ROYAL COMMISSION INTO NATIONAL NATURAL DISASTER ARRANGEMENTS

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT'S THIRD IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

NOVEMBER 2022

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Overview

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements (RCNNDA) was established in response to the extreme bushfire season of 2019-20. The RCNNDA examined improvements to natural disaster management arrangements and the legal framework for Federal Government involvement in responding to national emergencies. The Queensland Government continues to move forward on both State-led and nationally coordinated recommendations.

In regard to nationally coordinated recommendations which seek to establish consistency, coordination and collaboration between the Australian Government and all states and territories, the Queensland Government continues to work with its counterparts through its representation of the Australian and New Zealand Emergency Management Committee and the National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting to progress these recommendations as quickly as possible. A number of these recommendations, however, concern complex, long-term projects, such as operational communications and national interoperability, all-hazard warnings, disaster risk information and data sharing systems.

Concurrent to progress on nationally coordinated recommendations, the Queensland Government is making inroads on delivering recommendations that are within its control. This includes:

- The Queensland Government has reviewed supply chain risks and identified options for improving the supply of essential goods in times of natural disasters (recommendation 9.1). These supply chain processes were tested with success during the 2022 COVID-19 Omicron wave and the Southeast Queensland flood event.

- Queensland has supported the Australian Government to implement its Critical Infrastructure and Systems of National Significance reforms (recommendations 9.4 and 9.5), to ensure critical infrastructure owners in Queensland are prepared for and mitigate the risks of natural disasters. Queensland Government disaster management teams ensure appropriate engagement occurs to support critical infrastructure coordination arrangements and resilience.

- The Queensland Government has contributed to the development of nationally consistent categorisation and advice on air quality which has been incorporated in

Queensland Government websites. Furthermore, the Queensland Government has adopted the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee endorsed hourly reporting on air quality and public messaging is delivered on forecast air-quality for the next 24-hour period, with targeted advice to vulnerable groups (recommendation 14.1).

- Mental health planning has also been integrated into the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements at the local, district and state levels (recommendation 15.3). These arrangements provide for: initial support and psychological first aid through non-government organisations, Community Recovery and Queensland Health (QH) staff in recovery hubs to provide support, resources and referrals to impacted persons experiencing anxiety and distress; and ongoing outreach programs during the disaster recovery phase. Significant progress has also been to include primary health care providers and Primary Health Networks in disaster management planning.

- The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA), in partnership with the Australian Government, has developed extraordinary assistance packages that successfully include betterment or "build back better" programs (recommendation 22.6). Queensland's experience with betterment funds highlights that an upfront investment in rebuilding impacted assets to be more resilient is cost effective and enhances long-term sustainability across all levels of government in future disasters.

Over the coming six months the Queensland Government will continue to push progress on more State-led recommendations with Queensland on track to deliver recommendations relating to national exercising, vegetation management, bushfire mitigation and hazard reduction.