Natural disaster financial assistance for local councils

## Relief and recovery expenditure

### Overview

Under the Natural Disaster Financial Assistance (NDFA) scheme, financial support is provided to assist local councils with costs associated with some operational activities mainly related to the establishment of Relief or Recovery Centres or a Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC).

Financial assistance is provided in accordance with the Commonwealth-State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA).

As of 1 July 2017, local councils are required to advise the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) if further time is required to incur eligible relief and recovery expenditure post 12 months following an event.

### Relief and recovery centres

Some extraordinary operational costs mainly associated with establishment of relief and recovery centres i.e. evacuation centres, may be reimbursed under Category A of the NDRRA (refer to the table below).

The Victorian Government is currently reviewing emergency management roles and responsibilities and as a result, eligibility may change.

Note: Relief and recovery centre costs require the event to be notified to the Commonwealth as an eligible natural disaster under the NDRRA (unlike counter disaster activities, emergency protection and asset restoration). Local councils should advise DTF as soon as possible after they have established a relief and/or recovery centre.

### Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre costs

Some costs associated with establishing and operating a MECC are also currently eligible for reimbursement subject to the event being notified to the Commonwealth as an eligible natural disaster under the NDRRA.

Councils should note that MECC costs are reimbursed solely from DTF through the NDFA scheme, and are not cost-shared with the Commonwealth under the NDRRA.

Examples of costs associated with MECCs, relief or recovery centres which are generally considered to be eligible or ineligible include:

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| **Eligible Costs** | **Ineligible Costs** |
| * Establishment and operation of a Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre, relief and recovery centre which has been notified to the Commonwealth under the NDRRA, including costs associated with bedding, the provision of basic medical needs and catering for evacuees.
 | * Establishment and operation of a Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre, Relief and Recovery Centres which has not been notified to the Commonwealth under the NDRRA.
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| * Extraordinary costs of emergency food or essential supply drops to affected communities.
 | * Evacuation of companion or domestic animals (pets) where owners have made their own emergency accommodation arrangements or are not required to relocate.
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| * Pre-deployment of resources (staff and equipment) to establish evacuation centres.
 | * Evacuation of commercial animals or those animals the owner has a business attachment to and/or requires a special licence or permit (such as livestock, race horses, animals kept for breeding purposes).
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| * Evacuation of companion or domestic animals (pets) including cost of establishing evacuation facilities and of providing basic care, such as food and shelter, where they are at risk of injury, isolation, hardship or distress if they remain at a location (even if the disaster has not reached that locality.
 | * Purchase of capital equipment (except where hire is not possible).
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| * Evacuation of patients from hospital and residents from aged/high care facilities.
* Providing advice to residents regarding evacuation
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### Other emergency relief and recovery costs

Other costs which may be eligible under Category A of the NDRRA include costs associated with:

* emergency food, clothing or temporary accommodation; and
* personal and financial counselling aimed at alleviating personal hardship and distress arising as a direct result of a natural disaster.

Examples of costs generally considered to be eligible include:

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| **Temporary relocatable accommodation** | **Personal and financial counselling** |
| * Preparation and management of temporary relocatable accommodation of natural disaster displaced people.
 | * Provision of financial counselling and psychological first aid to disaster affected people.
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| * Assessments of temporary housing needs for people whose primary places of residence have been affected during a disaster.
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| * Establishment and decommissioning of temporary relocatable accommodation for natural disaster displaced people.
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| * Extraordinary costs associated with the transporting, erecting and manning of temporary relocatable accommodation.
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### Advice regarding eligibility

For any queries relating to the eligibility of relief and recovery expenditure, please NDFA Team on
(03) 9651 2327 or email ndfa@dtf.vic.gov.au.