



National Natural Disaster Mental Health Framework

About the Framework

The National Mental Health Commission is leading the development of a national Framework to guide a coordinated approach in Australia to psychosocial and mental health issues in the context of natural disasters. The Framework will aim to improve how governments work together to respond to people's mental health needs before, during and after natural disasters.

The Framework will contain a vision, responsibilities, and outcome indicators to guide those working within the government, in first response agencies and the community. The focus is two-fold:

1. Providing mental health services during and following disasters
2. Rebuilding thriving communities to support good mental health and wellbeing

Why?

Drought, cyclones, floods and bushfires are among the many natural disasters Australia experiences. In 2020 the compounding impact of these was felt with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Australian Government is fine-tuning its capacity to assist in disaster situations; and at the same time, disaster mental health and wellbeing impacts are becoming better understood.

Across Australia a variety of organisations are working in this field; this Framework will help harmonise their efforts.

Who?

The Commission will work with individuals, communities and organisations including:

- ✓ People in areas affected by natural disasters
- ✓ Responsible government agencies (such as Emergency Management Australia, state and national bushfire, flood and drought agencies)
- ✓ Health agencies, Primary Health Networks, Local Health Districts
- ✓ Local government
- ✓ Non government organisations such as Red Cross and Lifeline, Rotary
- ✓ Mental health researchers and experts
- ✓ People with lived experience of mental health, and people who care for them

Funding and Time-frame

The Framework is funded from the Australian Government's [\\$76 Million Bushfire Mental Health Response Package](#) provided for the 2019-2020 fires. However, its scope is preparation for, relief during and recovery from all natural disasters.

The final Framework is expected to be **released in June 2021** with interim drafts available for comment earlier. Contact us on: enquiries@mentalhealthcommission.gov.au



Australian Government
National Mental Health Commission