

Natural Disaster Financial Assistance

Updated Bulletin – 5 July 2024

(This document supersedes Bulletin 8 dated 4 July 2024)

NDA Bulletin 8-A

The Bulletin is sent out on a regular basis and includes updates and reminders around the Victorian Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) and the CMS (Claims Management System). It is emailed to all Council CMS registered users, Council contacts and Council's general email.

The DRFA information has moved to a new website

The DRFA documentation and information has been reviewed and refreshed, and was moved across to the whole of Victorian Government website in late June 2024. The NDA Team is continuing to work with the DJCS Web Team to add the date of the latest version of the documents to assist Councils. Please save the new link to your favorite's in google chrome, for quick and easy access.

<https://www.vic.gov.au/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements>

Benchmark rates for day labour, plant and equipment, salary on-costs

The new benchmark rates for day labour, plant and equipment, and salary on-costs have been finalised. The benchmark rates are an 'up to' cap. Councils will be able to claim up to the capped amount, (or below the capped amount), without the need to provide further supporting information to verify how their own council rates were arrived at. These rates are available for Category B Emergency Works, Immediate Reconstruction and REPA works. The rates claimed need to be captured in Council's General Ledger/Transaction Report. The objective of the benchmark rates is to streamline the process for councils and the assessors. Please note that the benchmark rates will not meet every possible scenario, however, will continue to be worked through on a case-by-case basis. The **Victorian DRFA Guideline 1: Claims and eligibility for essential public assets** has been updated with the benchmark rates which is available at the following webpage:

<https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-06/GL-1-Victorian-DRFA-Guideline-1-Claims-and-eligibility-for-essential-public-assets-June-2024.pdf>

Please refer to the updates on pages 27, 29, 32, 66-67, 83-84, 93 and 111-112.

Two new templates have also been created for Councils who are seeking reimbursement for day labour, and/or plant and equipment rates **above** the agreed benchmarked cap.

- **Day labour template** to be used for submitting lists of plant and people that have been claimed. This will be cross-referenced against Council's General Ledger/Transaction listings provided with claims.
- **Plant and equipment template** for inputting plant and equipment rates if claiming **higher** than the benchmarked cap.

Both templates are available on the DRFA Toolbox page under Category B. The following link will direct you to the templates on the new web page: <https://www.vic.gov.au/drfa-resources-guidelines-and-forms>.

Extension of time outcomes

The Commonwealth recently approved a 12-month extension to 30 June 2025 for the state to establish essential public asset reconstruction cost estimates (certified estimates). Individual Delivery Agency extension applies only to those councils who lodged an extension of time request via Luke Watts, the DTP DRFA Assessor Coordinator. Complete REPA certified estimate packages are required to be lodged in the CMS this calendar year, as per each of these Council's individual extension of time requests, or in consultation with the Council's assigned DTP Certified Estimate Assessor. The extension applies to the following three AGRNs:

- AGRN 1029 – South-East Victorian Storms (13 August 2022)
- AGRN 1037 – Victorian Floods (6 October 2022)
- AGRN 1063 – North Victorian Storms (7 June 2023)

Please note that for all Councils subject to above extension of time for approval of estimate packages, all REPA works for these three events need to be completed by 30 June 2026 once the estimate is approved by the NDFA Team. For Councils that did not request an extension of time for submission of estimate packages, the existing allowable time limit for completion of works of 30 June 2025 remains.

An extension of time has also been approved to those Councils who sought an extension of time in the CMS, to complete their emergency and immediate works, for the following three AGRNs:

- AGRN 1072 – East Victorian Floods (3 October 2023);
- AGRN 1087 – Victorian Floods and Storms (28 November 2023);
- AGRN 1096 – Victorian Floods and Storms (24 December 2023).

A further extension of time for AGRN 1108 for councils to complete their emergency works is still being considered by the Commonwealth.

An extension of time has not been approved for AGRN 1037 – Victorian Floods (6 October 2022) for immediate reconstruction works post the 31 December 2023 revised timeline already agreed to. Any works that were completed from 1 January 2024 are to be included as a REPA Works Estimate Package. Please work with your assigned DTP Assessor to help facilitate this transition to REPA.

The outcomes of these extension of time requests will be communicated to the councils who had requested an extension. Thank you to those councils who have been regularly liaising with their DTP Assessor regarding progress of their works.

Key upcoming dates

Claims for 2023-24 expenditure will need to be lodged, with all the required supporting documentation on the CMS before 31 July 2024. If required, please discuss extensions of time requests with the assigned DRFA assessor for your council.

Training on DRFA Guidelines and Eligibility

Please note that the training sessions have been very popular with the sessions for 2024 filling quickly. If you are interested in taking up the option for training for yourself and your work colleagues, please express your interest early to book a place.

- A reminder that **Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Training** is available in groups for all Council staff who are involved with the DRFA process and is extended beyond the registered CMS User/s.
- The group should include a cross section of staff involved with the DRFA activities such as emergency management, asset management, engineering/infrastructure, parks, depot and finance.
- Training sessions are approximately 2 hours in length.
- To arrange group training, please contact Lyndee Peters at: Lyndee.Peters@transport.vic.gov.au