



Disaster Ready Fund - Round Three 2025-26

Frequently Asked Questions

1. I have an idea for a project – how can I apply?

Projects must meet the eligibility and assessment criteria outlined in the [Round Three Guidelines](#). You can submit your proposal to the relevant Lead Agency between 9:00am (local time) on 22 January 2025 and 5:00pm (local time) on 2 April 2025.

For more details about the submission process, contact your state or territory's Lead Agency via the links below.

Jurisdiction	Lead Agency DRF webpage	DRF Contact
Australian Capital Territory	Justice and Community Directorate	drf@act.gov.au
New South Wales	NSW Reconstruction Authority	drfnsw@reconstruction.nsw.gov.au
Northern Territory	Northern Territory Emergency Services	ntdrf@pfes.nt.gov.au
Queensland	Queensland Reconstruction Authority	info@qra.qld.gov.au
South Australia	South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission	safecom.drf@eso.sa.gov.au
Tasmania	Resilience and Recovery Tasmania, Department of Premier and Cabinet	resilience@dpac.tas.gov.au
Victoria	Emergency Management Victoria	drf@emv.vic.gov.au
Western Australia	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	semc.grants@dfes.wa.gov.au ;

2. Can I apply directly to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)?

Only Lead Agencies can apply to NEMA. The Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) is run in partnership with states and territories, recognising their role in emergency management. Each state and territory has a Lead Agency. They are responsible for coordinating project proposals. Lead Agencies submit the most competitive proposals as applications to NEMA.

3. How do I apply if my project covers more than one state or territory?

You can submit separate applications to multiple Lead Agencies or apply with a multi-jurisdictional proposal involving collaboration between states or territories. More details are in Section 7.2.3 of the [Round Three Guidelines](#).



4. How much funding can I apply for?

The available \$197 million in 2025-26 has no maximum funding limit per project (up to \$3 million of the total \$200 million reserved to support Lead Agencies in administering the DRF). The minimum total project value (Commonwealth funding and co-contribution combined) is:

- \$0.5 million for infrastructure funding stream projects
- no minimum amount for other project types

5. What happens if I can't submit my project proposal on time?

You must submit your proposal to Lead Agencies before the closing date (i.e. 2 April 2025) in the Round Three Guidelines. There will be no time extension after the closing date.

6. How is Round Three different from Round Two?

Round Three, like Rounds One and Two, is a competitive merit-based grant opportunity delivered through states and territories. Section 2.4 of the [Round Three Guidelines](#) lists the key changes to Round Three. Applicants should read the Guidelines before developing project proposals.

7. Do I need to consult with First Nations communities for my project?

If your project has a place-based focus or will affect the particular interests of First Nations Communities (i.e. in ways not felt by the general population), you must meaningfully consult affected First Nations communities and include evidence of this in your application. See Section 7.3 for more details.

8. How does the DRF support communities at higher disaster risk?

Certain groups are more vulnerable to disasters due to social and economic factors. These include:

- Children and young people
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities
- First Nations communities
- LGBTQIA+ community
- Migrants and refugees
- People over 65
- People with disabilities
- Those experiencing homelessness, unemployment, or poverty
- Women

We encourage Applicants to consider these groups in project proposals. For example, they can make accessible infrastructures or develop inclusive disaster risk reduction plans.

9. Who is eligible to apply?

Anyone can develop a DRF project proposal and submit it to a Lead Agency for consideration provided they meet the criteria in sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the [Round Three Guidelines](#). Lead Agencies then submit the most competitive project proposals as applications to NEMA.



10. Can I apply if I'm from a non-self-governing territory?

Only jurisdictions and non-self governing territories that are identified as eligible in the guidelines (see section 5.2) can apply for funding under Round Three of the Disaster Ready Fund.

11. Can I reapply if my project was unsuccessful in previous rounds?

Yes, but you must review and update your proposal in line with the [Round Three Guidelines](#). Contact your Lead Agency for advice.

12. What hazards will the fund cover?

Most natural hazards are eligible. Check Section 5.1.1 of the [Round Three Guidelines](#) for details.

13. Can I seek funding for drought relief?

No. Drought, biosecurity hazards, and cyber-attacks are ineligible. However, projects that primarily focus on eligible natural hazards may receive funding to improve resilience against these natural hazards.

14. What are the DRF Investment Principles?

These are four key principles guiding funding decisions. See Section 2.1 of the [Round Three Guidelines](#) for details.

15. What does 'alignment with plans' mean?

Projects must align with national, state, territory and/or local disaster resilience and risk reduction plans or support the development of such plans. Contact your Lead Agency if unsure.

16. Do I need to include contingency costs in my budget?

Yes. To minimise the risk of cost overruns, Applicants should factor allowances for contingencies and escalation into project costings. You need a minimum of 10 per cent, but for complex projects or those in remote areas, a higher contingency of up to 30 per cent may be required. Guidance on best practice approaches to cost estimation is available as part of the Commonwealth Investment Toolkit on the [Department of Finance website](#). The Australian Government will not provide top-up funding for project cost overruns.

17. Do I need to include administrative costs in my budget?

Applicants can include reasonable project administration costs in their budgets. However, they don't need to factor in Program Administration Costs incurred by Lead Agencies to administer the DRF in their region. Lead Agencies claim these costs separately.

18. Can I seek a full or partial waiver of co-contributions?

No. For Round Three, a tiered co-contribution system has replaced the waiver process, which reduces requirements for certain Applicants and projects. See Section 3.1.1 of the [Round Three Guidelines](#).



19. When will I know if my application is successful?

We will notify Lead Agencies in the second half of 2025. They will then inform Applicants.

20. When can my project start?

Implementation Plans must be endorsed by NEMA before project activities funded by the Australian Government can start. The commencement of other project activities is at the discretion of Lead Agencies and at their own cost and risk.

21. When will I receive funding?

The Australian Government will process payments to states and territories once Federation Funding Agreement schedules have been signed by relevant ministers (expected late 2025). States and territories will then make payments to Applicants through individual project funding agreements (expected from early 2026).

22. Can past investments count towards my co-contribution?

Yes, but only funds invested on or after 1 July 2023 in a project or program that the DRF project will extend or enhance count. Also, these funds cannot exceed 50% of the required co-contribution. You must outline these in detail in the Indicative Budget. See Section 3.1.2 of the [Round Three Guidelines](#).

23. Can I still submit a project proposal if I didn't go through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process?

Yes. Lead Agencies ran the optional EOIs on an independent basis. Contact your Lead Agency for guidance.

24. What professionals can be used to prepare cost estimates for projects over \$1 million?

For infrastructure projects, a quantity surveyor should be used, as is usual for construction projects. For non-infrastructure projects, other relevant professionals (e.g. an actuary or accountant) may be used as appropriate. Applicants using professionals within their organisations should identify this and their qualifications in their applications. See Section 7.6 of the [Round Three Guidelines](#).

25. What file types and sizes can be submitted as attachments?

NEMA's application portal supports a variety of file types, including pdf, doc, docx, xlsx, jpg, tiff and zip up to 10MB in size. Each mandatory and optional attachment permits one file upload. If Lead Agencies need to submit several files to NEMA for a specific application requirement (e.g. multiple design and approval files showing a project's readiness), they should combine these files into one PDF or zip folder. Then, they can upload this folder to NEMA's portal.

Applicants should check with Lead Agencies to see if other file restrictions apply in state and territory processes.

26. What risk assessments and risk reduction or adaptation plans am I expected to identify in the Project Logic part of the application?

Applicants should identify any risk assessments and/or disaster risk reduction or adaptation plans that relate to the project. These can include risk assessments, risk reduction plans, or adaptation plans created by the

National Emergency Management Agency

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Applicant. They may also involve other relevant assessments and plans. This could include those published by state and local governments.

27. Does the coordinating Lead Agency for multi-jurisdictional and national projects need to provide written confirmation of its support?

No. Applicants only need to get confirmation in writing from the Lead Agencies in other relevant jurisdictions. Submission of the application by the coordinating Lead Agency and endorsement by its Minister is sufficient indication of its support. The only exception to this is where the coordinating Lead Agency is also named as a delivery partner on the application, in which case the coordinating Lead Agency would need to provide a letter of support in accordance with section 7.2.4 of the [Round Three Guidelines](#).

28. Can land valuations be counted as in-kind contributions towards a project?

While the Program Delegate would make the final decision on this, it is unlikely that they would consider land valuations as eligible in-kind contributions. Applicants should also note that section 5.4 of the Guidelines prohibits spending DRF funds on the purchase of land.

29. What should be covered in the business case?

Content requirements for the business case are set out in sections 6.3 and 7.6 of the [Round Three Guidelines](#). At a minimum, it must include a project plan, budget and risk management plan commensurate with the size and scale of the project. Applicants should check with their Lead Agency for any additional guidance.

30. What should be covered in the cost-benefit analysis?

Appendix A of the How-To Guide for Applicants provides detailed guidance on this. Applicants can access this Guide through their relevant Lead Agency.

31. What design and approval documentation need to be attached as evidence of project readiness for infrastructure projects?

Attach any relevant designs and approvals in place at the time of application submission as evidence. These may include, but are not limited to, architectural and engineering drawings, planning permits, and building approvals.

32. Are costs associated with the preparation of mandatory attachments such as designs and approvals, project cost estimates, etc able to be counted as historical investments?

This depends on when and for what purpose the documentation was prepared. For example, a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed DRF project would usually not qualify because it is a cost associated with the DRF project itself. In contrast, the cost of preparing design and engineering drawings after 1 July 2023 as part of the planning stage of an existing project that the DRF project aims to extend might qualify as historical investments.



33. Can Applicants submit proposals that build on projects funded through previous DRF rounds?

Yes, as long as the application:

- discloses the prior funding
- adheres to the rules related to historical investments (section 3.1.2) and double dipping (section 5.4)
- doesn't use Australian Government funding provided through previous DRF rounds to meet minimum co-contribution requirements (section 3.1.2) of [Round Three Guidelines](#).

34. Can projects apply for DRF funding if they previously received, but have since relinquished, Commonwealth funds for the same or a similar purpose?

This would depend on whether the eligibility criteria meet the rules against:

- double dipping (section 5.4)
- fund project cost overruns (section 3.1.2)
- use of Australian Government funds as part of co-contributions (section 3.1.2) in the [Round Three Guidelines](#).

The Program Delegate will make these decisions based on the application information at the time of submission.