

15 January 2025



Submission to Glasser and Colvin Reviews

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission responding to the *Independent Review of National Natural Disaster Governance Arrangements*, led by Dr Robert Glasser, and the *Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding*, led by Andrew Colvin.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is the national voice of local government in Australia, representing 537 councils across the country. In structure, ALGA is a federation of State and Territory Local Government Associations. This submission should be read in conjunction with any separate submissions received from State and Territory Associations as well as individual councils.

ALGA represents a sector that employs more than 200,000 people and manages assets valued at \$643 billion with an annual operational spend exceeding \$38 billion. Local governments are responsible for one-third of Australia's public infrastructure, including 77% of the national road network, 96% of public libraries and collectively are one of the largest providers of childcare in Australia.

ALGA enjoys a close, productive working relationship with the Commonwealth Government as part of local government's important role in the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery from emergencies. Local government plays a critical role in supporting the community in preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies. Working with their communities, local governments undertake hazard and mitigation activities, build community resilience, enhance health and well-being, and support vulnerable local residents.

The roles undertaken by local governments vary between jurisdictions and between councils depending on their capacity and the natural disaster risks their communities face. However, both the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements in 2020 and the Colvin Review have identified that councils need greater support to effectively enable their communities to withstand the impact of natural disasters. The McKell Institute¹ notes that local government's role in disaster relief is increasing and that in many cases the damage to local government infrastructure is more severe than any other level of government.

Councils are uniquely placed to understand the mitigation and risk reduction measures required to better prepare and protect their communities. However, many councils cannot implement these projects alone. Local governments in regional areas are typically those most exposed to natural disasters and have the lowest capacity to invest in new programs or initiatives due to restrained revenue. Because of this, these councils generally do not have the means to co-fund projects or to achieve betterment after disaster events to make the assets they rebuild more resilient to future events. For these councils, funding assistance is imperative due to their heavy reliance on federal and state grants for financial viability.

¹https://insurancecouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/McKell_Cost-of-Natural-Disasters_SINGLES_WEB.pdf

As the impacts of climate change are felt through greater frequency and severity of natural disasters, it is essential that local government is effectively equipped to support their communities, increase their resilience, and speed up recovery from natural disasters. Communities need support for their infrastructure, green spaces and social capital; all essential for recovery. This requires Commonwealth and State Governments to provide significant additional support to local government.

As it stands, councils have experienced repeated and cascading disasters but have not always been able to rebuild to a better standard. A lack of support for improvement has meant that councils have had to repair the same roads and infrastructure on numerous occasions, rather than increasing infrastructure resilience.

Impacts of financial sustainability on the local government sector

A lack of financial sustainability is preventing local governments from delivering key outcomes for their communities, local and national economies, and national priorities. It is forcing local governments to make difficult decisions about reducing services or withdrawing from services altogether.

Local government financial sustainability is a problem facing councils across all portfolio areas, not just emergency management, as the current funding models are inadequate to meet the growing expectations placed on local government. Local governments need targeted, non-competitive funding to effectively support their communities. We have highlighted this issue in ALGA's submission to the House of Representatives' Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability and encourage a major review of the local government funding model.

The relationship between emergency management and financial sustainability has become increasingly apparent in the last five years. Between January 2019 and 2023:

- 434 local government areas have been impacted by natural disasters (noting that many medium to larger scale events are unreported as they do not meet the catastrophic thresholds to seek funding assistance under DRFA)
- \$19.3 billion has been spent on recovery
- \$12.2 billion of insurance losses
- 17.8 million Australians affected²

There is a mismatch between the amount of local government infrastructure exposed to climate change risks and the resources available to local government to carry out effective adaptation to manage these risks. This consequently impacts councils' ability to support their local communities with asset management and other local needs. Australia's efforts to address and respond to climate change are not taking full advantage of the opportunity for partnership and collaboration with local government. The frequency and intensity of natural disasters will continue to exacerbate this mismatch unless a new approach is taken.

Further ALGA's 2024 [National State of the Assets Report](#) found that the cost to replace existing infrastructure owned by local governments that was in poor or very poor condition (as at 30 June 2023) was estimated at \$50-\$55 billion.

The recommendations by Colvin to uplift local government capacity provides an opportunity for the Commonwealth to more clearly define how it can better work with States and Territories to deliver overall funding increases for councils. Councils by their nature work within state and territory legislation and ALGA calls for a clearer funding model that works within the constitutional constraints.

General comments on Glasser recommendations

ALGA welcomes both the Glasser and Colvin Reviews and appreciates the important recommendations both reports make to improve the arrangements for disaster management.

ALGA supports the Glasser recommendations, particularly the focus on resilience. ALGA particularly welcomes Recommendation 29 of the Glasser Report:

² ALGA Submission to the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability, <https://alga.com.au/submission-to-inquiry-into-local-government-sustainability/>

Recommendation 29: *Jurisdictions should also contribute resourcing to implement the priorities for action, such as contributions in-kind and other funding, proportionate to the size of the jurisdiction. Funding should not be sourced from the Disaster Ready Fund given the dependence local government has on that funding source.*

General comments on Colvin recommendations

The Colvin Report contains a number of recommendations which impact local government. In particular, we welcome and wholeheartedly support Recommendations 5 and 6, which recognise the essential role local government plays in emergency management preparedness, prevention, response and recovery. ALGA also welcomes recommendation 42 – which goes to the need for additional funding.

Recommendation 5 addresses the need to uplift local government capability and capacity, with appropriate support and funding. It aligns with recommendation 11.1 of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. In order for councils to continue to play a critical role in emergency management, they urgently need an uplift in capability and capacity, combined with dedicated and sustainable funding streams.

Recommendation 6 calls for the Commonwealth to implement an enhanced national training and exercise regime to test and build local government capacity. Access for local government staff to nationally accredited training has been very limited over recent years, which has led to a significant gap in opportunities to building capacity and capability in the sector. National training pathways can build operational capacity and also develop the planning and risk assessment capacity of council staff. This will also be an on-going requirement to counter skills loss due to staff turnover in councils.

Recommendation 8 suggests the establishment of a Disaster Management Advisory Body. ALGA and its members are of the strong view that local government needs to be represented on this body. Local government is in the unique position to understand the needs of communities and best placed to advise on place-based disaster related investment priorities. Additionally, local government needs to be consulted on new processes and planning, so that policies which are unsuitable for local needs are avoided through early consultation and coordination with local government. This applies to the Outcomes Policy (recs 12-17) where consultation with local government is not mentioned.

Recommendations (Recs 35-40) relating to the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, particularly to clarify and simplify arrangements are fully supported. Over many years local government has highlighted issues with the DRFA including timeliness of reimbursement, administrative and evidentiary burden, greater flexibility, inclusion of betterment as a core principle and inclusion of community infrastructure as an essential asset.

We again reinforce that betterment needs to be incorporated into all reconstruction activities as a core component of the DRFA. DRFA arrangements should provide clear pathways for the funding and incorporation of betterment solutions.

Recommendation 41 which suggests that the DRF is underpinned by an investment strategy is supported by local government as is

Recommendation 42 which recommends the Commonwealth reconsidering, with a view to increasing, the current funding allocated to the DRF or other similar future programs.

Success of the proposed recommendations in the Colvin Review requires a significant increase in funding and resources for all who share responsibility for emergency management.

Further detailed comments on the Colvin recommendations can be found in the table at **Attachment A**.

ALGA comment on Colvin Report principles

The Colvin Report proposes eight principles for Commonwealth disaster funding.

The principles are generally supported by local government and ALGA makes comments on Principle 1 and Principle 2.

Principle 1 suggests that disaster management is a shared responsibility between governments, the non-government sector and the community. While ALGA agrees disaster funding should reflect the

shared responsibility of disaster management and align with agreed division of roles, we believe that the sharing of responsibility needs to be aligned with the capacity and capability of the three levels of government. Allocation of responsibility should reflect the legislative roles of the levels of government in disaster management.

As outlined in our submission, there is an urgent need for the capacity and capability of local government to be uplifted and accompanied by appropriate funding for it to undertake both its legislated and expected roles.

The current quantum of funding for risk reduction and mitigation is vastly inadequate for local government to undertake its role to prepare and protect its communities from future disasters.

Principle 2 suggests that the Commonwealth prioritise investment in measures that reduce risk and build resilience. ALGA believes it is essential for disaster risk reduction and increased resilience to be built into the design of all Commonwealth disaster programs. This upfront investment is expected to reduce the level of expenditure required for response and recovery in the future.

There is widespread agreement that more funding needs to be spent on mitigation, which saves costs on recovery post disaster. Every \$1 spent on mitigation can save \$8 - \$11 in subsequent funding on disaster response, which makes a compelling case for maximising investment in mitigation.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (quoting the Global Assessment Report 2015) states that \$1 invested in mitigation can save up to \$8 in post disaster recovery and loss. A 2020 CSIRO report³ quotes the Global Commission on Adaptation 2019 finding that a \$1 investment in mitigation can save up to \$11 in post disaster recovery.

Additionally, the impacts of climate change and the increasing incidence of disasters also need to be factored into the funding envelope, and higher levels of funding on response and recovery will continue to be required into the future.

ALGA policy position

In line with Recommendation 29 of the Glasser Review and Recommendations 41 and 42 of the Colvin Review, ALGA recommends that Australian Government consider the following proposal for additional funding to support local government prepare communities for, and respond to, more frequent and intense disasters.

As stated earlier, local governments need a dedicated funding stream for mitigation and resilience, and to provide capability and capacity uplift. Local governments need assistance to build their capacity and capability (both financial and non-financial) through dedicated funding and training. ALGA recommends an additional \$900 million per year be allocated to local government on top of any increase in the DRF that would be directed to jurisdictions.

Betterment also needs to be incorporated into all reconstruction activities and be a core component of the DRFA, with specific funding streams allocated.

Conclusion

ALGA welcomes and appreciates the comprehensive reports that have been prepared by Dr Robert Glasser and Andrew Colvin and their teams. ALGA looks forward to the Australian Governments' response and encourages the Australian Government and State and Territory Governments to give effect to the recommendations and adequately fund disaster preparedness, response and betterment.

To reiterate ALGA's key points:

1. It is essential that there is a sustainable funding model for disasters, which enables adequate investment in resilience and risk reduction for local government, through a non-competitive pathway.

³ www.csiro.au/-/media/Environment/CSIRO-Report-Climate-and-Disaster-Resilience-Overview.pdf

Local government needs dedicated funding streams (totalling an additional \$900 million per year):

- for mitigation and resilience, and
 - to provide capacity and capability uplift for local governments to undertake the emergency management role required of them (including additional support through Associations)
 - Betterment needs to be incorporated into all reconstruction activities and be a core component of the DRFA, with specific funding streams allocated.
 - Co-contribution requirements are a barrier to mitigation projects.
2. The expertise and critical role of local governments need to be recognised – and local governments (via ALGA) should be consulted on how agreed recommendations from Glasser and Colvin are to be implemented to avoid unintended consequences and have the greatest benefit.

If you would like clarification or further details on any of the content in this submission, please contact me on 02 6122 9400.



Amy Crawford
ALGA CEO

ALGA comments on Colvin recommendations

Recommendation	ALGA position
<p>Recommendation 5: <i>The Commonwealth, via NEMA, should work with state and territory governments to adopt a leadership and oversight role in ensuring adequate capability, capacity and/or investment exists across Australia for local government and communities to adequately respond to natural disaster events, and to engage with appropriate support and funding structures.</i></p>	<p>ALGA strongly supports this recommendation.</p> <p>This recommendation is supported by ALGA and aligns closely with ALGA's recent advocacy within emergency management. Specifically, capability and capacity uplift of local government is detailed within Recommendation 11.1 of the Royal Commission, and is a position strongly supported by ALGA.</p> <p>Within this recommendation is the opportunity to develop a network of emergency management support officers to aid the delivery of local capability and capacity uplift. ALGA suggests that this recommendation is implemented quickly and is accompanied by adequate resourcing to make meaningful improvements in local capability and capacity. In order for councils to continue to play a critical role in emergency management, an uplift in capability and capacity is urgently required, combined with dedicated and sustainable funding streams.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: <i>The Commonwealth should implement an enhanced national training and exercise regime that tests local capabilities, but also encourages better information sharing, continual improvement, cross-Local Government Area (LGA) and jurisdiction collaboration, and the identification of gaps or weaknesses in local disaster management capability and capacity.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Capability and capacity should be aligned with the requirements of the Nation-wide Natural Disaster Risk Profile (Risk Profile) and the National Natural Disaster Outcomes Policy (Outcomes Policy).</i> 	<p>ALGA strongly supports this recommendation.</p> <p>This recommendation aligns closely with ALGA's recent advocacy within emergency management.</p> <p>Extensive feedback from our members has reflected the importance of professionalization within the sector. The Mt Macedon AEMI Emergency Management Training was highly valued by local government, and there are benefits in reinstating a similar or improved model. The current lack of opportunities for local government staff to obtain nationally accredited training poses serious challenges to the disaster preparedness of communities as a whole. ALGA suggests that the implementation of this training and exercise regime must be accessible for all councils – particularly those in remote or rural areas – and led by industry professionals. ALGA similarly supports the identification of gaps and weaknesses within local disaster management and stresses the importance of delivering adequate support and funding to address them.</p> <p>Members report a significant gap to building capacity and capability in the sector given access for local government staff to nationally accredited training has been very limited over recent years. National training pathways can build operational capacity and also develop the planning and risk assessment capacity of council staff. Nationally accredited training will also be important in addressing skills loss due to staff turnover in councils.</p> <p>Local government is in the unique position to understand the needs of communities and best placed to advise on place-based disaster related investment priorities. Additionally, local government needs to be consulted on new processes and planning, so that policies which are unsuitable for local needs are avoided through early consultation and coordination with local government. This applies to the Outcomes Policy (recs 12-17) where consultation with local government is not mentioned.</p>

<p>Recommendation 8: <i>The Commonwealth should convene a Disaster Management Advisory Council to provide a constructive view of the Commonwealth’s current disaster arrangements, outcomes, and funding options. This Council should report directly to the Minister for Emergency Management and meet regularly (minimum twice per annum) but not be considered part of the decision making or administrative process.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A primary purpose of the Disaster Management Advisory Council should include advising on priority projects identified through the Risk Profile, and on how national outcomes could be better achieved.</i> • <i>The Advisory Council should be chaired by the Coordinator-General, NEMA and be supported by a secretariat within NEMA.</i> • <i>The Advisory Council should be comprised of a representative mix of government and non-government members.</i> • <i>Non-government members should be representative of a broad range of knowledge holders: industry, the not-for-profit sector, academia and representation of those groups who are disproportionately impacted by disaster.</i> • <i>First Nations should also be represented, with that representation drawn from existing First Nations’ governance structures, or as otherwise nominated by First Nations communities.</i> 	<p>ALGA supports this recommendation subject to the inclusion of ALGA as a representative on Disaster Management Advisory Body.</p>
<p>Recommendation 16: <i>The Commonwealth should engage with state and territory governments on the design and implementation of the Outcomes Policy.</i></p>	<p>ALGA supports this recommendation in principle.</p> <p>ALGA strongly believes local government should also be included in such consultation.</p> <p>Local governments possess a wealth of experience and in-depth understanding of how disasters affect communities. The Commonwealth should engage with ALGA to harness the knowledge from councils on the design and implementation of the Outcomes Policy.</p>
<p>Recommendation 19: <i>The Commonwealth should develop a common vocabulary for disaster management that can be used at national, regional and local levels in both government and non-government sectors to support the Outcomes Policy.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This should include the creation of a consistent set of definitions, roles and responsibilities</i> 	<p>ALGA supports this recommendation.</p> <p>Developing a common vocabulary is critical in building shared understanding within the industry and across regions. This will allow for more constructive communication between all tiers of government and encourage greater specificity and clarity in national targets and outcomes.</p> <p>Further, this clear vocabulary should be translated across to disaster funding arrangements to better assist councils in applying for funding streams and improve efficiency on both sides of the process. Implementation of this recommendation would need close local government consultation due to significant jurisdictional variations in language.</p>
<p>Recommendation 27: <i>The Commonwealth should require state and territory governments to complete complementary disaster risk assessments to inform the Risk Profile and guide priority areas for</i></p>	<p>ALGA supports this recommendation.</p>

<p><i>Commonwealth investment and support. Where they exist, climate risk or adaptation profiles developed at local, state and Commonwealth levels should be used to inform the Risk Profile.</i></p>	<p>Many members have noted that work of this nature is already underway and should be incorporated into the states' and territories' disaster risk assessments. ALGA supports the conduct of these local government risk assessments in advance of the high-risk weather season, to inform councils' disaster resilience and risk reduction. These assessments need to be fit-for-purpose and easily accessed by local governments.</p> <p>ALGA supports the responsibility of this task falling under state and territory jurisdictions, and the prevention of delegation to local governments. The assessment process is resource and time intensive and local government is not always appropriately funded to fulfil the task despite its importance.</p>
<p>Recommendation 28: <i>To support a comprehensive risk-based approach, the Commonwealth should require state and territory governments to develop local or regional Disaster Management Plans. These Disaster Management Plans should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the readiness of a region to handle a disaster event (including considerations of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery).</i> • <i>Include risks and strengths that are specific to that area in the natural, social, economic and built domains.</i> • <i>Contain information that can be used to inform state and territory risk assessments, inform response activities in advance of disaster events, or help inform resource and funding requirements for recovery, disaster risk reduction, and resilience.</i> • <i>Recognise and accommodate the lived experience, increased cost, risk and complexity of delivering disaster management services to remote communities, and to First Nations communities.</i> 	<p>ALGA supports this recommendation in principle.</p> <p>Many states/territories have pre-existing structures or pieces of legislation that already hold similar requirements to these Disaster Management Plans. These state-based plans should be incorporated into the implementation of Disaster Management Plans, with unique jurisdictional challenges taken into account.</p> <p>ALGA supports the proposition of scaling risk assessments to a state level, due to limited time and resources at a local level. Further, local governments have expressed concern of over-documentation interfering with councils' operational delivery. ALGA suggests that these Disaster Management Plans are developed with full transparency for optimal efficiency.</p>
<p>Recommendation 29: <i>The Commonwealth should mandate regular capability assessments of local governments by state and territory governments.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Where possible, these assessments should form part of the local or regional Disaster Management Plans.</i> • <i>Priority should be placed on assessing capability, capacity and investment requirements, as well as assessing any barriers to enabling locally led action, including disadvantaged, or disproportionately impacted communities.</i> • <i>These assessments should help inform broader capability needs considered as part of Recommendation 6.</i> • <i>Consideration should be given to complementing these local government capability assessments with data held by Regional Development Australia, managed by the Department of Infrastructure,</i> 	<p>ALGA supports this recommendation subject to further information on how such a mandate would be implemented.</p> <p>ALGA has concerns surrounding its implementation and would seek assurance that local governments are not disadvantaged by requirements of the mandated assessments. Any mandated level of capability needs to be matched with appropriate funding to build that capability if the minimum threshold is not met.</p> <p>The outcomes of these assessments need to inform future investment from federal and/or state governments and hold direct links to funding and capacity uplift. Any capability uplift needs to be conducted in a way that meets the time and resource constraints of councils.</p> <p>There is also a question regarding who takes responsibility where local governments do not meet the required threshold.</p>

<p><i>Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA).</i></p>	
<p>Recommendations 35 – 40: relate to the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, particularly to clarify and simplify arrangements are fully supported.</p> <p>Specific comments on select recommendations are below.</p>	<p>ALGA supports recommendations 35 – 40.</p> <p>ALGA and individual councils have previously raised concerns about the DRFA including timeliness of reimbursement, administrative and evidentially burden, the need for greater flexibility, the need for inclusion of betterment as a core principle and inclusion of community infrastructure as an essential asset.</p> <p>We again reinforce that betterment needs to be incorporated into all reconstruction activities as a core component of the DRFA. DRFA arrangements should provide clear pathways for the funding and incorporation of betterment solutions.</p>
<p>Recommendation 36: <i>The Commonwealth should clarify the role of the DRFA in the current Commonwealth disaster arrangements. This should be achieved through:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reinforcing that the DRFA is a recovery focused funding agreement designed to support state and territory governments to respond to, and for communities to recover from, natural disaster events.</i> • <i>Acknowledging that the DRFA is not the primary funding mechanism to achieve disaster risk reduction, resilience, and prevention objectives.</i> • <i>Acknowledging that, wherever possible, recovery measures progressed under the DRFA should still seek to reduce future risk (including betterment provisions) and build future resilience.</i> 	<p>ALGA has previously called for improvements to the DRFA, in relation to key issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of betterment funding under the DRFA • The need to expedite DRFA payments and streamline funding arrangements. • Alleviating administrative burdens and the onerous evidentiary requirements • The need for more flexibility, particularly for smaller councils which have less capacity in terms of the evidentiary requirements • The need to include local water and sewerage assets as essential infrastructure (particularly in New South Wales and Queensland) • The need to cover community infrastructure, including sports grounds and recreational footpaths, bike-paths and parks. • An increased focus on resilience. <p>ALGA strongly advocates for the inclusion of betterment in the DRFA. Increased risk reduction and betterment funding must be embedded within disaster funding arrangements moving forward. Emphasis on recovery over betterment creates long-term financial and social issues for local councils and communities.</p> <p>ALGA recommends recovery and betterment be funded in tandem, and a balanced funding model be adopted within the DRFA. ALGA also notes that if the DRFA is exclusively “designed to support state and territory governments”, the inequities faced by disaster-affected councils are likely to worsen over the following decades. We also stress the need for equity between jurisdictions in the assistance provided under the DRFA. Further, a single application from a council should be able to provide costs for reinstatement, and (where it is possible) costs for improved infrastructure that will provide increased resilience.</p> <p>The recommendation that the DFRA include betterment is in line with the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements’ (the Royal Commission) recommendation 22.6 which called for better incorporation of ‘build back better’ within Disaster Funding Arrangements. However,</p>

	<p>although there is some additional guidance on betterment, the current (2018 edition) DRFA guidelines and accompanying fact sheets make no reference to 'build back better'. This should be a core value and overriding principle of the DRFA.</p> <p>Under the current DRFA, essential public assets directly damaged by an eligible disaster, or a re-damaged essential public asset may be reconstructed to its pre-disaster function. The Commonwealth only provides the funding equivalent to the reconstruction of an essential public asset to its pre-disaster function, and DRFA guidelines do not allow for the upgrading of any infrastructure through a reconstruction program to a more resilient standard. These clauses make it difficult for the Commonwealth to fund councils or state governments to 'build back better'. Where local governments are dealing with events under Category B of the DRFA, betterment is not achievable.</p>
<p>Recommendation 37: <i>The Commonwealth should remove existing current DRFA Category A, B, C, and D and negotiate their replacement with a criteria framework that categorises measures into short- (or immediate), medium-, and long-term recovery initiatives and groups initiatives according to their domain (natural, social, economic and built).</i></p>	<p>This recommendation is supported in principle by ALGA.</p> <p>ALGA supports a model in which DRFA funding is more appropriately aligned with evolving disaster risk and recovery needs, and funding application processes are more accessible to local governments and other stakeholders. Further, ALGA supports the clarity that a reformed framework based on recovery timelines would provide but advises that this process should be developed under the direction of an industry expert. As local governments are one of the primary stakeholders affected by changes in existing DRFA categories, it is crucial that councils are consulted to understand the practical impacts.</p>
<p>Recommendation 38: <i>The Commonwealth should clarify and more narrowly define an exceptional circumstances consideration (currently Category D). This should include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More narrowly and explicitly defining when the exceptional circumstances consideration can be utilised for recovery objectives consistent with a categorisation that acknowledges short-, medium- and long-term recovery.</i> • <i>Requiring the completion of a comprehensive impact assessment, or noting if a project was identified as a priority through the Risk Profile.</i> • <i>Aligning longer term recovery initiatives considered as part of the (current) Category D in conjunction with the Risk Profile</i> 	<p>ALGA supports this recommendation in principle, but has concerns surrounding its practical implication.</p> <p>ALGA supports improving the clarity and definition of this category to ensure that recovery efforts are more appropriately arranged. However, it is essential that the unique geographical challenges faced by disaster-prone areas are taken into consideration when designing this category to avoid further cross-LGA inequities. ALGA strongly advises against any narrowing of Category D that actively excludes betterment funding. If the DRFA categories (ABCD) are replaced, as per recommendation 37 above, then this recommendation becomes redundant.</p>
<p>Recommendation 40: <i>The Commonwealth should streamline nationally consistent standardised measures, focused on response and short-term recovery that can be delivered quickly following a disaster event. The standardised measures should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure a nationally consistent activation process/decision making framework that is based on impact, consequence and need.</i> • <i>Create certainty and speed for pre-determined funding.</i> • <i>Clearly state the eligible activities, their relevant domain/s and the conditions under which the measure can be activated.</i> 	<p>This recommendation is supported by ALGA.</p> <p>ALGA supports the creation and funding of recovery roles within state agencies and recommends these roles reflect the relevant levels of support required by local governments. It is crucial that the DRFA maintains a balance between the benefits that standardization awards, and the flexibility of funding to meet diverse and evolving recovery needs.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adopt streamlined audit and assurance, as well as monitoring and evaluation requirements consistent with the Outcomes Policy</i> 	
<p>Recommendation 41: <i>The DRF should be underpinned by an investment strategy that is informed by the Risk Profile. This should be done through:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prioritising state and territory projects that address needs identified through the Risk Profile.</i> • <i>Introducing an expanded ‘national projects’ stream that the Commonwealth could use to pursue national risk reduction priorities, as identified by the Risk Profile.</i> • <i>Linking the desired outcomes of the DRF to the Outcomes Policy.</i> • <i>Aligning the timing and process of decision-making with state and territory governments to ensure proper prioritisation of agreed risk reduction measures.</i> 	<p>ALGA fully supports the suggestion in the report that the DRF requires a substantial increase in investment. This aligns with ALGA’s previous advocacy that the quantum of funding under the DRF is inadequate to make a meaningful contribution to risk reduction across the country.</p> <p>While we agree with the intention of prioritising “state and territory projects that address needs identified through the risk profile”, we strongly advocate for dedicated non-competitive funding for local government mitigation projects at community level.</p> <p>ALGA calls for the prioritisation of local government projects in addition to state and territory projects. Many local governments have cited the capacity to develop a grant ready application and co-contribution requirements as somewhat of a barrier, or an insurmountable barrier. Any alteration of the decision making behind the funding model, must look to the level of time and resources required, and how this can be met be all councils in an equitable way.</p> <p>ALGA recommends that emergency management funding support should not be provided on a competitive basis, as this prevents councils that often require the most support from applying. All amendments made to funding arrangements must ensure that inequity does not become further entrenched, particularly as Australia faces worsening high-risk weather seasons that continue to worsen positions of disadvantage.</p> <p>ALGA would like to see new and additional dedicated federal funding streams (totalling an additional \$900 million per year) for local government mitigation and resilience, and to provide capacity and capability uplift for councils to undertake the emergency management role required of them.</p>
<p>Recommendation 42: <i>The Commonwealth should reconsider, with a view to increasing, the current amount of funding allocated to the DRF, or other similar future programs, to address the disaster risk reduction and resilience priorities identified by the Risk Profile.</i></p>	<p>ALGA strongly supports this recommendation.</p> <p>The current sum of funding available through the DRF is inadequate in providing meaningful support for communities across the nation. To allow the DRF to act as an effective vehicle for national risk reduction, larger projects in high-risk areas must be prioritised, which must be resourced from a greater funding pool. Increased betterment funding through the DRF or an alternative dedicated funding stream is essential for effective emergency management.</p>