Victorian Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements

Tip Sheet 5: Counter Disaster Operations (Category B - Clause 4.3.2 (a))

## Introduction

Victoria's Natural Disaster Financial Assistance (NDFA) scheme is available to Delivery Agencies including local councils, to relieve some of the financial burden that may be experienced following a disaster in accordance with the [Australian Government’s Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA)](https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/Documents/Natural-Disaster-Relief-and-Recovery-Arrangements/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-2018.pdf). The DRFA does not cover all costs resulting from a disaster.

This Tip Sheet relates to Clause 4.3.2 (a) under Category B of the DRFA for the undertaking of **Counter Disaster Operations**.

**Examples of Costs associated with the provision of Counter Disaster Operations under Category B**

Some costs which are associated with the undertaking of counter disaster operations (CDO) under Category B, are eligible for reimbursement.

Eligible CDO activities must be intended to reduce the need for other forms of assistance under the arrangements. In order for Delivery Agencies to claim costs for CDO, they must be able to demonstrate that the costs are extraordinary, relate to eligible counter disaster operations activities and that they have been required to engage additional personal to undertake these activities.

Generally, counter disaster operations activities under Category B are undertaken with the intent of protecting the general public and ensuring public health and safety in public areas i.e. the community (as a whole) will benefit from the activity being undertaken.

Examples of eligible and ineligible costs associated with undertaking of counter disaster operations intended to protect the general public and ensuring public health and safety in public areas i.e. the community (as a whole) will benefit from the activity being undertaken have been directly affected by, an eligible disaster, have been included in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

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| Table 1: Eligible expenditure | |
| **Establishment and operation of temporarily locally positioned operational base camps** used by front line emergency services personnel to undertake bushfire suppression activities or incident control centres used to support the disaster response operations including assistance to disaster affected people/communities. |
| **Bushfire suppression** activities to protect the general public, including grading or dozer support or construction of fire breaks (such as working with the Incident Control Centre to clear firebreaks with machinery to protect high voltage power transmission lines) in order to protect the general public. |
| **Consumables** such as chainsaw chains, ropes, batteries, plastic sheeting, outboard motor parts, tarpaulins and personal protective equipment and uniforms used during an event (as long as there was no stock on hand prior to the event). |
| Extraordinary costs associated with overtime or an additional contractor to assist in **operating a Council owned Aerodrome, which is required to be used for essential food and supply drops, the transportation of emergency personnel and/or to evacuate members of the general public.** |
| **Hire of additional plant and equipment** to undertake eligible activities. |
| **Capital purchases of assets -** if it can be clearly demonstrated that purchasing an asset for the purpose of providing recovery assistance is effective and viable solution. Refer to the line in this table for advice on emergency generators for further detail.  Note that Capital purchases for computers, phones and software including dashcams is ineligible. |
| **Emergency generators –**if the cost of an emergency generator required to be purchased is less than the hire cost, the Delivery Agency may claim the cost of the purchase as eligible expenses. Appropriate evidence would need to be provided to demonstrate this is the most cost effective solution. If the purchase cost is more than the hire cost, the Delivery Agency is able to claim equivalent hire costs for the generator including operational costs if not covered by the hiring arrangement. If the generator is issued in subsequent DRFA notified disasters, operating costs (i.e. fuel, transportation) will be considered as eligible expenses. |
| **Extraordinary salaries and wages (above what would normally be incurred) such as overtime, additional allowances** for undertaking eligible counter disaster operations. |
| **MECC operational costs** associated with overtime when undertaking the:   * + acquiring, deploying, and coordinating resources to support the disaster response, community support and relief and recovery activities.   + providing accurate logging of information, communication, and decisions for recording, debriefing, and planning purpose.   + collating community information and disseminating the information to relevant agencies.   + registration of volunteer emergency workers.   + contributing to the damage assessment process, including maintaining and validating records relating to damage and loss assessment data for impacted residential properties. |
| **Restoration of a facility** or **assets** damaged while undertaking eligible counter disaster operations activities, or where an asset has been damaged when used as an evacuation point. |
| Establishment of **temporary access routes** required for disaster relief operations to allow individuals and families to return to their home. |
| **Traffic management and road closures** in order to maintain public health and safety before, during and immediately after the event (irrespective of whether emergency or immediate works are undertaken). |
| **Transportation** of labour, equipment and materials necessary for eligible disaster relief operations. |
| **Vehicle or equipment repairs,** and additional servicing required as a direct consequence of eligible counter disaster operations, such as fuel and oils. |

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| Table 2: Ineligible expenditure |
| **Advertising** where not associated with an eligible DRFA activity i.e. community events. |
| **Caravan Parks -** Restoration of damage or debris located in Caravan Parks (owned by a private operator or local council). |
| **Capital purchases of assets, computers, phones and software** including dashcams**.** Please refer to Table 1 for the exception to this. |
| **Day Labour – ordinary salaries and wages** associated with eligible Category B counter disaster operations. |
| **Driveways –** re-grading of private driveways where there is no link to a disaster and the driveway was not damaged as a direct result of a Delivery Agency or State Agency undertaking a counter disaster operation. |
| **Fencing including the:**   * Establishment costs associated with a volunteer organisation repairing fencing on a residential property. * Rebuilding of fencing on a residential property including costs associated such as fuel for generators. * Temporary fencing to contain livestock such as cows and sheep, wandering free as a result of a disaster. |
| **Internal plant hire.** |
| **Parks, Gardens, Reserves, Access Tracks, Fire Trails, State and National Parks** – clean-up of debris. |
| **Powerlines –** removal of a tree on a road reserve which is not impacting on residents and properties. Powerlines are also owned by ineligible undertakings as defined under the DRFA. |
| **Planning and building permit fee waivers.** |
| **Recovery** in **general –** the engagement of contractors/consultants responsible for advising the Delivery Agency of general recovery following a disaster not associated with an eligible activity. |
| **Recovery Plans –** preparation of a plan transitioning from response to recovery. |
| **Reports –** the commissioning of a report undertaken by an external consultant not associated with an eligible activity i.e. economic impact of a disaster. |
| **Restoration** of community assets not damaged whilst used as a MECC. |
| **Saleyard fees –** associated with the sale of disaster impacted stock. |
| **Smoke monitor hire –** associated with keeping the general public informed of air quality levels. |
| **Staffing Costs -** Compassionate leave and staff counselling as well as normal day labour salaries and wages outside of the DRFA – refer to the section on Salaries and Wages in this Tip Sheet. |
| **Vector control –** relating tomosquitoes. |

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#### Examples of eligible counter disaster operations following a bushfire event

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| Table 3: Eligible Bushfire Counter Disaster Operations examples |
| **Bushfire suppression** activities to protect the general public, including grading or dozer support or construction of fire breaks (such as working with the Incident Control Centre to clear firebreaks with machinery to protect high voltage power transmission lines) in order to protect the general public. |
| **MECC operational costs** associated with:   * + acquiring, deploying, and coordinating resources to support response, community support and relief and recovery activities.   + providing accurate logging of information, communication, and decisions for recording, debriefing, and planning purpose.   + collating community information and disseminating the information to relevant agencies.   + registration of volunteer emergency workers.   + contributing to the damage assessment process, including maintaining and validating records relating to damage and loss assessment data for impacted residential properties.   Note that MECCs are considered eligible as long as they are focussed on supporting disaster response operations). |
| **Traffic management and road closures** in order to maintain public health and safety before, during and immediately after the event (irrespective of whether emergency or immediate works are undertaken). |

### Examples of eligible counter disaster operations following flood & storms

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| Table 4: Eligible Flood & Storm Counter Disaster Operations examples |
| **Sandbagging** including the hiring of machines to fill sandbags necessary **to prevent damage to communities** (i.e. to protect residential areas, public schools and public hospitals).  Eligibility of these costs are determined as per the following:   * That the levee/s in question is owned and maintained/established by the Delivery Agency. * If the levee is owned by the local council, those costs could be placed in a [counter disaster operation](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-drfa/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-12) claim (please refer to the **Claims process requirements** section in this *Tip Sheet* below, with the following supporting information included:   1. Whether there was agreement/direction by the Incident Control Centres (ICC) for the undertaking of these works;   2. Evidence of pre-condition of the damaged levee including photographs, maintenance logs and/or the asset register;   3. Evidence of the damage to the levee through photos or videos linking the damage to the flood event;   4. Advice regarding whether costs were associated with protecting particular household/s or whether the costs were solely in ensuring public health and safety in public areas. * Where those costs incurred by a property owner as a direct result of the ICC/SES requesting a temporary levee to be established primarily to protect essential transport or public infrastructure (essentially roads and/or townships) or private properties, this would be eligible under Category B or A, respectively for CDO. For eligible expenditure, property owners should seek reimbursement from their local council as long as the local government area has been included in an eligible DRFA event. The impacted local council should then lodge those costs as part of a claim seeking reimbursement from the Emergency Recovery Victoria within the Department of Justice and Community Safety. * In addition to repairs to permanent existing levee/s, Delivery Agencies can claim costs associated with the removal of temporary levee/s that were constructed specifically for the eligible disaster event under category A/B CDO works.   Where an existing levee is damaged as a direct result of the disaster (and not as a result of the levee being used to undertake counter disaster operations) and is considered to be an essential public asset under Category B of the DRFA, any costs incurred should be placed in a claim for either [emergency works](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-drfa/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-16) or agreement sought with the Assessing Authority (Department of Transport and Planning) to undertake immediate reconstruction works or reconstruction works in line with [Victorian DRFA Guideline 1](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/drfa/guideline-1-photo-template). |
| **Temporary levees (i.e. sandbagging and/or the construction of portable levees/flood barriers** to prevent inundation of a central business district. |
| **Traffic management and road closures** in order to maintain public health and safety before, during and immediately after the event (irrespective of whether emergency or immediate works are undertaken). |

## Key time limits

The following table presents the time limits for works completion and claims lodgement for eligible works under the DRFA:

Table 5: Key time limits

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| Claim type | Works completed | Claims lodgement |
| MECCs and Counter Disaster Operations | **Within 3 months** from the eligible disaster occurring.  Subject to the severity and nature of a disaster, further time may be required to undertake counter disaster operations and will be considered on a case by case basis. Requests for an Extension of time (EOT) is required to be lodged in the CMS two weeks prior to the end of the allowable time limit. | Regular claims are to be submitted. All claims including supporting documentation are to be submitted as expenditure is incurred throughout the financial year and no later than the 31 July (one month after the end of the financial year) |

## Claims requirements

Delivery Agencies are required to provide the following supporting documentation in the format and separate zip files, no more than 2 GB per zip file associated with the provision of Category B Counter Disaster Operations, as specified in Table 5 below in order to support their claims, **in the Administering Authority’s Claims Management System (CMS).**

The required documents outlined in Table 6 are to be uploaded in the Claims module of the CMS when lodging a claim.

**All supporting documentation lodged are to be structured and cross referenced to allow third party verification.** **This will facilitate the timely processing of claims and the State and Commonwealth audit review process.**

Table 6: Documents to be lodged into the CMS

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| **Supporting documentation required** | **File type and name** |
| Claim Lodgement Declaration Form - **Form ID V Form D-DEC** | V Form D-Dec.pdf or V Form D-Dec.xlsx |
| Claim form **- Form ID V Form A2 CDO**  Claim form provided must reconcile to the final amount in the claim lodgement declaration form. | V Form A2-CDO.xlsx |
| **Proof of expenditure/General Ledger** (providedfrom the Council’s financial system) including a detailed general ledger/transaction report displaying all expenditure incurred for eligible activities, being claimed within a specific financial year. General ledger provided must reconcile to the final amount in the claim lodgement declaration form.  In the case where works on an invoice is only being partially claimed, the General Ledger should reflect the full invoice amount. The invoice should show the works which are being claimed, with the claimed amount entered on the claim form. Delivery Agencies should refer to How To Sheet 1: Examples of Best Practice Claim Forms for Category A & B Counter Disaster Operations for examples of a Delivery Agency can provide best practice examples of claim forms, general ledger and invoices relating to Category A or Category B CDO expenditure. | Zipped folder: **Financials.zip** |
| **Invoices** to include:   * Reference to the disaster event (including the eligible event name (AGRN) if that is available, descriptions of works/activities and dates when undertaken. * Source documents (e.g. contracts and purchase orders) supporting the invoice to be available for sampling upon request. * Where invoices do not fully outline the link to the event and/or the works/activities undertaken, source documents are to be provided when lodging that claim. |
| **Photographic evidence**  Photos need to be representative of the cost, damage and location.  For small events, comprehensive photos per asset and for large events, a reasonable sample of photos   * Post disaster photo files   Photo reports/files should be presented in subfolders within the zipped folder, grouped by address with metadata intact (e.g. road link) and are to be assigned a unique photo ID that corresponds with the reference to the photo within the relevant claim form. For photos that do not contain the metadata, a separate folder should be provided for the original photo files containing the metadata, within the asset folder. | Zipped folder: **Photos.zip** |
| **Payroll reports**  Payroll reports for extraordinary payroll costs (overtime) and evidence of the additional resources required. Timesheets to be available for sampling upon request. | Zipped folder: **Payroll.zip** |
| **Reports and additional supporting paperwork**  Other examples of source documents that may be provided include customer service requests, agendas, minutes of meetings, any reports developed on particular works/activities being undertaken, copies of handout materials etc.  For MECCs and locally positioned Incident Control Centres, evidence demonstrating that they have been established to support disaster response operations including assistance to disaster affected people/communities  **For sandbagging** (including the hiring of machines to fill sandbags) and the **construction of temporary levees or further extension** **of existing levees** necessary to prevent inundation of **communities and/or a central business district,** Delivery Agencies should refer to **Table 4** in this Tip Sheet for evidentiary requirements. | Zipped folder: **Reports/additional supporting documents.zip** |

## Funding contributions

Funding assistance provided to Delivery Agencies for early relief and recovery activities and counter disaster operations undertaken as a direct result of an eligible disaster event are outlined in the table below.

**Table 7: ￼Funding contributions**

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| Assistance type | Delivery Agencies (with no insurance arrangements in place) |
| MECCs and Counter Disaster Operations | 100% of approved works  For these amounts to apply the total state expenditure for the eligible event must be more than $240,000.  Where the event has not been notified to the Commonwealth, Delivery Agencies are required to incur the first $100,000 in eligible expenditure prior to receiving assistance under the NDFA. |

## Further information

For further information, refer to the:

* [*How To Sheet 1: Best Practice Examples – Category A and B CDO*](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-drfa/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-drfa-claims/victorian-drfa-how-to-sheet-1-category-a-b-cdo-best-practice-examples)which provides best practice examples on claim forms, general ledger and invoices for Category A and B CDO expenditure; and the
* [*Victorian DRFA Guideline 3: Claims and eligibility for relief and recovery activities (Category A) and counter disaster operations (CDO) – Category A & B*](file://G:\NDFA\NDFA%20Working%20Documents%20for%20DTF%20Website\2024\mockup%20of%20new%20GLs%20tip%20sheets%20etc\Cat%20A%20and%20Cat%20B%20CDO%20-%20February%202024\Victorian%20DRFA%20Guideline%203:%20Claims%20and%20eligibility%20for%20relief%20and%20recovery%20activities%20(Category%20A)%20and%20counter%20disaster%20operations%20(CDO)%20–%20Category%20A%20&%20B.)*.*

Delivery Agencies should also refer to the Frequently Asked Questions for the [June 2021 storm and flood event (AGRN 969)](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-drfa/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-drfa-claims/frequently-asked-questions-june-2021-storm-and-flood-event-agrn-969), [Victorian Floods commencing 06 October 2022 (AGRN 1037)](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-drfa/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-drfa-claims/frequently-asked-questions-victorian-floods-commencing-06-october-2022-agrn-1037), [Victorian Bushfires and Storms commencing 13 February 2024 (AGRN 1108)](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-drfa/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-drfa-claims/frequently-asked-questions-victorian-bushfires-and-storms-commencing-13-february-2024-agrn).

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