire knowledge, training, technical expertise, science and research.</p>
<p>Recommendation 17.2 Assessment and approval processes for vegetation management, bushfire mitigation and hazard reduction Australian, state and territory governments should review the assessment and approval processes relating to vegetation management, bushfire mitigation and hazard reduction to: (1) ensure that there is clarity about the requirements and scope for landholders and land managers to undertake bushfire hazard reduction activities, and (2) minimise the time taken to undertake assessments and obtain approvals.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>In November 2020 Western Australia introduced the Bush Fire Risk Treatment Standards – Residential and Public Buildings which simplifies vegetation management requirements in given areas.</p> <p>State agencies have also assisted local governments with achieving efficiencies in issuing permits and fire break notices under relevant legislation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 17.3 Classification, recording and sharing of fuel load data Australian, state and territory governments should develop consistent processes for the classification, recording and sharing of fuel load data.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and will work with Australian and state and territory governments on this recommendation.</p>

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Royal Commission Recommendation	WA Government Response	Comment
<p>Recommendation 18.1 Indigenous land and fire management and natural disaster resilience Australian, state, territory and local governments should engage further with Traditional Owners to explore the relationship between Indigenous land and fire management and natural disaster resilience.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation and Indigenous land and fire management practices. Western Australia is implementing the first-of-its-kind Traditional Fire Burning Program at the Western Australian Bushfire Centre of Excellence, which was established as a part of the State Government’s emergency management reforms in 2018. This refocused DFES’ mission from primarily response to a holistic emergency management agency invested across all phases of preparedness, prevention, response and recovery.</p> <p>Western Australia continues to engage with Traditional Owners through practices such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Western Australian Government has delivered three rounds of Aboriginal Ranger Program funding across the State to ensure Traditional Owners are accessing country, learning or sharing skills to manage country and undertake programs of management - including bushfire risk mitigation activities. • The Western Australian Bushfire Centre of Excellence has employed a Traditional Fire Programs Coordinator and is developing a Traditional Fire Program and integrating traditional knowledge and cultural fire practices into training programs. • In the Kimberley and the western desert areas, Aboriginal communities working with State agencies maintain traditional burning practices assisted by modern technologies. • Western Australia has three Remote Aboriginal Community Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services Units located in Bidyadanga, Beagle Bay and Djarindjin. The volunteers play an integral role in protecting their local community and township, not only in operational response during an incident but also in mitigation activities to improve community resilience.

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Royal Commission Recommendation	WA Government Response	Comment
<p>Recommendation 18.2 Indigenous land and fire management and public land management Australian, state, territory and local governments should explore further opportunities to leverage Indigenous land and fire management insights, in the development, planning and execution of public land management activities.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation.</p> <p>As above in relation to recommendation 18.1.</p>
<p>Recommendation 19.1 Communication of natural hazard risk information to individuals State and territory governments should: (1) each have a process or mechanism in place to communicate natural hazard risk information to households (including prospective purchasers) in 'hazard prone' areas, and (2) work together, and with the Australian Government where appropriate, to explore the development of a national mechanism to do the same.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and notes that state agencies work with national bodies such as Geoscience Australia and the Bureau of Meteorology to develop tools and products to communicate natural hazard risk to households. This information is available to the public as a whole and does not specifically target prospective purchasers and is not specific to land-use planning and building regulation.</p> <p>The <i>Planning and Development Act 2005 (WA)</i> allows for the notifications on title for new lots created which allows for identification of hazards and are targeted at prospective purchases.</p>
<p>Recommendation 19.2 Guidance for insurer-recognised retrofitting and mitigation The insurance industry, as represented by the Insurance Council of Australia, working with state and territory governments and other relevant stakeholders, should produce and communicate to consumers clear guidance on individual-level natural hazard risk mitigation actions insurers will recognise in setting insurance premiums.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes this is a matter for the Insurance Council of Australia and will work with the Council as appropriate.</p>
<p>Recommendation 19.3 Mandatory consideration of natural disaster risk in land-use planning decisions State, territory and local governments should be required to consider present and future natural disaster risk when making land-use planning decisions for new developments.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation noting this occurs in practice in Western Australia through the requirements of <i>Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015</i>. In particular, bushfire risk is considered through the requirements in State Planning Policy 3.7 - Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas and Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 19.4 National Construction Code The Australian Building Codes Board, working with other bodies as appropriate, should:</p> <p>(1) assess the extent to which AS 3959:2018 Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas, and other relevant building standards, are effective in reducing risk from natural hazards to lives and property, and</p> <p>(2) conduct an evaluation as to whether the National Construction Code should be amended to specifically include, as an objective of the code, making buildings more resilient to natural hazards.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes this recommendation.</p> <p>Western Australia is of the view that the Australian Building Codes Board should consult with states and territories in relation to the work suggested by this recommendation. Western Australia, through its representation on the Australian Building Codes Board, will bring matters relevant to the Western Australian context to the attention of the Board to consider as part of this work.</p>
<p>Recommendation 20.1 Debris clean-up arrangements Governments should create and publish standing policy guidance on whether they will or will not assist to clean-up debris, including contaminated debris, resulting from natural hazards.</p>	<p>Support in Principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>An interagency Emergency Waste Management Working Group in Western Australia is considering among other related issues, the need to clarify roles and responsibilities for coordinating the removal of waste and debris from damaged properties. Western Australia will consider the findings of this Working Group in relation to this issue.</p>
<p>Recommendation 21.1 Arrangements for donated goods State and territory governments should develop and implement efficient and effective arrangements to:</p> <p>(1) educate the public about the challenges associated with donated goods, for example, the storage and distribution of donated goods, and</p> <p>(2) manage and coordinate donated goods to ensure offers of support are matched with need.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 21.2 Reform fundraising laws Australian, state and territory governments should create a single national scheme for the regulation of charitable fundraising.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and considers that better outcomes will be achieved by aiming for nationally consistent requirements rather than a national scheme.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 21.3 National coordination forums The Australian Government, through the mechanism of the proposed standing national recovery and resilience agency, should convene regular and ongoing national forums for charities, non-government organisations and volunteer groups, with a role in natural disaster recovery, with a view to continuous improvement of coordination of recovery support.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes this recommendation and that this is a matter for the Australian Government.</p>
<p>Recommendation 21.4 National recovery resource sharing arrangements Australian, state and territory governments should establish a national mechanism for sharing of trained and qualified recovery personnel and best practice during and following natural disasters.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation and will work with the Australian and state and territory governments on this matter.</p>
<p>Recommendation 21.5 National level recovery exercises Australian, state and territory governments should work together to develop a program for national level recovery exercises, building on the work currently underway through the Community Outcomes and Recovery Subcommittee of the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation and will work with the Australian and state and territory governments on this matter.</p>
<p>Recommendation 22.1 Evaluation of financial assistance measures to support recovery Australian, state and territory and local governments should evaluate the effectiveness of existing financial assistance measures to inform the development of a suite of pre-effective pre-determined recovery supports.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australia Government supports this recommendation and notes that this issue is being considered through the review of the current nationally-led Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. Western Australia supports the review. However, Western Australia is of the view that individual states and territories are best placed to determine the optimal application of assistance tailored to the local context.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 22.2 Appropriate sharing of personal information Australian, state and territory governments should ensure that personal information of individuals affected by a natural disaster is able to be appropriately shared between all levels of government, agencies, insurers, charities and organisations delivering recovery services, taking account of all necessary safeguards to ensure the sharing is only for recovery purposes.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation.</p> <p>The Western Australian Government has committed to introducing new whole-of-government privacy and responsible information sharing legislation for the State's public sector. Consideration will be given to this recommendation when developing the legislation.</p> <p>The <i>Emergency Management Act 2005 (WA)</i> also permits the disclosure of personal information for the purposes of emergency management in the event of a declared emergency situation or state of emergency in certain circumstances.</p>
<p>Recommendation 22.3 Review the thresholds and activation process for the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements In reviewing the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, Australian, state and territory governments should examine the small disaster criterion, and financial thresholds generally.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>Western Australia does not support the lowering of the current threshold and considers the current threshold appropriate for a natural disaster emergency event. Western Australia considers it would be of assistance to the community, and more appropriate, to review what losses can be considered as contributing to this threshold.</p> <p>Should this recommendation form part of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement review, Western Australia will work with the Australian and other state and territory governments on this matter.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 22.4 Nationally consistent Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements assistance measures Australian, state and territory and local governments should develop greater consistency in the financial support provided to individuals, small businesses and primary producers under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australia Government supports the review of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements however the overall objective to achieve equitable outcomes for people affected by disasters must be balanced by the need to ensure the arrangements are fit for purpose for each jurisdiction’s circumstances.</p> <p>Individual states and territories are best placed to determine the optimal application of assistance tailored to the local context. The ability of states and territories to assist communities should not be constrained by arrangements which may not be appropriate in other jurisdictions but are necessary in a state’s or territory’s specific context. For example, concessional interest rate loans to small businesses or primary producers whose assets have been significantly damaged as a direct result of the disaster are available in some states and territories, however in Western Australia this is not offered. Instead Western Australia provides access to interest rate subsidies on new borrowings.</p>
<p>Recommendation 22.5 Develop nationally consistent, pre-agreed recovery programs Australian, state and territory governments should expedite the development of pre-agreed recovery programs, including those that address social needs, such as legal assistance domestic violence, and also environmental recovery.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation and notes that pre-agreed recovery measures are currently being considered as part of the review of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.</p>
<p>Recommendation 22.6 Better incorporate ‘build back better’ within the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Australian, state and territory governments should incorporate the principle of ‘build back better’ more broadly into the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation and notes it has advocated for ‘build back better’ which will increase resilience to be better incorporated into the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 22.7 Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements recovery measures to facilitate resilience Australian, state and territory governments should broaden Category D of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements to encompass funding for recovery measures that are focused on resilience, including in circumstances which are not 'exceptional'.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports this recommendation.</p> <p>As above in relation to recommendation 22.6.</p>
<p>Recommendation 22.8 Streamline the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements processes Australian, state and territory governments should create simpler Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements application processes.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and notes that this matter is being considered as part of the current review of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.</p>
<p>Recommendation 24.1 Accountability and assurance mechanisms at the Australian Government level The Australian Government should establish accountability and assurance mechanisms to promote continuous improvement and best practice in natural disaster arrangements.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes that this is a matter for the Australian Government.</p> <p>Any arrangements the Australian Government establishes should be limited to accountability and assurance mechanisms applicable to Australian Government activities and not those of states and territories.</p>
<p>Recommendation 24.2 An independent accountability and assurance mechanism for each state and territory Each state and territory government should establish an independent accountability and assurance mechanism to promote continuous improvement and best practice in natural disaster arrangements.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government supports the intent of this recommendation and is already exploring opportunities for an improved assurance mechanism through Western Australia's State Emergency Management Committee.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 24.3 A public record of national significance The material published as part of this Royal Commission should remain available and accessible on a long-term basis for the benefit of individuals, communities, organisations, businesses and all levels of government.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>The Western Australian Government notes this recommendation and that this is a matter for the Australian Government.</p>