Natural Disaster Financial Assistance for local councils

Supporting documentation required with claims

## ****Overview****

## **When lodging a claim in DTF’s Automated Claims Management System (ACMS), local councils are now required to provide the following supporting documentation:**

1. **Evidence of the event and impact on the local government area including local media articles, and State Emergency Service and Bureau of Meteorology reports (this is only required for the first claim). This evidence provides an understanding of the overall impact of the event for the claim assessment and audit process;**
2. **Details of expenditure incurred, which provides a direct link to the eligible activities undertaken:**

**For all relief and recovery activities provide**

* **detailed general ledger reports and/or a transaction listing (in excel format), which clearly outlines all expenditure being claimed and reconciles with the total claim amount which has been lodged in the ACMS – see section “Transaction listing” for additional information.**
* **all external invoices associated with relief and recovery activities. All invoices should correspond with an appropriate item line on the transaction listing.**
* **all timesheets relating to the general ledger as well as position descriptions associated with undertaking relief and recovery activities (note that all position descriptions are required to be approved by DTF prior to each role commencing).**
* **all administrative data that supports the transactions including contract/work orders, timesheets and minutes of meetings.**

**For Restoration of Essential Public Assets (in addition to the above documentation) provide**

* **evidence demonstrating the nexus between the natural disaster and the restoration of damage of the essential public asset. Evidence includes:**
1. **pre-disaster condition, the post-disaster condition, and post-restoration condition of the asset – see section “Pre and post restoration evidence”.**
2. **that restoration has been undertaken using current engineering and design standards and not betterment (note that any costs associated with betterment and/or enhancement of the asset which is contributed by the Council needs to be lodged as part of a claim – see section on “Current engineering and design standards”.**
3. **Mitigation strategies i.e. disaster resilience plans, risk profiles and hazard mapping.**

**Without the supporting documentation (as outlined in this document), claims will be deemed ineligible for reimbursement under the NDFA. Additionally, local councils are required to keep other additional supporting documentation (not already provided to DTF) on-hand for a period of seven years from the end of the financial year in which the expenditure has been claimed or until such time as the clams are subject to audit by the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office or the Commonwealth.**

## ****Transaction listing****

**A transaction listing generally refers to a general ledger that includes a reasonable level of information regarding the nature of relief and recovery works. Where such information is not available on a general ledger, councils are encouraged to provide additional information through the ACMS Transaction Listing template, which was developed by DTF following an audit of 2012-13 expenditure, by the Commonwealth’s appointed auditor, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), as a guide for councils. The template can be found on the ACMS under ‘**Documents, Guides & Forms**’ (on the menu, left hand side) entitled ‘*ACMS Transaction Listing’*.**

**If using your own transaction listing, please ensure it includes the same information as the template (i.e. Date, Invoice Number, Supplier and Description of Works Undertaken). In the absence of receiving this information, the NDFA Team will be required to request missing information, which may risk slowing down the claims process.**

## ****Pre and Post-damage and Post-Restoration evidence required****

Claims that do not include the three types of evidence relating to (1) pre-disaster condition, (2) post-disaster condition, and (3) post-restoration condition of assets damaged during an eligible disaster will be ineligible for reimbursement under the NDFA scheme.

**1. Pre-disaster condition**

The pre-disaster standard of a damaged asset is considered to be the condition of the asset and its level of functionality or utility *prior to* the eligible natural disaster.

In the case of a road asset, the pre-disaster standard includes factors such as traffic and vehicle capacity, classification and/or role of the road within the road network, signage, street parking, road width and number of carriageways – for example, a gravel road is replaced using gravel and not bitumen.

To demonstrate the pre-disaster standard of a damaged asset, councils *must* be able to demonstrate the location, nature and pre-disaster condition of the damaged asset through one or more of the following means:

* the primary and most direct evidence will include visual and geospatial data and information which may include (but is not limited to) satellite images, Google earth or Google Street View images, photographs, video footage. Evidence provided needs to be clear with regards to the timing of the pre-condition evidence i.e. 12 months prior to the actual natural disaster occurring.
* In the absence of any photographic evidence, other information (less direct) that can be provided to can include Engineer Reports, an Asset Register or Asset Maintenance/Inspection Log, or an inspection report undertaken or verified by a suitably qualified professional such as the VicRoads assessor.
* If there is still no substantive basis using the information identified above that can prove the damages are **directly attributable** to the event, then this assessment outcome will be properly documented by VicRoads as part of the claim assessment, with a reasonable reduction on ineligible costs recommended back to DTF.
* **Note: Road Management Plans are not sufficient evidence to demonstrate the pre-condition of assets prior to an event.**

**2. Post-disaster condition**

The post-disaster condition is the condition of the asset *after* the disaster has occurred but *before* the restoration works are undertaken, demonstrating that the damage to the asset was caused as a direct result of the disaster. Evidence demonstrating the post-disaster condition includes include visual and geospatial data and information which may include (but is not limited to) satellite images, Google earth images, photographs, video footage of the damage sustained to the asset *before* the restoration works on the asset are undertaken.

**3. Post-restoration condition**

The post-restoration condition is the condition of the asset *after* the restoration works are undertaken. Evidence demonstrating the post-restoration condition of the asset includes include visual and geospatial data and information which may include (but is not limited to) satellite images, Google earth images, photographs, video footage of the asset *after* the restoration works on the asset are undertaken.

## Current building and engineering standards

The allowance for ‘current engineering and building standards’ under the NDFA/NDRRA is intended to provide a modest level of flexibility to utilise ‘contemporary (rather than the use of obsolete or out-dated) construction methodologies and building materials’. For example, in the case of restoring or replacing a timber bridge asset, this may include using concrete or steel instead of timber.

In the situation where a damaged essential public asset cannot be reinstated in the same way, for example, due to site constraints, consideration may be given to a reasonable alternative, if agreement can be negotiated with the Commonwealth. Local councils should contact DTF and VicRoads in this instance.

In addition, costs incurred in restoring or replacing an asset to a **more disaster resilient level** (betterment) or **higher level of service** (enhancement), unless otherwise agreed by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments[[1]](#footnote-1) are **ineligible** for reimbursement**.**

## ****Position descriptions and details of salary and overtime costs****

**Should your local council need to create a position for the coordination of the clean-up and restoration of essential public assets as part of the natural disaster recovery process, please ensure that a copy of the Position Description (PD) is forwarded to the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) *prior to the role commencing*.**

**Once approved, the PDs can be saved to FileShare in your entities folder. Further information regarding what should included in the PD is outlined in the guidance “Salaries and wages”.**

**Please ensure the employee name, date, amount, and the activity undertaken whilst on overtime are included in each claim for salary or overtime cost reimbursement.  Alternatively, timesheets can be attached, provided they include the required information (i.e. employee name which can be easily matched to the ledger).**

**Please contact the NDFA Team if you have any queries relating to the NDFA process on (03) 9651 2327 or at** [**ndfa@dtf.vic.gov.au**](http://ndfa@dtf.vic.gov.au)**.**

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| **Checklist for local councils:Supporting documentation for NDFA claims****(all documentation required to be included with each claim lodged in the ACMS)** |
| 1. **Evidence of the event and impact on the local government area:**
* **local media articles**
* **State Emergency Service**
* **Bureau of Meteorology**
1. **Details of expenditure incurred, which provides a direct link to the eligible activities undertaken:**

**For all relief and recovery activities**1. **Detailed general ledger reports and/or a transaction listing (in excel format.**
2. **All external invoices associated with relief and recovery activities.**
3. **All timesheets relating to the general ledger as well as position descriptions associated with undertaking relief and recovery activities.**
4. **all administrative data that supports the transactions including contract/work orders, timesheets and minutes of meetings.**

**For Restoration of Essential Public Assets in addition to the above documentation**1. **Detailed general ledger reports and/or a transaction listing (in excel format.**
2. **All external invoices associated with relief and recovery activities.**
3. **Pre-disaster condition, the post-disaster condition, and post-restoration condition of the asset.**
4. **Evidence that restoration has been undertaken using current engineering and design standards and not betterment.**

**Mitigation strategies i.e. disaster resilience plans, risk profiles and hazard mapping.** | **Yes** | **No** |

1. For example, replacing undamaged guardrails with new standard guardrails, including new traffic calming devices, widening the carriageway of a narrow single lane road, adding kerbing, or including storm water drainage where none previously existed. To claim these or similar costs the relevant council needs to obtain the approval for the proposed work by DTF which, if in agreement, will seek Emergency Management Australia’s agreement to enable a council to include these costs in a subsequent claim. Please note that this prior approval does not prevent the work being undertaken should a council choose to do so, it only prevents the costs being eligible for reimbursement. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)