Natural disaster financial assistance for local councils

**Case Example following a significant natural disaster event**

**Q: What financial assistance is available to a local council which has estimated that it may cost approximately $3 million to restore and repair roads damaged in a natural disaster event? Can the council appoint additional staff to act as a project manager and/or engineer to oversee the overall recovery works?**

**A:** Expenditure on salaries and wages of normal employees or other ongoing administrative costs that would have been incurred by councils in the ordinary course of business cannot be claimed under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA).

Some components of costs for salaries and wages may be claimed by councils and CMAs where the costs are extraordinary (i.e. are costs beyond those routinely budgeted for).

Under this scenario the local council may be eligible for reimbursement of costs relating to the protection of the asset during the natural disaster event and the subsequent restoration and repairs of the roads.

This could include activities associated with counter disaster operations, the undertaking of emergency protection works (temporary repairs) and the restoration of essential public assets.

Costs associated with the hire of additional plant and equipment required for use in the restoration of these essential public assets is also eligible for reimbursement under the NDRRA.

The restoration of public assets needs to be undertaken in accordance with current engineering standards/requirements and building codes/guidelines.

In undertaking repairs to essential public assets, local councils are able to seek reimbursement for costs associated with the overtime of existing staff required to perform this role (outside of normal working hours) as well as any costs of backfilling this existing staff member. Councils are also able to employ additional temporary fixed-term staff or contractors to undertake this role.

Travel expenses, allowances, accommodation and associated on-costs relating to the overtime, employment of temporary (fixed-term) staff and contractors and backfilling may also be claimed.

Local Councils should read the separate guide sheets on the eligibility of expenditure are provided in the section ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENDITURE for more detailed information.