



Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department

National Security
Capability Development Division

NATIONAL SECURITY UPDATES

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National Security Capability Development News

The following are extracts / summaries of news items and media releases that may be of interest to the emergency management sector.

10 DECEMBER 2009

SECURITY COLLEGE REFLECTS ANU NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The announcement by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd that Australia's first National Security College will be established at The Australian National University was welcomed by ANU Vice-Chancellor Professor Ian Chubb.

Professor Chubb said the establishment of the College was a reflection of the role of the national university as a significant contributor to Australia's national interest.

"In August this year at the Annual Burgmann College Lecture, the Prime Minister announced plans for a new strategic relationship with ANU that would see a "re-invigorated" relationship between the Australian Government and ANU.

"The National Security College is the first element of that reinvigorated relationship, and harnesses the expertise of ANU as a strategic endowment for the nation.

"We look forward to delivering our end of that bargain" he said.

Professor Chubb said that the appointment of Rhodes Scholar and former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Michael L'Estrange AO as founding Executive Director would ensure the NSC had both the academic rigour expected of an ANU academic unit and the policy and public administration responsiveness expected by the Australian Government.

23 DECEMBER 2009

COMMONWEALTH AND NSW GOVERNMENTS AGREE ON DISASTER RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP

Commonwealth Attorney-General, Robert McClelland and New South Wales Minister for Emergency Services, Steve Whan, agreed on a \$15 million joint implementation plan for disaster resilience initiatives in New South Wales.

These measures will be provided under the Commonwealth's new \$110 million Natural Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP). The Program assists Government and non government agencies, in conjunction with the private sector, to cooperatively prepare for, and respond to, major natural disasters.

"The plan has been designed to maximise flexibility in targeting local priorities. It is the first to be signed between the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments," Mr McClelland said.

Further information on the Natural Disaster Resilience Program can be found at www.ema.gov.au

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31 DECEMBER 2009

COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANCE FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRE VICTIMS

After a visit to affected communities by the Parliamentary Secretary for Western Australia, The Hon Gary Gray MP, the Commonwealth Government has announced that it will provide financial assistance to communities affected by bushfires in Western Australia under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA).

This assistance will apply to natural disaster declared areas, including Dandaragan, Coorow and Toodyay.

Funding will be provided in cooperation with the Western Australian Government.

Inquiries can be made to the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia on (08) 9323 9552 or wandrara@fesa.wa.gov.au

8 JANUARY 2010

COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANCE FOR FLOOD AFFECTED QUEENSLAND COMMUNITIES

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, announced the Commonwealth Government will provide financial support to the Queensland Government to assist with costs associated with helping communities in Central and South West Queensland impacted by recent heavy rain and flooding.

Commonwealth support is being provided to the Queensland Government through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. This assistance will reimburse the state of Queensland for a share of the costs associated with helping flood affected communities to rebuild damaged public infrastructure.

For more information visit www.attorneygeneral.gov.au

12 JANUARY 2010

COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANCE FOR FLOOD AFFECTED COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland and Federal Member for Lingiari, Warren Snowdon, announced that the Commonwealth Government will provide financial support to the Northern Territory Government to assist with costs associated with helping communities impacted by recent flooding.

Commonwealth support is being provided to the Northern Territory Government through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA). This assistance will reimburse the Territory for a share of the costs associated with helping flood affected communities to rebuild damaged public infrastructure.

For more information visit www.attorneygeneral.gov.au

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28 JANUARY 2010

COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANCE FOR FLOOD AFFECTED QUEENSLAND COMMUNITIES

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, announced that the Commonwealth Government will provide financial assistance to North Queensland communities impacted by recent heavy rain and flooding caused by ex-Tropical Cyclones Olga and Neville.

Funding will include assistance for the restoration of essential public infrastructure as well as costs associated with counter disaster operations.

Commonwealth assistance is being provided to the Queensland Government through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) and will be available in 14 affected local government area.

Residents requiring assistance with storm, flood and cyclone damage should contact the Queensland State Emergency Service (SES) on 132 500.

For more information visit www.attorneygeneral.gov.au

07 FEBRUARY 2010

ANNIVERSARY OF BLACK SATURDAY BUSH FIRES

The Australian Government today joined with Victoria in marking the first anniversary of the devastating Black Saturday bushfires.

The Black Saturday bushfires were Australia's worst natural disaster since Federation, claiming 173 lives, devastating entire towns and communities, destroying more than 2,000 homes and leaving thousands of residents homeless.

February 7 will be forever etched in the nation's memory as a day of mourning but also one of tremendous spirit and inspiration.

The tragedy brought out the best of the Australian character and inspired countless acts of bravery and generosity.

Our thoughts today are with the survivors of the bushfires as they remember the people they lost and work to rebuild their lives and towns.

Their quiet courage has inspired a nation.

The Australian Government has worked closely with the local communities, the Victorian and local governments, business and non-government organisations to provide more than \$455 million to assist in the reconstruction and recovery of bushfire affected communities.

In August 2009, the Australian Government welcomed the interim report of the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission and committed to implement all of the interim recommendations directed at the Commonwealth.

In cooperation with the States and Territories, the Australian Government has supported a range of measures to ensure that Australians are better prepared for bushfires.

This has included, for example, the provision of \$26 million for the development of a national telephone-based emergency warning system, 'Emergency Alert' and convening the inaugural bushfire pre-season briefing for emergency management officials.

Today's anniversary represents an important opportunity to reflect on this terrible tragedy and to acknowledge the critically important work of our emergency services and the generous support of the Australian community in helping those in need.

For more information visit http://www.pm.gov.au/Media_Centre

09 FEBRUARY 2010

TRIAL OF BUSHFIRE FIRE DETECTION CAMERAS

Federal Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, Victorian Minister for Emergency Services, Bob Cameron, and New South Wales Minister for Forest Resources, Ian Macdonald, announced a comprehensive trial of bush fire detection cameras.

The trial will commence on 15 February in the Otway Ranges in Victoria and near Tumut in New South Wales and will run until the end of April, with a possible one month extension depending on prevailing conditions.

The cameras are able to continually monitor bushland and automatically detect smoke and lightning to enable the provision of exact information on where and when a fire starts. This will potentially assist fire fighters get to a fire in the shortest possible time in order to prevent it becoming an inferno.

The trial will be conducted in two parts, with locations chosen to provide broad area coverage and the opportunity for controlled testing where appropriate. Cameras for the trial will be provided by three private contractors: Firewatch, Eyefi and Forestwatch.

In Victoria, twelve cameras will be trialled at four locations covering the Otway Ranges at Mt Porndon, Crowes Lookout, Peters Hill and Mt Cowley under 'real conditions' without the use of controlled burning.

In New South Wales, three cameras will be trialled at Mt Tumorrana in the Tumut region under 'controlled conditions' which will include test burning to evaluate the performance of the system under simulated conditions.

The Australian Government will fund the trial, estimated to cost \$3 million, with coordination and facilitation provided by the Victorian and New South Wales Governments.

The Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) will evaluate the trial by comparing the effectiveness of different camera systems and examining their ability to accurately detect fires, avoid false detections, and their potential to be integrated into existing emergency management processes, including for example, providing timely warnings to the community.

This analysis will enable the technology to be evaluated against other existing bush fire detection systems including fire spotters in towers or planes, public reports through the triple-zero emergency service, or through satellite systems.

This trial demonstrates the strong commitment of Commonwealth and State Governments to pursue all possible avenues to better protect Australian communities from bushfire.

For more information visit www.attorneygeneral.gov.au

17 FEBRUARY 2010

COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANCE FOR NEW SOUTH WALES FLOOD AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, today announced that the Commonwealth Government will provide financial assistance to New South Wales communities affected by recent flooding in the south coast and far west.

Commonwealth assistance is being provided to the New South Wales Government through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) and will apply to disaster declared areas on the south coast including Bega and Eurobodalla Shires as well as Central Darling and Cobar Shires in the far west.

For more information visit www.attorneygeneral.gov.au

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19 FEBRUARY 2010

COMMONWEALTH AND VICTORIA AGREE ON DISASTER RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP

Federal Attorney-General, Robert McClelland and Victorian Minister for Emergency Services, Bob Cameron, today announced a \$7.8 million joint implementation plan for disaster resilience initiatives in Victoria.

The plan formally implements the National Partnership Agreement on Natural Disaster Resilience signed by the Prime Minister and the Victorian Premier at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting in December 2009.

The implementation plan will be funded under the Commonwealth's new \$110 million Natural Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP) which assists Government and non government agencies, in conjunction with the private sector, to cooperatively prepare for, and respond to, major natural disasters.

Further information on the Natural Disaster Resilience Program can be found at www.ema.gov.au

03 MARCH 2010

COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANCE FOR QUEENSLAND FLOOD AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, announced that the Commonwealth Government will provide financial assistance to Queensland communities affected by recent flooding.

Commonwealth assistance is being provided to Queensland through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) and will apply to disaster declared areas in 56 Local Government Areas throughout the State.

Funding will include assistance for the restoration of essential public infrastructure as well as costs associated with counter disaster operations.

The Commonwealth, through Emergency Management Australia, will continue to work closely with Queensland authorities, local government and community organisations to ensure that affected communities have all the support they need during this difficult period.

For more information visit www.attorneygeneral.gov.au

06 MARCH 2010

Tsunami Awareness Project

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, and Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) Director of Life Saving, Peter George, promoted an innovative awareness program at Bondi Beach to help the general public and surf life savers better prepare and respond to tsunami warnings.

"The earthquake in Chile last weekend and the subsequent issue of tsunami warnings for the east coast of Australia demonstrated that while the tsunami warning system worked well, sections of the public chose to ignore the warnings," Mr McClelland said.

The awareness program, prepared in conjunction with the States and Territories, includes a new interactive online resource to assist life savers and other beach management personnel deal with the general public in the event of a tsunami warning.

Education materials will also be provided for school kids and recreational boaters, fishers and other marine users about the nature of tsunamis, what to look out for and basic actions that should be taken in the event of a warning, including:

- not travelling to the coast or headlands to watch the tsunami;
- the importance of moving inland or to higher ground;
- returning and securing boats that are in shallow water; and
- moving vessels already at sea to deep water, well offshore.

Since the devastating Boxing Day tsunami in 2004, Australia has made significant advances in the coordination of responses to advise and alert the public of tsunami warnings.

Tsunami warnings are provided through the Australian Tsunami Warning System (ATWS), which is jointly operated by the Bureau of Meteorology and Geoscience Australia, and is provided through the Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre (JATWC) which operates 24-hours a day, seven days a week to detect and verify tsunami threats to Australia.

The centre uses sea surface buoys and undersea sensors to measure earthquake activity and the likelihood of a tsunami affecting Australia. In the event of a tsunami threat to Australia, warnings are issued through the media, including local radio and television announcements as well as messages through emergency service workers, lifeguards and surf life savers.

A CD Rom of the awareness program has been distributed to all Australian Surf Life Saving Clubs and is also available at www.beachsafe.org.au/tsunami

10 MARCH 2010

Emergency Management Cooperation with New Caledonia

Australia and French New Caledonia have agreed to strengthen their cooperation in preventing and responding to bushfires and other natural disasters, under a Letter of Intent signed by the Attorney-General, Robert McClelland.

The Letter of Intent calls for Australia and New Caledonia to:

- share information about preparations for natural disasters and emergencies, including disaster response plans;
- share information on each Government's emergency management frameworks;
- undertake professional development of emergency managers, including exchanging 'lessons learned' experiences from recent natural disasters; and
- build networks between Australian and New Caledonian emergency management agencies including through the exchange of technical experts and specialists.

The Letter of Intent also calls for emergency management authorities in both countries to establish arrangements for the exchange of personnel in response to emergencies.

For more information visit www.attorneygeneral.gov.au