

# FACT SHEET



## DRFAWA: General overview and FAQs

In November 2018, the Commonwealth introduced the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) for the states and territories of Australia. The DRFA provides financial assistance for eligible disaster events.

In Western Australia, the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Western Australia (DRFAWA) is administered by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and is Western Australia's application of the DRFA.

The DRFAWA includes additional support measures that the State government deems necessary to best support communities and businesses within Western Australia.

### The aim of the DRFA

Natural disasters or terrorist acts may result in large-scale expenditure by state governments in the form of disaster relief and recovery payments and infrastructure reconstruction.

To assist with this burden, the Commonwealth has made arrangements to provide financial assistance to the states and territories in certain circumstances.

Usually the assistance is in the form of partial reimbursement of state expenditure and estimated reconstruction costs.

### What is an eligible disaster event?

An eligible disaster event is one or a combination of the following rapid onset events:

- Bushfire
- Landslide
- Tornado
- Cyclone
- Meteorite strike
- Tsunami.
- Earthquake
- Storm
- Flood
- Storm surge

A disaster event also includes a terrorist act, whereby an action or a series of actions committed in Australia which the Commonwealth Minister has determined is a terrorist act.

To be declared an eligible disaster event the following criteria must also be met:

- A coordinated multi-agency response is required; and
- It must be estimated that the cost of emergency assistance to individuals and communities, and/or damage to essential public assets will exceed \$240,000 across all local government areas impacted by the disaster event.

## How can an event be deemed eligible?

Once an event is believed to meet all of the above eligibility criteria, local governments or state government agencies should contact DFES Disaster Recovery Funding team.

DFES will liaise with Emergency Management Australia and the Minister for Emergency Services' Office to advise them of the details that will assist in the activation of the event.

Activating an event involves a media release 'proclaiming' the event as an 'eligible disaster' and the allocation of a unique Australian Government Reference Number (AGRN).

All eligible disaster events have an AGRN reference and official title, which must be used in all correspondence and claims.

## Can a number of small events be merged to create one DRFAWA event?

As a general rule, no.

Under the DRFA an eligible disaster event can be a terrorist act or be as a result of one or more natural disasters that occur at the same time.

Where multiple disaster events impact at the same time, one event may be activated. For example, a cyclone and subsequent flooding; Cyclone and flood are recognised as separate natural hazards but can occur at the same time and may be included as one eligible disaster event.

In exceptional cases, where two separate events occur in close succession, the Commonwealth may agree to amalgamate the events to create one eligible disaster. This is where damage from one event cannot be easily identified or separated from the second event. The State has only had one occasion where two events have been amalgamated into one eligible disaster event.

## What assistance is available?

The DRFAWA provides assistance through a range of measures to support individuals and communities after an eligible disaster event:

- Category A assistance is for individuals and communities and primarily administered by the Department of Communities and the impacted local government(s).
- Category B assistance includes assistance to small businesses and primary producers, state government agencies and local governments.
- Category C assistance is provided in the form of Community Recovery Packages and recovery grants for small businesses and primary producers
- Category D assistance is for exceptional circumstances.

## Category A assistance that may be available

Needs basis:

- Emergency food, clothing and temporary accommodation (up to 3 weeks) assessed on individual needs basis

- Personal and financial counselling.

Means tested:

- Repair or replacement of essential items
- Essential repairs to housing, including repairs necessary to restore housing to a habitable condition.

Additional Category A assistance provided by the State:

- Removal of debris from residential properties to make them safe and habitable
- Demolition or rebuilding to restore housing to a habitable condition.

## **Category B assistance that may be available**

### **State government agencies and local governments**

Assistance is available for:

- The restoration and replacement of Essential Public Assets (to restore the asset to the equivalent of its pre-disaster condition):
  - Emergency works
  - Immediate reconstruction works
  - Essential public asset reconstruction works.
- Counter disaster operations (operations carried out to protect communities from the disaster and to ensure public health and safety in public areas).

### **Small business**

- Interest rate subsidy:
  - Currently set at 4 per cent
  - Payments capped at a maximum of \$6,000
  - Maximum of 10 years claim period on new borrowings.

### **Primary producers**

- Professional advice grant up to \$1,500
- Interest rate subsidy currently set at 4 per cent
- Freight subsidy – 50 per cent of transporting livestock, fodder, building, fencing or machinery
- Fencing reimbursement – 100 per cent of materials only when it adjoins a major road or rail corridor (livestock producers only).

## Category C assistance that may be available

### Community Recovery Packages

- Community Recovery Fund (only provided in exceptional circumstances)
- Recovery Grants for small businesses and primary producers (only provided in exceptional circumstances).

## Category D assistance that may be available

### Exceptional Circumstances Measure

A measure to be agreed between the State and Commonwealth Governments following an event which the Commonwealth considers has created *exceptional* circumstances.

### More information and advice

The full suite of DRFAWA fact sheets and other related documents are available on the DFES website ([www.dfes.wa.gov.au](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au)).

If you have any questions or need additional support, contact the Disaster Recovery Funding team at [drfawa@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:drfawa@dfes.wa.gov.au).