



**THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
ATTORNEY-GENERAL
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

MC12/12935

Mayor Felicity-ann Lewis
President
Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600

ALGA MAIL
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Dear Mayor Lewis

I refer to the correspondence from your predecessor, Ms Genia McCaffery, regarding resolutions passed at the 17-20 June 2012 National General Assembly of Local Government, that relate to emergency management. The resolutions and Australian Government response are set out below.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as the new President of the Australian Local Government Association. Furthermore, I wish to welcome you as the ALGA member of the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management (SCPEM), which comprises representatives from the three levels of government and drives important national initiatives in the emergency management space.

Resolution Number: 43

That the National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to work with relevant States and Territories and local governments to develop a nationally consistent framework for flood risk management.

There are currently a number of national initiatives progressing under the auspices of the SCPEM, consistent with the tenets of the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience, that contribute to a more holistic and nationally consistent approach to flood risk management across Australia. Work on the National Work Program for Flood Mapping is a notable example. Its ongoing implementation will improve the consistency and comparability of flood risk maps and, in turn, better inform decision-making.

SCPEM's adoption in November 2011 of the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG) as the nationally consistent methodology for future use by Australian governments to assess risk for priority hazards, is another important step. The NERAG aims to ensure consistency in the way in which risks are assessed and improve the consistency and rigour of emergency risk assessments undertaken across hazards and jurisdictions.

Also of interest, funding has recently been provided through the National Emergency Management Projects to develop '*Managing the Floodplain: A Guide to Best Practice in Flood Risk Management in Australia.*' The Guide is intended to provide broad advice on all important aspects of flood risk management in Australia.

Should ALGA consider that additional work in this area is required, the ALGA member of the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC), Mr Adrian Beresford-Wylie, and yourself as the ALGA member of SCPEM, may wish to raise this during consideration of related agenda items at the October ANZEMC meeting and November SCPEM meeting. Alternatively, ALGA may wish to sponsor an item on the agenda of these committees to allow robust and appropriate national consideration of these issues.

Resolution Number: 44

That the National General Assembly call for a review of the current funding guidelines and Audit process of the Natural Disaster Restoration (sic) and Relief Arrangements (NDRRA) and seek an urgent implementation for changes to streamline finding for disaster affected Councils. This review is to also consider the matter of using existing local government resources including day labour to undertake works.

Under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA), the Commonwealth reimburses the States and Territories (the States) for eligible disaster expenditure. The States determine the type and level of assistance that will be made available to local governments following each disaster event, and the funding approval process for disaster restoration works.

The ordinary wage and salary (day labour) costs of permanent staff undertaking recovery activities during normal working hours are not eligible expenditure under the NDRRA. However, the Commonwealth contributes funding to the States to assist local governments with extraordinary costs, such as eligible overtime wage and salary costs.

Resolution Number: 45

That the National General Assembly call on the Commonwealth Government to consider the development of National Emergency Management Guidelines to offer consistency in emergency management practice across the nation, clarity of the role of local government and supporting agencies in emergency management and consider sustainable resources to support its effective delivery.

There are a number of existing guidelines, frameworks and well established practices in place nationally that inform work undertaken in the emergency management space. Given constitutional responsibility for emergency management arrangements, consideration of the need for guidelines of the nature proposed by ALGA would appropriately be through the SCPEM and their senior officials group, the ANZEMC, as the national bodies responsible for driving policy reform in respect to emergency management.

I encourage you as a member of SCPEM to commence dialogue within the Standing Council on those issues that ALGA consider require further focus, to ensure that they are afforded appropriate national consideration. I look forward to working together, as colleagues on SCPEM, to progress emergency management initiatives of national importance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicola', with a long, sweeping tail extending to the right.

NICOLA ROXON