



Australian Government

National Emergency Management Agency

# COMDISPLAN

## Australian Government Disaster Response Plan

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## 1. Acronyms

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<b>AGCMF</b>	Australian Government Crisis Management Framework
<b>AUSRIAPLAN</b>	Australian Government Reception of International Assistance Plan
<b>CASP</b>	Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning
<b>CCT</b>	Australian Government Crisis Coordination Team
<b>DACC</b>	Defence Assistance to the Civil Community
<b>DCG EMR</b>	Deputy Coordinator General, Emergency Management and Response
<b>LO</b>	Liaison Officer
<b>NCM</b>	National Coordination Mechanism
<b>NCM-AUSGOV</b>	Australian Government National Coordination Mechanism
<b>NED</b>	National Emergency Declaration
<b>NEMA</b>	National Emergency Management Agency
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organisation
<b>NJCOP</b>	National Joint Common Operating Picture
<b>NSC</b>	National Security Committee of Cabinet
<b>NSR</b>	Australian Government National Situation Room
<b>PM&amp;C</b>	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
<b>RFA</b>	Request for Assistance

## 2. Definitions

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<b>Australian Government Coordinating Agency</b>	The agency required to lead the coordination across the Australian Government for a significant crisis caused by an identified hazard under the AGCMF. This agency also leads the consequence management activities within its agency functions and sector-specific responsibilities.
<b>Australian Government Crisis Communication Guidelines</b>	Provides guidance on coordinating whole-of-Australian Government crisis communication, including development and dissemination of talking points, media holding lines and response strategies for media management and collaboration with state and territory operations centres.
<b>Australian Government Crisis Management Framework</b>	The Australian Government's capstone policy framing Australia's national crisis management arrangements.
<b>Early recovery</b>	The immediate and short-term measures for the restoration and improvement of the livelihoods, health, economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities of a crisis-affected community.
<b>Enabling Agency</b>	An Australian Government agency that administers relevant programs, provides specialist technical, scientific, intelligence or information capabilities or conducts any other enabling activities to support consequence management activities.
<b>Lead Coordinating Senior Official</b>	The designated senior official within an Australian Government Coordinating Agency who is responsible for leading the coordination for a significant crisis.
<b>Lead Minister</b>	The Australian Government minister responsible for leading coordination in response to a significant crisis caused by an identified hazard under the AGCMF.
<b>Liaison Officer</b>	Departmental officer deployed to an Australian Government or state or territory coordination centre to support the coordinated action of operational arrangements.
<b>National Coordination Mechanism (NCM)</b>	The peak senior officials' crisis coordination mechanism providing a national picture of crisis to governments and key stakeholders. The NCM provides the convening mechanism to bring together Australian Government, state and territory government and nongovernment representatives immediately before, during and after a crisis.
<b>Australian Government NCM (NCM-AUSGOV)</b>	A specialised NCM that supports a shared whole-of-Australian Government picture of crisis, with participants drawn from across the Australian Government.

<b>Preparedness</b>	Near-term and longer-term arrangements to ensure that, should a crisis occur, the required resources, capabilities and services can be efficiently mobilised and deployed.
<b>Relief</b>	Meeting the essential needs of food, water, shelter, energy, communications and medicines for people affected by a crisis event.
<b>Response</b>	Actions taken in anticipation of, during, or immediately after a crisis to ensure that its impact are minimised, and that those affected are supported as quickly as possible.
<b>Sector Lead Agency</b>	An Australian Government agency that contributes to whole-of-Australian Government crisis coordination activities and leads the consequence management activities relevant to agency functions and sector-specific responsibilities.

## 3. Authorising Environment

### 3.1. Authority

The Australian Government Disaster Response Plan (COMDISPLAN) derives its authority from the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (AGCMF). The AGCMF outlines the roles and responsibilities of Australian Government in preparing for, responding to and recovering from crises. It is the Australian Government's capstone policy framing Australia's national crisis management arrangements.

The AGCMF is underpinned by a range of national plans that set out hazard and sector-specific crisis management arrangements. COMDISPLAN is one such plan.

COMDISPLAN is prepared and maintained by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). COMDISPLAN is approved by the Deputy Coordinator General of the Emergency Management and Response Group (DCG EMR) in NEMA.

### 3.2. Review and Amendments

Recommendations for amendments or suggestions for improvement may be forwarded to:

Deputy Coordinator General  
Emergency Management and Response Group  
National Emergency Management Agency  
[EMRCoordination@nema.gov.au](mailto:EMRCoordination@nema.gov.au)

### 3.3. Version Details

Version #	Date of Issue	Brief description of change
4.3	April 2025	Administrative review to align with the updated Australian Government Crisis Management Framework
4.2	2020	Administrative review
4.1	2017	Strategic review
3.1	2008	Strategic review
2.1	2005	Strategic review
1.1	February 2002	COMDISPLAN created

## 4. Introduction

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### 4.1. Purpose

COMDISPLAN outlines the mechanisms and coordination arrangements for the provision of Australian Government non-financial assistance in the event of a crisis within Australia or its offshore territories.

COMDISPLAN is an all-hazards plan. However, it also functions as the default plan that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government in a crisis caused by a domestic natural hazard, in line with the AGCMF.

### 4.2. Scope

COMDISPLAN is utilised to provide Australian Government non-financial assistance to states and territories. The term “non-financial assistance” refers (but is not limited) to: planning expertise, provision of geospatial services, counselling, advice, niche capabilities, management of external resources and physical assistance. Appendix A provides an overview of capabilities that Australian Government agencies can typically provide.

Australian State and Territory Governments have responsibility for coordinating and planning for the response to and recovery from a crisis within their borders. When the total resources – government, community and commercial – of an affected jurisdiction cannot reasonably cope with the needs of the situation, the nominated official can seek non-financial assistance from the Australian Government under COMDISPLAN. The Australian Government accepts responsibility and prepares plans for providing Australian Government non-financial assistance in response to such requests.

Under COMDISPLAN, an affected jurisdiction encompasses mainland Australian states and territories and the offshore territories of: Ashmore and Cartier Islands, Australian Antarctic Territory, Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Coral Sea Islands, Heard and McDonald Islands and Norfolk Island.

### 4.3. Principles

Crisis events are typically variable, which requires flexible responses. Therefore, a principles-based approach should be adopted, including:

1. Unity of effort will be encouraged, through a collaborative and coordinated approach, without removing individual agencies' legislative, ministerial and constitutional responsibilities.
2. Flexibility, interoperability, improvisation and scalability in the system will be promoted.
3. Decision-making will be decentralised and will be supported by centralised strategic coordination and decentralised execution.
4. Agencies will support forward-looking decision-making and risk management with anticipatory analysis.
5. Agencies will be responsive and support elected officials' decision-making and crisis leadership.
6. COMDISPLAN may be used for the provision of approved Australian Government non-financial assistance.
7. COMDISPLAN can be activated for any crisis, regardless of the cause or hazard. It is also the default national plan used for domestic natural hazard events.
8. COMDISPLAN acknowledges and complements existing agreements (such as bilateral arrangements) between jurisdictions, and in some instances international agencies.
9. Impacted jurisdictions will be involved in decision-making regarding any offers of, or request for, assistance.
10. In some circumstances, locally-based Australian Government resources may be deployed in support of local authorities for limited periods without the need to activate COMDISPLAN. This may include the provision of Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC) Category One, which is activated for a set period of time under local arrangements.
11. For a jurisdiction to make a request under COMDISPLAN, one of the following criteria must be met:



- All government, community and commercial resources are exhausted or are likely to be exhausted.
  - The jurisdiction is unable to mobilise its own resources (or community and commercial resources) in time.
  - The Australian Government has a capability that the state or territory does not have.
12. The Australian Government will assess all requests for assistance and where approved will provide non-financial assistance.

## Consideration of diverse groups

Under COMDISPLAN, decisions and crisis communication made through preparedness, response, relief and early recovery phases need to consider the particular needs of people who may be disproportionately at risk of harm and ensure their inclusion in planning. This may include, but is not limited to:

- People with disability.
- People that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- First Nations communities.
- Refugee and migrant populations.
- People experiencing or at risk of gender-based violence.
- Lesbian, gay bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and other non-binary, non-cisgender (LGBTQIA+) people.
- Culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

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Under COMDISPLAN, ministers, senior officials and their agencies have clear responsibilities to ensure Australian Government coordination and response activities are well-aligned and responsive as the impacts and consequences of the crisis evolve.

The roles of the Lead Minister, the Australian Government Coordinating Agency, the Lead Coordinating Senior Official and Enabling Agencies under COMDISPLAN are outlined below.

### 5.1. Lead Minister

Under the AGCMF, the **Lead Minister** under COMDISPLAN is the Minister for Emergency Management. The Minister for Emergency Management is responsible for:

- Providing approval for the provision of Australian Government non-financial assistance.
- Overseeing a coordinated Australian Government response to the crisis and coordinating with Australian Government and jurisdiction counterparts.
- Exercising executive responsibilities and decision-making in consultation with Australian Government ministers with relevant interests.
- Acting as the key Australian Government spokesperson in alignment with a whole-of-Australian Government crisis communications strategy.
- Ensuring there are systems and procedures available so that they are readily contactable.
- Ensuring the office of the Minister for Emergency Management maintains business continuity plans in the event that the office is affected directly by a crisis.

Should a crisis require Tier 4 coordination as defined by the AGCMF, the Prime Minister will become the Lead Minister. The Prime Minister may delegate the Lead Minister role to another minister.

## 5.2. Australian Government Coordinating Agency

The **Australian Government Coordinating Agency** under COMDISPLAN is NEMA. NEMA is responsible for coordinating the provision of Australian Government non-financial assistance to states and territories. NEMA's roles and responsibilities in serving this overarching goal include:

- Monitoring crisis events that may impact the interests and responsibilities of Australia, at a level where Australian Government support may be required.
- Supporting the Lead Coordinating Senior Official in making decisions and recommendations on the level of coordination and response required.
- Preparing and positioning to lead the Australian Government response to a natural hazard event, or any other hazard where Australian Government non-financial assistance may be requested.
- Coordinating the operational response through the Australian Government Crisis Coordination Team (CCT).
- Facilitating shared situational awareness, including through the Australian Government National Situation Room (NSR) and National Coordination Mechanism (NCM).
- Providing a central point of communication between the Australian Government and states and territories during a crisis response, via the CCT.
- Developing and coordinating a whole-of-Australian Government crisis communications strategy and ensuring the dissemination of crisis communications products and public information (such as whole-of-Australian Government talking points and briefing materials).
- Undertaking crisis planning using the Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning (CASP) process to scope the situation and determine requirements and gaps, in consultation with relevant Australian Government agencies, jurisdictions and other relevant organisations.
- Maintaining Business Continuity Plans to ensure the Agency can continue to perform its role if it is affected directly by a crisis.
- Conducting a post-response evaluation and supporting the integration of relevant lessons identified into the continuous improvement of the Australian Government's crisis management arrangements, including COMDISPLAN.

If a crisis is determined to require Tier 4 crisis coordination under the AGCMF, NEMA remains the Australian Government Coordinating Agency and will work closely with the Prime Minister as the Lead Minister, via the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C).

## 5.3. Lead Coordinating Senior Official

The **Lead Coordinating Senior Official** is DCG EMR, who is responsible for:

- Ensuring NEMA is prepared and positioned to coordinate Australian Government actions to provide non-financial assistance to states or territories.
- Maintaining oversight of any requests for, or offers of, assistance received by Australian Government agencies from state, territory or foreign governments.
- Authorising phase changes for COMDISPLAN.
- Advising and supporting the Minister for Emergency Management in executing their responsibilities, including by seeking ministerial approval of Task Requests.
- Assessing the level of crisis coordination required, and establishing, reviewing and adapting the appropriate tier of coordination over the course of the crisis.
- Overseeing and coordinating the COMDISPLAN response.
- Liaising with state and territory counterparts to target response efforts.
- Facilitating agreement to whole-of-Australian Government coordination priorities and objectives.
- Engaging and collaborating with counterparts in Enabling Agencies.
- Convening and chairing AGCMF crisis forums, including NCMs, and briefing the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSC) or other Committee of Cabinet as required.

- Coordinating production of whole-of-Australian Government crisis communications products in alignment with the crisis communications strategy.
- Overseeing a post-response evaluation and the integration of lessons identified into relevant plans and processes.

## 5.4. Enabling Agencies

Depending on the need or hazard, **Enabling Agencies** can provide a variety of resources and capabilities in response to a request for assistance from a state or territory. Under COMDISPLAN, Enabling Agencies are responsible for:

- Accepting or rejecting Task Requests forwarded from NEMA.
- Providing regular updates to the CCT and relevant jurisdictions on the status of Task Requests, including on the completion of requests.
- Administering relevant programs.
- Providing specialist technical, scientific, intelligence or information capabilities.
- Supporting or conducting any other enabling activities to support consequence management activities.
- Deploying Liaison Officers (LOs) to the NSR as required to support shared situational awareness.
- Proactively contributing to the whole-of-Australian Government crisis communications strategy, dissemination of crisis communications products and public information (such as whole-of-Australian Government talking points and briefing materials).
- Engaging with counterparts in states, territories and/or international jurisdictions as required, in coordination with NEMA.

A more detailed list of Enabling Agencies and the capabilities that they offer can be found at Appendix A.

## 6. Operational Activities

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### 6.1. Overview

COMDISPLAN has two (2) phases: STANDBY and ACTIVE. The Deputy Coordinator General, Emergency Management and Response (DCG EMR) has the authority to initiate phase changes under COMDISPLAN.

DCG EMR or delegate will authorise a phase change from STANDBY to ACTIVE if a crisis is imminent or has occurred. The NSR will advise relevant Australian Government agencies and jurisdictions of phase changes to COMDISPLAN.

### 6.2. Authority to Request

The authority to request Australian Government non-financial assistance under COMDISPLAN is vested in one nominated official in each jurisdiction. In their absence, the officer performing their role holds this delegation.

The nominated jurisdiction officials pass requests for Australian Government non-financial assistance to NEMA for consideration by DCG EMR. Following receipt of ministerial approval for the provision of Australian Government non-financial assistance for a particular crisis, DCG EMR is authorised to request any appropriate agency to undertake the task.

The nominated jurisdictional officials are outlined below.

Jurisdiction	Nominated Official
New South Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Emergency Operations Controller</li> </ul>
Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency Management Commissioner – Victoria</li> <li>Chief Commissioner of Police</li> </ul>
Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Officer, Queensland Disaster Management Committee</li> </ul>
South Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Coordinator</li> </ul>
Western Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Emergency Coordinator</li> </ul>
Tasmania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Officer, State Emergency Management Committee</li> <li>State Controller</li> </ul>
Northern Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Officer, Northern Territory Emergency Management Council</li> </ul>
Australian Capital Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair of the Security and Emergency Management Senior Officials Group</li> </ul>
Norfolk Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair of the Norfolk Island Emergency Management Committee</li> </ul>
Cocos (Keeling) Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Territory Controller, Cocos (Keeling) Islands</li> </ul>
Christmas Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Territory Controller, Christmas Island</li> </ul>
Jervis Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Territory Controller, Jervis Bay</li> </ul>

### 6.3. Phases and Activities

#### STANDBY

COMDISPLAN is maintained in STANDBY phase as the default condition. Under STANDBY the following activities are undertaken by NEMA:

- Monitoring potential situations.
- Contingency planning for potential responses.
- Training and exercising in the use of COMDISPLAN.

#### ACTIVE

Where an event is imminent, or has occurred, DCG EMR or delegate can authorise the activation of COMDISPLAN. Under ACTIVE the following activities are undertaken by NEMA:

- Advise appropriate stakeholders that COMDISPLAN is to be activated in anticipation of an imminent crisis or has been activated by DCG EMR or delegate.
- Issue a formal notification of the COMDISPLAN activation via the NSR.
- Stand up a CCT to coordinate the whole-of-Australian Government response and facilitate Requests for Assistance (RFA).
- Initiate engagement with requesting jurisdiction(s) and relevant Australian Government agencies to validate the RFA and check it against COMDISPLAN criteria.

- Through the CCT, provide Task Requests to the Australian Government agency providing the assistance to the affected states or territories.
- Inform jurisdictions when Task Requests are approved.
- Deploy an LO to the affected jurisdiction, and/or other Australian Government agencies.
- Provide stakeholders with regular situational awareness updates, monitoring and reporting, via the NSR.
- Via the NSR's Crisis Intelligence capability, work with stakeholders to provide data-driven decision support.
- Establish a crisis communications cell, in line with advice provided in the Australian Government Crisis Communications Guidelines.
- Conduct a crisis planning process using the CASP methodology, developing subsequent planning products, informed by crisis intelligence.
- Regularly brief the Australian Government agencies and involved jurisdiction(s) on the status of Task Requests when appropriate.

Deployed Australian Government resources remain the responsibility of the parent agency. The CCT will facilitate liaison and working arrangements with the requesting jurisdiction.

In certain circumstances, under the direction of DCG EMR, the CCT may request the pre-positioning of Australian Government resources in advance of a crisis impact or a formal request for assistance, in order to reduce response time.

Jurisdictions should:

- Advise NEMA of the intention to request Australian Government non-financial assistance under COMDISPLAN.
- Forward signed requests for Australian Government non-financial assistance to the CCT.
- Work with the CCT to cooperatively facilitate the completion of approved tasks.
- Provide regular situation updates to the CCT, and NCM, to ensure situational awareness across the response effort.

#### ***Tier 4 coordination***

As the nature of a crisis changes over time, the Australian Government may shift and adapt coordination arrangements in accordance with the severity and complexity of the crisis. NEMA will consistently monitor and discuss the tiered arrangements and determine what level of coordination is required for a given crisis.

Tier 4 coordination under COMDISPLAN may be triggered by a natural hazard event where the complexity and severity of impacts and consequences requires the highest level of coordination across the full span of Australian Government interests.

If a crisis requires Tier 4 crisis coordination under the AGCMF, as agreed by relevant agencies, including NEMA and PM&C, NEMA remains the Australian Government Coordinating Agency and will continue to facilitate preparedness, response and early recovery. NEMA will also support all agencies involved in the response to fulfil their responsibilities under COMDISPLAN.

The Lead Minister role will transition to the Prime Minister who may wish to delegate some, or all, responsibilities to another minister.

The transition does not displace portfolio-specific responsibilities for responsible agencies and ministers as detailed in the AGCMF. Tier 4 coordination is expected to involve most or all Australian Government portfolios. Australian Government agencies may be requested to embed LOs into the CCT (within the NSR) in order to enhance crisis coordination.

## Deactivation and Post-Incident

Upon completion of all active Task Requests and confirmation of no further requirement of Australian Government non-financial assistance, coordination and communications, DCG EMR or delegate will approve the deactivation of COMDISPLAN, which will then revert to STANDBY.

The NSR will advise relevant stakeholders of the deactivation of COMDISPLAN. If relevant, all resources will be returned to the parent agency.

Lessons management processes are a crucial element of COMDISPLAN, ensuring that opportunities for continuous improvement of the plan and its associated arrangements are identified. Following deactivation of COMDISPLAN, NEMA will conduct an After-Action Review and will participate in those after-action activities conducted by other parties. For Tier 3 or Tier 4 coordination, a whole-of-Australian Government evaluation process is required under the AGCMF. The outcomes of this process will be distributed across the Australian Government and will inform updates to COMDISPLAN.

NEMA is responsible for the coordination of early recovery from natural hazard events and will ensure that all requests for assistance received from states and territories are appropriately concluded.

## 6.4. Coordination Arrangements

Key mechanisms under the AGCMF that could be leveraged to respond to natural hazards or requests for Australian Government non-financial assistance include the below.

### Crisis Communication and Public Information

To ensure consistent messaging across government during COMDISPLAN activations, DCG EMR, supported by NEMA, is responsible for coordinating whole-of-Australian Government key messages and public communication.

A crisis communication cell will be established to support consistent public messaging. This cell will prioritise and coordinate messages, including public safety messages and whole-of-Australian Government talking points. Agencies involved in the response will be requested to provide lead communications staff to form part of the cell. Agencies are responsible for providing timely and accurate information related to their responsibilities to support prompt updates and dissemination of crisis communication products.

The crisis communication cell will engage across governments, and with industry and stakeholders such as media outlets, to ensure information is provided to the public in a timely manner, thereby supporting safety messages and maintenance of public trust in crisis management systems. The crisis communication cell will also identify key government spokespeople and will establish a daily tempo of public information updates.

The crisis communication cell will be responsible for:

- Developing a whole-of-Australian Government crisis communications strategy.
- Coordinating crisis communications key messages and products with relevant states and territories.
- Determining products, channels and cadence of updates.
- Confirming key spokespeople and tempo of engagement.
- Liaising with media and public information officers across government, and other stakeholders including media outlets as required.
- Anticipating and resolving communication risks, including misinformation and disinformation.
- Incorporating and prioritising coordinated and consistent key messages across government, including public safety messages.
- Adjusting communications as the event, the media cycle and community needs evolve.
- Disseminating crisis communication products across the Australian Government, state and territory governments, industry and other stakeholders as required or deemed relevant.
- Supporting other areas of government that are organising media conferences.

- Supporting PM&C, the Prime Minister's Office and any other ministers on any crisis communication requirements.

## National Coordination Mechanism (NCM)

The NCM is the peak senior officials' crisis coordination mechanism for shared situational awareness, national coordination and synchronisation of effort under COMDISPLAN. It may bring together relevant Australian, state, territory and local government officials, industry, peak bodies, non-government organisations (NGOs) and eminent individuals for coordination, communication and collaboration during near-term preparedness, response, relief and early recovery.

- The relevant DCG NEMA (or delegate) convenes and chairs the NCM on behalf of the Australian Government, supported by NEMA. PM&C may elect to co-chair an NCM. Other relevant Australian Government agencies may co-chair, at the request of the NEMA chair or where they are the Australian Government Coordinating Agency.
- Participation in the NCM is not limited or defined by membership. NCM participation is flexible and can be wide-ranging. In the context of their role in the NCM, participants bring information, expertise and experience from their sectors, and actively contribute to shared situational awareness and cross-sectoral coordination of priorities and actions.
- Attendees can be from Australian and state and territory governments, industry or NGOs. NCM participation is determined on a case-by-case basis and can be restricted when required, as with the Australian Government NCM (NCM-AUSGOV).
- The NCM may be informed by subsidiary sector-specific coordination forums or crisis coordination nodes.

The role of the NCM under COMDISPLAN includes:

- Facilitating whole-of-Australian Government coordination and decision-making.
- Facilitating discussion of whole-of-Australian Government strategic intent and agreed-upon tasks.
- Maintaining near real-time shared situational awareness, including discussion of current impacts.
- Clarifying priorities to ensure community safety and stabilise systems.
- Informing crisis communication strategies, including products and cadence.
- Ensuring national leadership and the maintenance of public trust in government systems.
- Directly engaging with industry and NGOs in alignment with strategic intent and agreed tasks.
- Recording and distributing agreed actions where required.

## Australian Government National Situation Room (NSR)

The NSR is an operational hub that provides 24/7 all-hazards situational awareness, impact analysis and decision support through its crisis operations, intelligence and planning capabilities. During a crisis, Australian Government agencies, states and territories may be invited to deploy an LO into the CCT (based in the NSR) to facilitate coordination, collaboration and communication between the Australian Government and affected jurisdictions.

Situation reports from the NSR could include predictive analysis, impact assessments, actions being undertaken and activities to be prioritised. The National Joint Common Operating Picture (NJCOP) provides a near real-time, all-hazards platform designed to display all active significant crisis events. It provides a shared and common understanding both nationally and across borders during crisis events.

## Australian Government Crisis Coordination Team (CCT)

Operational crisis coordination will be undertaken by the CCT. The CCT is an all-hazards capability which can be established to support coordination of Australian Government actions, in line with the strategic intent set at the NCM. The CCT facilitates RFA in line with its holistic coordination role.



The CCT is scalable to meet the needs of effective consequence management during a crisis. The CCT is responsible for coordinating whole-of-Australian Government planning, utilising the CASP methodology – which is reviewed regularly as the situation evolves and validated through available intelligence, subject-matter experts and coordination forums such as the NCM. Input will be utilised from all relevant agencies and updates to planning will be shared with the NCM to guide priorities, the strategic intent and tasking.

If additional specialist advice is required by the CCT during the CASP process, existing sector advisers may be contacted to provide expert guidance, risk assessments and validation of planning. Advice could be sought in a variety of fields, including in legal, information technology and cyber security matters. This could include private sector and NGO leads.

Through the CCT, NEMA may facilitate targeted, functional crisis planning for specific and high priority consequences as identified. To support whole-of-Australian Government functional planning for high priority consequences, NEMA may request planners with expertise in the relevant domain to conduct a targeted CASP.

## Resourcing and Surge

Prolonged crises or crises of a significant scale or complexity could erode NEMA's capacity to respond to a crisis event under COMDISPLAN. When internal surge options are exhausted, NEMA will utilise surge workforce options across the Australian Public Service to augment its operational structures. These options may include the surge reserve maintained by the Australian Public Service Commission, which mobilises staff in large numbers to respond to significant crises when required.

### 6.5. Liaison Officers

Prior to or during an event, the CCT may request an LO from another Australian Government agency and/or jurisdiction to be deployed to the NSR, to assist the CCT in the coordination of Australian Government non-financial assistance or recovery assistance.

Similarly, if required, NEMA may offer to deploy a NEMA LO to a requesting jurisdiction, to assist in the coordination of Australian Government non-financial assistance.

### 6.6. Inter-Agency Communications

While initial contact and liaison on matters relating to COMDISPLAN may be made by telephone, the primary means of communication between NEMA and stakeholders will be by email. Alternative or overnight communication arrangements will be coordinated by the CCT as the situation demands. All telephone requests are to be confirmed by email as soon as possible.

Ongoing communications between the CCT and relevant agencies should be supported by the provision of regular situation reports or by the NEMA LO where deployed to the respective jurisdiction.

It is the responsibility of agencies to provide the CCT with appropriate contact details and to arrange internal distribution messages. All correspondence related to requests for non-financial assistance is documented by the CCT.

## 7. Requests for Assistance

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### 7.1. Domestic

Upon receipt of a request for Australian Government non-financial assistance from a state or territory, NEMA will assess whether:

- All government, community and commercial resources are exhausted or are likely to be exhausted.



- The jurisdiction is unable to mobilise its own resources (or community and commercial resources) in time.
- The Australian Government has a capability that the state or territory does not have.

The CCT records all offers or requests for domestic assistance, and forwards them on to the appropriate jurisdiction or agency for consideration.

## 7.2. International

The processes for offers of international assistance, requests for international assistance, and coordinating the reception of international assistance are covered under the arrangements in the enabling *Interim* Australian Government Reception of International Assistance Plan (AUSRIAPLAN). For further information, see AUSRIAPLAN.

## 8. Financial Arrangements

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The Australian Government does not normally seek financial reimbursement from jurisdictions for assistance provided under COMDISPLAN. However, when Australian Government assistance is provided for tasks not directly related to the safety of life and property, or that could be handled by jurisdictional resources (e.g. clean-up teams), the Australian Government may seek reimbursement from the affected jurisdiction.

Unless the Task Request to an Australian Government agency clearly states that costs are recoverable, costs incurred to fulfil the request will be absorbed by that agency. Where Australian Government agency resources are inadequate, because of insufficient funds or lack of a suitable appropriation item on which to call, no financial commitments can be entered into or expenditure incurred unless authorised by PM&C.

Where an agency is tasked to provide a response capability, the criteria for cost recovery will be clearly defined within the formal Task Request. Any ambiguity relating to reimbursement should be clarified prior to the acceptance of the tasking.

## 9. Associated Documents

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Agencies should read COMDISPLAN in conjunction with the following documents:

- Australian Government Crisis Management Framework ([Australian Government Crisis Management Framework \(pmc.gov.au\)](https://pmc.gov.au)).
- The *National Emergency Declaration Act 2020* ([Federal Register of Legislation - National Emergency Declaration Act 2020](#)) and NED Aide-Memoire.
- *Australian Government Guide for Financial Reimbursement*.
- Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning (CASP) Guidebook ([CASP Guidebook v.1.4 \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](#)).
- Exercise in a Box (toolkit available from NEMA).
- Lessons in a Box (toolkit available from NEMA).

## Appendix A: Capabilities of Australian Government Agencies

Enabling Agency	Capability
Airservices Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides Australian civil aviation traffic management including air traffic control and aeronautical information services. This includes aviation navigation and communication services and an extensive national footprint and communications network, including terrestrial resources and digital radio communications.</li> <li>Provides aviation rescue and firefighting services at major airports.</li> </ul>
Attorney-General's Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides legal policy advice.</li> <li>Provides legal advice through the Office of International Law and the Australian Government Solicitor.</li> </ul>
Australian Border Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides maritime and aviation search and surveillance support to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority as requested and within Maritime Border Command operational capabilities</li> <li>Offers border facilitation of international assistance (resources and equipment).</li> <li>The 24/7 Australian Border Operations Centre in Canberra can expedite entry of overseas personnel and equipment, if required.</li> </ul>
Australian Bureau of Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides population and other statistical and reference information.</li> </ul>
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a videoconferencing network covering all state capitals and Townsville</li> <li>The statutory authority responsible for administering and enforcing the <i>Competition and Consumer Act 2010</i> and other legislation, promoting competition, fair trading and regulating national infrastructure for the benefit of all Australians.</li> </ul>
Australian Federal Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinates the Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) capability as per the Australian DVI Activation and Response Plan.</li> <li>Provides general or specialist policing assistance as agreed through the memorandum of understanding that exists between the signatories of the Police Assistance in Neighbouring States/ Territories in Australia.</li> </ul>
Australian Maritime Safety Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintains a 24/7 Rescue Coordination Centre with an aviation and maritime communication capability and picture for search and rescue planning and response. This includes air drop capability over land and sea and Distress Beacon locating over land, sea, ice and air.</li> <li>Provides marine pollution identification, monitoring and dispersal, maritime ship casualty response and emergency towage and the promulgation of Maritime Safety Information.</li> </ul>
Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ANSTO is a publicly funded-research agency with responsibilities under the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation Act.</li> </ul>

Enabling Agency	Capability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANSTO can assist with preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery in a radiological or nuclear incident by providing scientific expert advice, technical assistance and making available on-site resources and facilities in areas such as radiation and nuclear safety, nuclear security, emergency response and nuclear forensics.</li> <li>• ANSTO maintains a 24/7 incident management team that can coordinate a response to a nuclear or radiological incident.</li> </ul>
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides specialist technical advice and operational field support if requested to assist during a nuclear or radiological incident. This includes operational planning support, deployment of technical assets and the provision of geospatial products across all elements of the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery phases of an event.</li> <li>• The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)-designated national authority for radiation emergencies, both domestic and overseas.</li> </ul>
Australian Transport Safety Bureau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides advice on transport safety matters related to accident/incident investigations, including occupational health and safety aspects of transport accident sites.</li> </ul>
Civil Aviation Safety Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides advice on aviation safety regulatory matters.</li> <li>• Implements safety-related actions in accordance with its functions (e.g. establishing a temporary restricted area to limit/control aviation activity in the interests of public safety, as required).</li> <li>• Provides technical advice and support to other agencies (including on the safe transport and carriage of dangerous goods by air).</li> <li>• Grants permission for the air transport of dangerous goods not usually permitted for carriage by air.</li> <li>• Approves the use of foreign-registered aircraft in Australia.</li> </ul>
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides advice and expertise on national agricultural impacts and consequences, biosecurity, animal health and welfare, epidemiology, plant pests and diseases, introduced marine pests, food residues, pesticide use and response, native animal and pest animal issues.</li> <li>• Can support linkages with state/territory agricultural departments.</li> </ul>
Department of Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a range of military capabilities that may be called upon to provide assistance to the civil community in emergency situations, as required and as appropriate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In seeking assistance from Defence, the most effective method is to define or outline the outcome or result required (the effect to be achieved) rather than seek assistance of a specific capability. By defining the desired outcome, Defence can consider a broader range of available capabilities and can assign the most suitable and available assets to achieve the required result.</li> <li>○ Capabilities may include: logistics support including airlift (fixed and rotary wing aircraft), sealift, land transport, engineering and medical support, temporary accommodation, imagery, and communications.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Enabling Agency	Capability
Department of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for Government financial accountability, governance and financial management frameworks, procurement policy and fostering the efficient and effective use of information and communications technologies by the Australian Government.</li> </ul>
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinates international offers of assistance, including liaison with foreign governments.</li> <li>Provides reverse consular assistance to foreign missions whose nationals are affected.</li> <li>Disseminates accurate and timely information to foreign governments about a crisis internationally, through Australian missions abroad.</li> </ul>
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops and maintains national health emergency plans, including environmental health, communicable disease, mass casualty and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear incident management.</li> <li>Monitors emerging communicable disease issues and outbreaks.</li> <li>Provides specialist technical advice and expertise, such as epidemiological information, advice on infection control measures, and provision of medical specialists through the AUSMAT system.</li> <li>Coordinates multi-jurisdictional public health response measures.</li> <li>Manages implementation of human biosecurity and border health measures.</li> <li>Supports communication with health sector partners and stakeholders, including activation of the National Health Emergency Media Response Network.</li> <li>Collaborates with the Australian Medical Transport Coordination Group.</li> <li>Meets international health reporting obligations, particularly the International Health Regulations.</li> <li>Manages the National Medical Stockpile and coordinates the deployment of items within it.</li> <li>Provides information on the location and number of care recipients in aged care facilities and likely vacancies in the event of an evacuation or relocation.</li> </ul>
Department of Home Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulates the security and resilience of the critical infrastructure sector:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides advice on transport security (aviation, maritime and offshore oil and gas) matters.</li> <li>Disseminates information to industry participants and responsible entities through a trusted information sharing network.</li> <li>Enacts a range of regulatory relief options in support of crisis response and recovery operations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Provides advice on regulatory frameworks relating to, and powers available under, the <i>Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018</i>.</li> <li>Can leverage its large network of critical infrastructure owners and operators under the Trusted Information Sharing Network.</li> </ul>

Enabling Agency	Capability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides Assisted Passage services to eligible refugee and humanitarian entrants (approved foreign nationals) to support their travel to Australia if required.</li> <li>• Provides settlement support to eligible refugee and humanitarian entrants (approved foreign nationals) on arrival in Australia if required.</li> <li>• Is a first point of contact to assist with the provision of interpreters or translators (via TIS National), if necessary.</li> <li>• Provides liaison and advice relating to ethnic communities.</li> <li>• Provides liaison and advice relating to replacement of immigration documentation to clients.</li> </ul>
Department of Industry, Science and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives advice on supply chains and provides on-ground business intelligence and case studies.</li> <li>• Provides sector-specific policy expertise, including on offshore petroleum spills and international space treaty obligations.</li> </ul>
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives policy advice on regulatory frameworks relating to telecommunications, broadcasting and postal sectors, including spectrum allocation and the National Triple Zero Emergency Call Service.</li> <li>• National broadcasters (the ABC and SBS) can provide emergency broadcasts.</li> </ul>
Department of Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can provide advice on available programs to support adversely affected people, families or communities.</li> <li>• Works closely with Services Australia on the delivery of payments.</li> <li>• Programs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Emergency Relief Services – providing support to address immediate needs in a time of crisis e.g. food vouchers and parcels, clothing, transport.</li> <li>○ Family Support program – provides funding to NGOs to support families, particularly those who are vulnerable or living in disadvantaged communities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Geoscience Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to a range of high value geospatially-enabled national data sets such as socio-economic characteristics, demographics, bushfire boundaries and a range of administrative boundaries through the Digital Atlas of Australia.</li> <li>• Provide access to satellite imagery of impacted areas.</li> <li>• Provide access to disaster impact information.</li> </ul>
National Emergency Management Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can deploy supplementary support from the National Emergency Management Stockpile, including emergency shelter, water purification and storage, flood mitigation equipment, emergency power generators and non-medical biohazard personal protective equipment. Some services from Panel suppliers can also be provided to supplement state and territory capabilities.</li> <li>• Disaster Relief Australia: A deployable capability which provides support to communities through early relief and recovery activities, including planning and logistics, clean-up and impact assessment.</li> </ul>

Enabling Agency	Capability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can provide a strategic planning capability.</li> </ul>
Services Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinates the provision of the National Emergency Call Centre Surge Capability (NECCSC) to assist states and territories and other Government agencies as agreed through NECCSC agreements.</li> <li>• Provides surge assistance in the form of: service officers; social workers and other health and allied health professionals; mobile IT capability and support; mobile service centres; live and interactive webcasting capability.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Note that arrangements involving the agency are subject to the Secretary (or delegate) authorising staff and/or resources to be in the field for a particular event.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provides Commonwealth disaster recovery payments and services, ensuring that affected individuals receive the financial support and resources they need to recovery after a disaster.</li> <li>• Provides on-the-ground support in state and territory recovery centres, including providing advice on essential social security and disaster payments and services.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: Request for Australian Government Non-Financial Assistance

Requests for Australian Government non-financial assistance may be phoned to NEMA in the first instance, but must be confirmed by email from the nominated official. The table below indicates the format for requests and should be used as a template.

REQUEST FOR AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT NON-FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	
Subject	Event and nature of request being made.
Date	This must include the date and local time of the request.
Request ID	This should be a jurisdiction number that can be used for reference (NEMA will allocate separate sequential numbers to each incoming request).
Situation	A brief summary of the reason for the request.
Own resources	An explanation as to why the requirement cannot be met from within the jurisdiction's existing resources (local, government, commercial or other).
Priority	Start date and duration of request.
Delivery location	Details of where the assistance is required.
Task description	A brief description of the need and effect required.  Requesting authorities should NOT specify the means for meeting the effect but should identify constraints that may influence NEMA's decision (e.g. landing area unsuitable for all but rotary wing aircraft).
Contact name and details	Full details of delivery point contact officer/s including name, location and telephone number as appropriate.
Approved by jurisdictional nominated official	Name, title, contact details and signature.
Comments	Any general comments that may contribute to providing the fastest and most effective response to the request.