

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO NATIONAL NATURAL DISASTER ARRANGEMENTS

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT'S FOURTH IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

JULY 2023

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 national natural disaster management arrangements and the legal framework for Australian Government involvement in responding to national emergencies.

Queensland has faced consecutive years of intense natural disasters that have been compounded by overlapping bushfire and severe weather seasons, widespread drought and heatwave conditions. As the disaster management landscape in Queensland continues to evolve with changing climatic conditions and more frequent natural disasters, so too does the commitment of the Queensland Government to ensure effective disaster management arrangements, while continuing to recognise the importance of locally led mitigation, response and recovery.

The Queensland Government has made considerable progress in delivering RCNNDA recommendations. Overall, of those relevant to the state, 29 recommendations are now considered delivered. This includes the delivery of key recommendations in relation to: climate projections; vegetation management, bushfire mitigation and hazard reduction; communicating risk information to households; national exercising; and the Australian Fire Danger Rating System.

- The Queensland Government has worked with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to develop the [Climate Projections Roadmap for Australia](#), designed to deliver comparable, consistent, robust, fit-for-purpose future climate information to assess climate risks and inform adaptation planning. Queensland has invested in high performance computing and data storage to deliver climate change projections and high-resolution downscaled information that informs regional-based assessment of natural disasters and decision making within Queensland. This information is available on the Queensland Future Climate Dashboard. (recommendation 4.5).
- Queensland has contributed to the establishment of a National Crisis Exercising and Lessons Capability Strategy (NCELCS) to develop and deliver a program of national crisis exercises and other services to support, examine and evaluate current national capabilities for crisis response and early recovery. Queensland has also worked with the National Emergency Management Agency



(NEMA) and state, territory and local governments to deliver a program of national level recovery exercises, that includes a National Recovery Capability Package that can be used to support the inclusion of the recovery component into exercise management programs. At the state level, Queensland has established a robust and enduring exercising capability that supports exercising needs through all phases of disaster management to stress-test crisis response capabilities, assess capacity, make recommendations to inform future capability development and promote continuous improvement in response and recovery (recommendation 6.5 and 21.5).

- The Queensland Government continues to work with landholders and land managers to ensure there is a clear understanding of how existing exemptions under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* enable road managers to manage vegetation within road corridors. This includes the capacity to clear vegetation to build and maintain roads, remove dangerous trees, undertake control burning, or to undertake emergency works in the event of a bushfire or during an evacuation. Exemptions also apply to the establishment and maintenance of firebreaks and fire management lines. The Government has developed a range of communication material for landholders that clarify the application of the Vegetation Management Framework to bushfire mitigation and hazard reduction activities. The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) also has dedicated Bushfire Safety Officers available to provide localised support to landholders enquiring about bushfire mitigation activities (recommendations 12.1 and 17.2).
- The Australian Fire Danger Rating system (AFDRS) launched nationally on 1 September 2022. The AFDRS substantially improves and simplifies the reporting of fire danger making it easier for communities and individuals to stay safe during bushfires. It uses up-to-date fuel state, spatial and weather data, science and technology to more accurately calculate, forecast and report fire danger. Queensland has adopted the new national system and government agencies are working with land managers to ensure they understand the new system (recommendation 13.1).

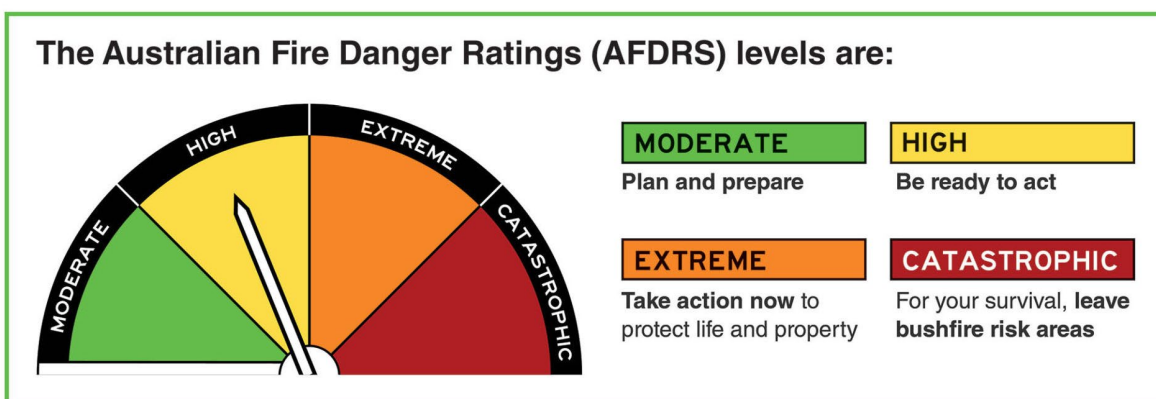


Figure 1 Australian Fire Danger Rating Levels

- The Queensland Government works closely with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to ensure national consistency in the conservation status of threatened species

through the national framework for sharing threatened species data. Within Queensland, fauna and flora information is accessible through Queensland's Herbreccs, WildNet, WetlandsInfo, and the Regional Ecosystems Descriptions Database (recommendation 16.1).

- The *Disaster Management Act 2003* recognises that disaster management in Queensland is locally led. The Queensland Government supports local governments to communicate natural hazard risk relevant to members of their local government area. Local governments provide hazard awareness and risk information to communities through state funded mechanisms including: Get Ready Queensland, State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service community engagement, and implementation of the Queensland Emergency Risk Management Framework. The Queensland Government is committed to continuous improvement and research to enhance the discoverability, accessibility and useability of these products for vulnerable and diverse community groups (recommendation 19.1).
- The Queensland Government has worked with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to establish a national mechanism for sharing of trained and qualified recovery personnel. Queensland led the development of a Disaster Recovery People Capability Framework, and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority also worked with the National Emergency Management Agency and Australian Industry Standards to develop a Diploma of Public Safety (Recovery Management) to ensure best practice following natural disasters, and to ensure recovery personnel have access to appropriate training and qualifications (recommendation 21.4).

Implementation of the remaining recommendations within Queensland's control is on track. Many of these recommendations seek to establish consistency, coordination and collaboration between the Australian Government and all states and territories, and are therefore dependent on the actions of other jurisdictions. The Queensland Government continues to work with its counterparts through the Australian and New Zealand Emergency Management Committee and the National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting to progress these recommendations as quickly as possible.

The Queensland Government is committed to improving disaster resilience and preparedness of Queensland Communities and will continue to enhance efforts to progress recommendations at the state and national level.

