

Developing the Second National Action Plan

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People in Australia are facing intense and frequent natural hazards. Bushfire, drought, flood, storms and tropical cyclones can have significant impacts on exposed communities, the economy, infrastructure and the environment.

With drivers such as changing climate, population growth, rapid urbanisation and infrastructure growth, new risks to people and the things they value are being generated and accumulated faster than risks are being reduced.

Disasters arise when hazards intersect with what we value and when the consequences exceed capacities to cope. Communities are more exposed and more vulnerable to disaster as social, technological and infrastructure systems become more connected. When one fails, ripple effects happen. Now, more than ever before, we need to take action to reduce disaster risks.

...now is the time to transform systems to build resilience, and to reduce the underlying drivers of disaster.

The National Recovery and Resilience Agency is improving its knowledge of coordinating national efforts to understand and address systemic disaster risk. Significant efforts continue towards building Australia's resilience to the effects of natural hazards through reducing disaster risk.

The challenge

A whole-of-society approach is required to reduce disaster risk and everyone has a role to play. Despite commitments to build and improve resilience, human actions and choices are creating risks. Doing more of the same is not enough and now is the time to transform systems to build resilience, and to reduce the underlying drivers of

disaster. Collectively, governments, organisations, the private sector, communities and people's actions can reverse trends. The *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* which was released in April 2019 and endorsed by the then Council of Australian Governments in 2020, sets the agenda for all sectors to work together reduce disaster risk.

National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework

The *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* represents a shift in thinking about disaster risk. The framework outlines a national and comprehensive approach to reduce risks and prevent the creation of new risks and provide the information to do so. It establishes a foundation for reform and takes a whole-of-society, systems and values-based approach. The framework is an anchor for the development of new disaster risk and resilience actions, policy goals, capabilities and competencies across all sectors.

The framework reflects the domestic implementation of the international *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* and is broadly aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris Agreement.

The 4 priority areas of the framework are:

- Priority 1: Understand disaster risk
- Priority 2: Accountable decisions
- Priority 3: Enhanced investment
- Priority 4: Governance, ownership and responsibility.

Sustainable development and climate change adaptation can result in outcomes that reduce

systemic disaster risk and build resilience. The success of one framework is dependent on the success of another. Progressing the implementation of the framework is, in part, driven through national action plans.

National Action Plans

The First National Action Plan, released in December 2020, was a starting point. It outlined initiatives aligned to the framework that were already underway and consolidated those efforts by the Australian, state and territory governments and the private sector into one document. Feedback on the first plan indicated that a Second National Action Plan needed to be highly strategic, inclusive and forward-looking to drive cultural, behavioural and procedural change. The Second National Action Plan will span 2 financial years.

Developing the Second National Action Plan

The Second National Action Plan is being developed in partnership with the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience and through comprehensive consultation across all sectors, including land-use planning, infrastructure, emergency management, social policy, agriculture, education, community development, energy and the environment. The Second National Action Plan identifies the transformational, system-wide actions necessary to accelerate the reduction of disaster risk.

The National Recovery and Resilience Agency (NRRRA) is uniquely placed to lead this work given its role.¹ The NRRRA is providing national leadership and convening authority to bring people together to focus effort to reduce disaster risk for the long term and improve Australia's preparedness for future events.

To date, events have occurred with a broad range of sector representatives and community groups. These include:

- preliminary discovery discussions, held online in March 2022
- webinar: Developing Australia's Second National Action Plan, held online in April 2022

- Catalysing Change workshop, held in Sydney in April 2022
- cross-sector panels held during 2022
- a discussion paper that was open for consultation during May and June 2022
- an online survey was conducted during May and June 2022
- subject deep dives, held online in June 2022
- the From Risk to Resilience Summit, held in Sydney in June 2022.

These opportunities were designed to enable collaboration and connection across sectors and government levels and to provide practical advice on how to work together with clarity and accountability.

Next steps

The Second National Action Plan will detail the collective actions and partnerships needed to enable nationally significant initiatives to be delivered. The plan will identify the investment needed to build place-based resilience and reduce risk for the long term. It will be the roadmap for how Australia is going to get there.

More information about the development of the Second National Action Plan is available at www.knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/second-national-action-plan-for-disaster-risk-reduction.

Endnote

1. The NRRRA was established in response to a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. The NRRRA provides national leadership and strategic coordination for disaster resilience, risk reduction and preparedness for future disasters across all levels of government in Australia.