Fact Sheet

Essential Public Assets – Evidence requirements

November 2025

This fact sheet is for local councils and state agency asset owners. This fact sheet provides guidance on the evidence requirements for essential public asset restoration works under the NSW Essential Public Assets Restoration Disaster Grant Program Guidelines (Guidelines).

Key definitions

- Asset owner refers to a local government entity (councils) or other agency of state government (such as Transport for NSW in relation to State Roads).
- An essential public asset refers to an eligible transport or public infrastructure asset which is owned and maintained, or operated and maintained, by an eligible undertaking in accordance with the National Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018 (DRFA).

Evidence requirements for DRFA Category B Works

Applications for funding under these guidelines for all 3 sub-categories of essential public asset restoration works - Emergency Works, Immediate Reconstruction Works and Essential Public Asset Reconstruction Works must demonstrate that they have met the evidence requirements of the DRFA.

Table 1: Summary of evidence requirements for essential public asset restoration sub-categories

Details	Emergency Works	Immediate Reconstruction Works	Essential Public Asset Reconstruction works
Evidence of asset eligibility	• asset is owned, operated and maintained by an eligible undertaking • asset is an integral part of a state's infrastructure and normal functioning of a community • asset DRFA category and type • location of the asset	• asset is owned, operated and maintained by an eligible undertaking • asset is an integral part of a state's infrastructure and normal functioning of a community • pre-disaster function under the Essential Public Asset Function Framework • pre-disaster condition • location of the asset	• asset is owned, operated and maintained by an eligible undertaking • asset is an integral part of a state's infrastructure and normal functioning of a community • pre-disaster function under the Essential Public Asset Function Framework • pre-disaster condition • location of the asset

Details	Emergency Works	Immediate Reconstruction Works	Essential Public Asset Reconstruction works
Pre-disaster condition evidence	• not required	• evidence of pre-disaster condition must be no older than 4 years (councils) or 2 years (state assets) from the event. • must demonstrate the exact location and have a clear link to the same asset's damage evidence	• evidence of pre-disaster condition must be no older than 4 years (councils) or 2 years (state assets) from the event. • must demonstrate the exact location and have a clear link to the same asset's damage evidence.
Damage evidence and restoration works	• connection between damage and eligible disaster • damage evidence commensurate with nature and extent of damage • description of the emergency works required	• connection between damage and eligible disaster • damage evidence commensurate with nature and extent of damage • agreed scope to address damage and type of treatments	• connection between damage and eligible disaster • damage evidence commensurate with nature and extent of damage • establishment of an estimated reconstruction cost by an engineer or quantity surveyor • applicable procurement processes are followed
Completion of works evidence	• date the assets became accessible • works completed within 3 month timeframe • actual costs incurred • completion of works	• date the assets became accessible • works completed within 3 month timeframe • actual costs incurred • completion of works	• actual costs incurred • variations are made in accordance with the requirements of the DRFA • completion of works

Requirements for evidence types

Asset eligibility and location

Asset owners are required to provide evidence that the asset is owned (or operated) and maintained by an eligible undertaking, as defined by the DRFA, and that it is an integral part of the state's infrastructure and normal functioning of a community.

For Emergency Works, asset owners need to provide evidence of the location of the asset and a description of the high-level category and type of the asset. Asset owners are not required to provide any pre-disaster condition evidence for expenditure claimed under Emergency Works., However, it is good practice to collect pre-disaster condition evidence to support any future claims.

For expenditure claims under Immediate Reconstruction Works, asset owners are required to demonstrate the pre-disaster condition and the pre-disaster function of the asset. Asset owners must provide evidence of the damage to the asset, specifically the nature and extent of the damage and provide evidence of agreed treatments/scope of works to address each element of damage. The type of treatment for each asset type (for example roads, culverts and table drains) should also be provided by the asset owner and approved by the RA before commencing any Immediate Reconstruction Works.

For Essential Public Asset Reconstruction works, asset owners are required to demonstrate the pre-disaster condition and the pre-disaster function of the asset. The pre-disaster function of the essential public asset must be determined by using the Essential Public Asset Function Framework, which is outlined in Section 6.3 of the DRFA. The process for defining pre-disaster function of an essential public asset is:

Step 1: Define primary asset function by establishing:

- category, and
- sub-category and purpose.

Step 2: Define asset classification by establishing:

- type
- capacity, and
- layout and materials.

Refer to the RA Fact Sheet: *Essential Public Assets – defining function, standards for works and alternate solutions* for further information.

Pre-disaster condition evidence

To ensure that damage identified is the direct result of an eligible disaster, the pre-disaster condition of damaged essential public assets must be demonstrated.

For Immediate Reconstruction Works and Essential Public Asset Reconstruction Works, the asset owner must provide evidence of the location, nature and pre-disaster condition of the essential public asset through one or more of the following most appropriate means as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 Acceptable pre-disaster condition evidence types and order of preference

Preference	Evidence	State Government asset	Local Government asset
1	Visual data, including photographs or images taken from video footage	Latest available data but no older than 2 years before the eligible disaster	Latest available data but no older than 4 years before the eligible disaster
2	Geospatial data, including satellite images	Latest available data but no older than 2 years before the eligible disaster	Latest available data but no older than 4 years before the eligible disaster
3	Maintenance records	Latest available data but no older than 2 years before the eligible disaster	Latest available data but no older than 4 years before the eligible disaster
4	Asset registers	Latest available data but no older than 2 years before the eligible disaster	Latest available data but no older than 4 years before the eligible disaster
5	An inspection report or certification (undertaken at the time of the damage assessment) conducted or verified by a suitably qualified professional, with the appropriate level of expertise and experience that confirms the damage was caused by the eligible disaster. Inspection reports should be only used when the above evidence requirements have been exhausted. The inspection report must include details of the suitably qualified professional including name, title and qualifications and should be completed as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than 12 months from the eligible disaster.	An inspection report or certification (undertaken at the time of the damage assessment) conducted or verified by a suitably qualified professional, with the appropriate level of expertise and experience that confirms the damage was caused by the eligible disaster. Inspection reports should be only used when the above evidence requirements have been exhausted. The inspection report must include details of the suitably qualified professional including name, title and qualifications and should be completed as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than 12 months from the eligible disaster.	An inspection report or certification (undertaken at the time of the damage assessment) conducted or verified by a suitably qualified professional, with the appropriate level of expertise and experience that confirms the damage was caused by the eligible disaster. Inspection reports should be only used when the above evidence requirements have been exhausted. The inspection report must include details of the suitably qualified professional including name, title and qualifications and should be completed as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than 12 months from the eligible disaster.

Damage evidence

For Emergency Works, Immediate Reconstruction Works and Essential Public Asset Reconstruction Works, in order to establish a basis that the damage sustained was a direct result of an eligible disaster, the asset owner must provide evidence of the exact location, nature and extent of the damage to an essential public asset through one or more of the following most appropriate means:

- geospatial data, including satellite images
- visual data, including photographs or images taken from video footage, or
- asset inspection report(s) conducted or verified by a suitably qualified professional, with the appropriate level of expertise and experience.

All damage evidence must be collected as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than 12 months from the eligible disaster. For Emergency Works and Immediate Reconstruction Works, this evidence must be obtained as soon as reasonably practicable, prior to the commencement of the Emergency Works or Immediate Reconstruction Works, noting that these works must be completed within 3 months from the date that the damaged essential public asset became accessible to the asset owner.

For more information about eligible evidence capturing of damage, see Appendix A – Visual and Geospatial Evidence – Best Practice.

States must undertake a damage assessment of each essential public asset. This must be conducted or verified by a suitably qualified professional with the appropriate expertise and experience from either:

a) the state or local government, or

b) a delegated third party.

The purpose of a damage assessment is to provide evidence of the condition of an essential public asset following an eligible disaster, proving the damage is directly attributable to the eligible disaster. The assessment must include all evidence relied upon to demonstrate that the damage to the essential public asset was caused as a direct result of an eligible disaster.

Completion of works evidence

Photographic evidence of completed works is required for Emergency Works, Immediate Reconstruction Works and Essential Public Asset Reconstruction works claim submissions.

Completion of works evidence must clearly identify the exact location and scope of works completed on the essential public asset through photographs or images taken from video footage with metadata intact. It must be provided for each location at which eligible restoration works have been completed. This photographic evidence must be clearly linked to the corresponding pre-disaster condition evidence and damage evidence for the essential public asset.

For Emergency Works, there must be photos of each of the key work types undertaken on the damaged asset. This may include a range of work such as temporary pavement repairs, clearing of silt and debris, and repair of guardrails. The number of photos for Emergency Works undertaken should correspond with the level and scale of damage advised to the RA prior to commencing the Emergency Works.

Immediate Reconstruction Works and Essential Public Asset Reconstruction works involving the use of multiple treatment types on a damaged asset, require photographs of each type of treatment for each asset to be provided. For example, if a project includes pavement and culvert works, then photos of pavement works and separate photos of the culvert works must be included. The completion photos must sufficiently demonstrate that works were completed in accordance with eligibility criteria and the approved scope of works. For larger work areas, photographs should be taken at regular intervals that ensure the full details of the works are captured. Refer to Appendix A for further guidance.

Asset owners must provide a certified acquittal of the project's expenditure with supporting documentation. Where the photographic evidence and acquittal do not meet the RA's assurance or audit requirements, asset owners will be required to provide additional information. Failure to provide the required evidence may result in withholding of final payments or adjustment of payment claims where insufficient evidence is provided.

Table 3. Summary of pre-disaster condition evidence requirements

Evidence type	Evidence requirements
Geospatial data **Visual data with metadata intact** **Maintenance records** **Asset registers** **Inspection report/certification**	Evidence must be the latest available evidence, and no older than 4 years prior to the eligible disaster date for local government and 2 years for state agencies Visual data must be high-quality, well managed JPEG photographs with EXIF metadata such as GPS coordinates and date and time the photo was taken. Visual data must clearly capture the asset context, scale and dimensions (if necessary) Evidence must demonstrate the exact location of the asset. Asset registers must document the asset type, location, ownership and operational responsibility and demonstrate the asset was functional prior to the disaster. Maintenance records should establish the asset was in a serviceable condition prior to the disaster. Records should identify the asset, its location, and the nature and frequency of any maintenance works carried out Inspections reports or certifications must be undertaken at the time of damage assessment by a suitably qualified person as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than 12 months from the eligible disaster. The report must confirm include evidence of the qualifications of the suitably qualified professional, the date the inspection was undertaken, locations inspected (chainages or coordinates), and specific references to both pre-disaster condition and damage incurred.

Table 4. Summary of damage evidence requirements

Evidence type	Evidence requirements
Geospatial data **Visual data with metadata intact** **Inspection reports**	Evidence must demonstrate the exact location, have a clear link to the evidence of the asset's pre-disaster condition, and support that the proposed scope of works for restoration is commensurate with the damage incurred to the asset. Geospatial data including satellite imagery and aerial mapping images can be used to demonstrate post disaster condition of an asset where the resolution is sufficient to demonstrate defects that are not present in pre-disaster imagery. Geospatial data must include coordinates, as well as date the imagery was captured. Evidence should be obtained: • as soon as reasonably practicable • before any works have commenced • no later than 3 months after damaged asset becomes accessible for EW and IRW Evidence must be obtained no later than 12 months after the eligible disaster for EPAR Inspections reports or certification must be undertaken at the time of damage assessment by a suitably qualified person as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than 12 months from the eligible disaster. Report must confirm include evidence of the qualifications of the suitably qualified professional, the date the inspection was undertaken, locations inspected (chainages or coordinates), and specific references to both pre-disaster condition and damage incurred.

Table 5. Summary of completion of works evidence requirements

Evidence type	Evidence requirements
Visual data with metadata intact	Evidence must: • be obtained as soon as possible after completion of works • include photographs that clearly identify the exact location and scope of all completed works • be provided for each location at which eligible works have been completed • include representative photos of each of the key work types undertaken, showing a clear link to the evidence of the asset's damage and pre-disaster condition • be clear, show the works in the context of the asset and location, be clear of obstructions, and include scale and dimensions (if necessary) For more complex or larger scale projects, visual evidence may be supported by additional information such as inspection and testing reports, works as executed drawings, contract documentation, claims and invoices.

Additional Information

- NSW Reconstruction Authority Administration of Essential Public Assets Restoration website

https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/nsw-reconstruction-authority/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements

- NSW Essential Public Assets Restoration Disaster Grant Program Guidelines (2025)
- The Australian Government's Disaster Assist website; Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (2018) disasterassist.gov.au/disaster-arrangements/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements

Contacts

For additional information or support relating to defining function, standards for works, and alternate solutions for the repair of disaster damaged essential public assets, please contact the NSW Reconstruction Authority at Reconstructioncoordination@reconstruction.nsw.gov.au.

Appendix A - Visual and geospatial evidence – best practice

Collection and management of evidence

This section provides guidance for the collection and management of evidence for funding claims. Adherence with this guidance assists in the compilation, review, approval and payment of funding applications.

Best practice photo evidence

Photos are considered an important component of the funding application. Thorough and comprehensive photo evidence will assist in ensuring funding applications can be assessed accurately and without delays.

All photographic evidence should be provided in JPG format with all metadata intact, including time/date and GPS coordinates (longitude and latitude).

Systems that can transmit photographic evidence automatically to a central database/storage location can ensure that all data is securely located and is easily assessable to all stakeholders. These types of systems are strongly recommended and considered best practise. If an asset owner does not have the resources or capacity to meet the photographic best practice evidence requirements, the asset owner should inform the RA to request support.

Pre-disaster condition evidence

Asset owners are encouraged to take proactive steps to collect visual and geospatial evidence of the essential public assets under their control on a frequency that aligns with the evidence requirements for DRFA eligibility. For example, at least every 4 years for local government assets and at least every two years for State Government assets. Photographic data is the best form of pre-disaster condition evidence and will assist asset owners in maximising their eligible claims. There are simple cost-effective photographic data collection methods that can be integrated with regular inspection and maintenance activities at very little cost.

Key photo considerations

What to consider when taking photos:

- ensure you are using a camera device which automatically records relevant metadata, including GPS coordinates and time/date taken
- take high resolution colour photos which clearly show the damage caused by the eligible disaster, and the scale or scope of the damage
- take photos of the damage for every location which demonstrate the damage features and support proposed restoration treatment
- consecutive photos are required to demonstrate consistent damage
- photos should be taken in the direction of the chainage
- photos taken at different times should be easily comparable with other road elements and taken in the same direction. They should also be clearly comparable and obviously relating to each other. For example, pre-disaster photos must correspond with the post-disaster photos and the photos of the completed restoration works of the same essential public asset.
- measurement of dimensions should be shown clearly in the photos. For example, use a measuring tool such as a straight edge (preferably minimum 2 metres long) and measure to demonstrate depth/width/distance of damage such as washout or rutting.
- it may be useful to take low vantage points to demonstrate distinctive damage features and support proposed treatments
- mark any damage where it is difficult to see. Marking the pavement also demonstrates the dimension of damage

- photos may also be used to articulate the type and components of the asset that have been damaged. This may include the pavement, shoulders, culverts, table drains and guardrail.
- early morning and late afternoon provide optimum contrast to capture damage in road surfaces but avoid glare and dark shadows
- photos that show the horizon just past the top of trees and full road width may be beneficial. This provides context of the damage in relation to an asset. Close-up shots of damage may be beneficial. However, they must be supported by shots of the same damage showing horizon and road width.
- side-view photos of culverts and floodways can help to identify all aspects of damage – for example washout, blocked or collapsed pipe, end wall damage.
- take additional close-up photos of damage components to demonstrate all disaster-related damage and support each proposed treatment – for example damaged head wall, wash out, rock protection, apron.
- photos of the surroundings of the asset can also provide evidence of the event and resulting damage – for example build-up of washed away gravel, dislodged end wall located in creek, lost rock protection seen in drain, grass debris on fence lines.
- where full-width restoration works are proposed, the photos taken after the *eligible disaster* should clearly demonstrate *damage* across the full width to justify this treatment.
- To ensure there is enough photographic evidence:
  - provide photos showing both the detail of the damage and some showing the scope.
  - demonstrate consistent damage and consistent treatment or variance in damage by taking photos at regular intervals. However, where the type or extent of damage changes within the interval, additional photos should be taken.
  - the selected interval in the distance between photos is subject to how evident the continuous damage is in each photograph. The minimum of 200 metres is to be used as a guide only. Judgement in the field as to how evident the continuous damage is should ultimately dictate the intervals for the photos. If in doubt, take photos at more regular intervals.
  - for long distances, the intervals may be less frequent than for shorter distances. For example, if claiming a 5 kilometre section of road, the photo interval should be a minimum of 200 metres. However, for a one kilometre section of road the interval may be 50 to 100 metres. The terrain will also influence the intervals. More photos will be necessary for mountainous/winding roads than a straight flat road.
  - for culverts and floodways, photos must be taken to demonstrate each component within the asset that is damaged. Photos looking atop the asset will demonstrate its location within the road, but photos will also be needed from a side view to identify all aspects of the damage. If restoration works are proposed on a continuous basis and where there is a noticeable rise in the vertical alignment/crest in the road, photos should be taken at this high point to demonstrate it is also damaged.
- To avoid photographic evidence deemed to be ineligible, ensure:
  - photos are not taken from inside the car or through the windscreen
  - close-ups photos must be accompanied by horizon and road width shots
  - no objects obscure the view of the damage for example vehicles, people
  - avoid glare or dark shadows on the ground. These can prevent the damage from being seen. Additional close-up photos or markers to outline damage might be required
  - do not use star pickets, sticks, posts or guideposts as straight edges.

Examples of best practice photo evidence

Before the *eligible disaster*

After the *eligible disaster*

Acceptable photos

Before the *eligible disaster*

After the *eligible disaster*

Acceptable photos

After the *eligible disaster*

Completion of *reconstruction works*

Acceptable photos

After the *eligible disaster*

Completion of *reconstruction works*

Acceptable photos