

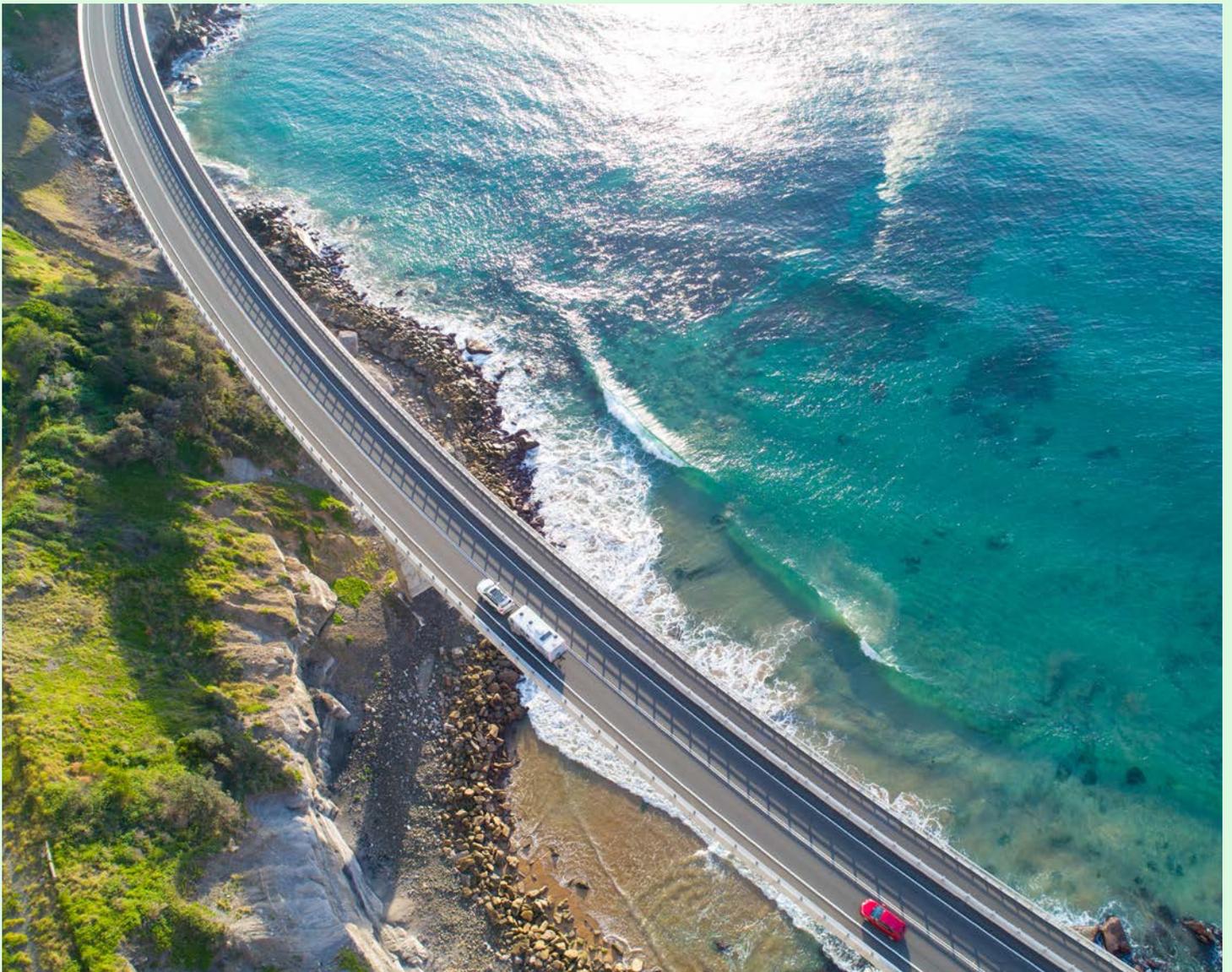
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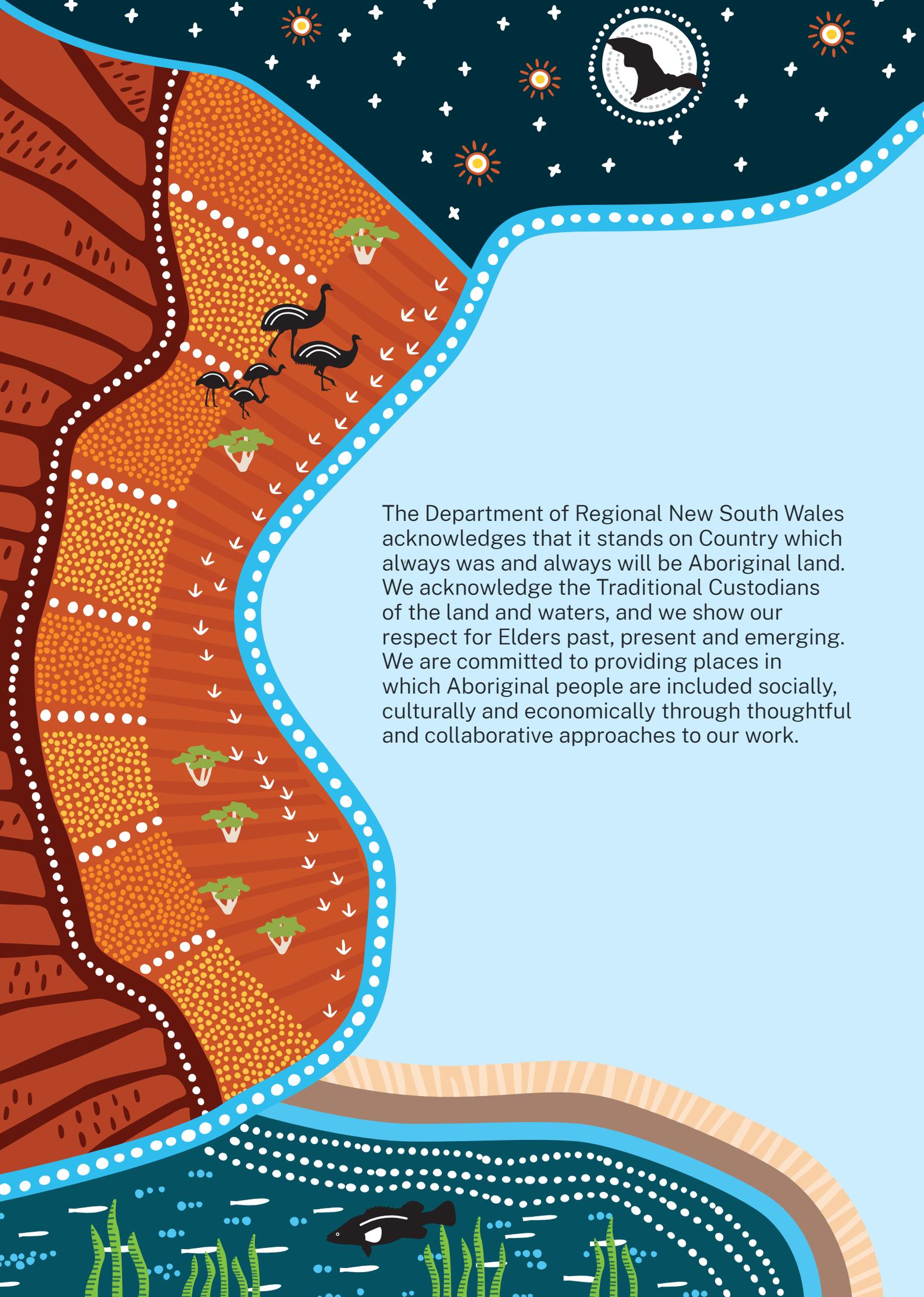
# Infrastructure Betterment Fund

## Guidelines

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Co-funded by the Australian and NSW Governments





The Department of Regional New South Wales acknowledges that it stands on Country which always was and always will be Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging. We are committed to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work.

# Message from the NSW Deputy Premier



During the past three years NSW has endured floods, storms and bushfires, which have caused significant damage to essential public Infrastructure, put lives and livelihoods at risk and hampered recovery and rebuilding efforts.

In a state first, the Australian and NSW Governments are funding \$512.5 million in betterment programs to deliver a new approach to rebuilding disaster affected roads, bridges and other essential public infrastructure to ensure they are more resilient and better able to withstand future natural disasters.

Through this investment, two complementary betterment programs will be delivered: the \$200 million Infrastructure Betterment Fund and the \$312.5 million Regional Roads and Transport Recovery Package.

Betterment supports rebuilding infrastructure in a way that reduces vulnerability to future disasters, provides continuity of essential services and lowers the risk of economic impact due to a natural disaster.

For example, funding projects such as improved roads and bridges with better drainage so they can remain open for longer during rain events or are less likely to be impacted by fire.

The Infrastructure Betterment Fund will consider not only where but how essential public assets are being built. Better, stronger public assets mean the risks associated with future natural disasters can be minimised.

This investment is about future proofing infrastructure to ensure communities are better protected and can swiftly recover and return to everyday life.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Toole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**The Hon Paul Toole**  
*Deputy Premier*  
*Minister for Regional New South Wales,*  
*Minister for Police*

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Cover image: A picturesque drive along the beautiful Sea Cliff Bridge, in Clifton.

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# Background

The Australian and NSW Governments are committed to providing ongoing support for communities impacted by the 2019/20 NSW Bushfires (AGRN 871), February and March 2021 Storm and Floods (AGRN 954/AGRN 960) and February and March 2022 NSW Severe Weather and Flooding (AGRN 1012) events. A total of \$200 million, co-funded by the Australian and NSW Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, has been committed to support the betterment of *Eligible Infrastructure* that was *Directly Damaged* from these natural disasters.

The complexity, intensity, and economic impact of natural disasters in NSW is increasing. Greater investment in prevention, preparedness and capability development initiatives is needed to decrease recovery costs. Well-targeted and sustained investment in resilience (referred to as betterment) will not only enable communities to mitigate and adapt to future risks but it will also save money in the longer term.

Betterment is repairing or building-back an asset that can better withstand future natural disasters while delivering benefits associated with improved resilience and generating productivity, economic and social outcomes.

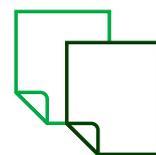
Betterment promotes rebuilding infrastructure in a way that reduces vulnerability to future disasters, providing continuity of essential services and function of the asset for users, as well as lowering the risk of economic impact due to a natural disaster. Betterment also provides intangible social, economic and environmental benefits associated with having resilient infrastructure, including connected communities, continuity of essential services for individuals, continuity of business activity in impacted areas, and reduced environmental impact.

[The Betterment Vision](#) provides further context on the scope, core values benefits and anticipated outcomes of infrastructure betterment.

From left: Land slip on Waterfall Way.  
Cracks form along NSW roads after widespread flooding.



# Complementary Programs



The Australian and NSW Governments are delivering two complementary betterment programs to support impacted communities. This investment totals \$512.5 million, which is staged across the \$200 million Infrastructure Betterment Fund (IBF) (subject of these Program Guidelines) and the \$312.5 million Regional Roads and Transport Recovery Package (RRTRP). Both programs will be delivered as a consistent, whole-of-government approach to betterment.

## The Infrastructure Betterment Fund

The \$200 million IBF is administered by the Department of Regional NSW (the Department) and will provide funding for NSW government agencies and local government authorities to restore and rebuild *Directly Damaged* public assets to a more resilient standard. This includes *Essential Public Assets* as defined by the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), as well as other public assets not usually funded under the DRFA but damaged in the 2019/2020 NSW Bushfires (AGRN 871), February and March 2021 Storm and Floods (AGRN 960 and AGRN 954) or February and March 2022 Severe Weather and Flooding (AGRN 1012). These events and the eligible local government areas are defined in these Guidelines as *Eligible Disaster Declaration Events* detailed in Appendix A. *Eligible Infrastructure* is defined in Appendix B.

Betterment funding is available not for the reconstruction or repair of the damaged asset but for the resilience improvement activity (referred to as the betterment activity) that is additional to the reconstruction works.

## Regional Roads and Transport Recovery Package

The \$312.5 million RRTRP is administered by Transport for NSW (TfNSW) and will provide funding to reinforce and upgrade the State and Local Government road network in northern NSW. This is to meet continuing impacts of natural disasters by planning, developing and delivering priority transport infrastructure resiliency works on eligible infrastructure *Directly Damaged* by February and March 2022 Severe Weather and Flooding (AGRN 1012).

Both the Department and TfNSW are working together to streamline application assessment processes for eligible applicants across both programs to maximise convenience for applicants.

The programs will be delivered in parallel through SmartyGrants to reduce administrative burden on applicants. Assessment of projects will be undertaken progressively and collaboratively across the Department and TfNSW. The progressive approach will allow for focussed support of applications and appropriately balance the need for immediate works while adequately scoping more complex projects. Both agencies will refer applications where a project best-suits one program over another. As such, applications will be assessed for either IBF or RRTRP funding – not both. Announcements of successful projects will be progressive across both programs.

## Complementary Programs

\$512.5 million investment in infrastructure betterment  
Australian and NSW Government co-funded

\$200m

\$200 million Infrastructure  
Betterment Fund

Delivered by the  
Department of Regional NSW

\$312.5m

\$312.5 million Regional Roads  
and Transport Recovery Package

Delivered by Transport for NSW

**Eligible Assets:**

Transport, Tourism, Water and Sewerage,  
Telecommunication and other public  
infrastructure assets

**Eligible Applicants:**

Local Councils, Local Aboriginal Land  
Councils and NSW State agencies (the  
entities listed in the table on page 12)

**Relevant disasters:**

*Direct Damage* from AGRN 871, 954,  
960 or 1012

**Eligible impact area:**

91 LGAs across NSW

**Eligible Assets:**

Transport infrastructure assets

**Eligible Applicants:**

Local Councils and TfNSW

**Relevant disasters:**

*Direct Damage* from AGRN 1012

**Eligible impact area:**

26 Northern NSW LGAs

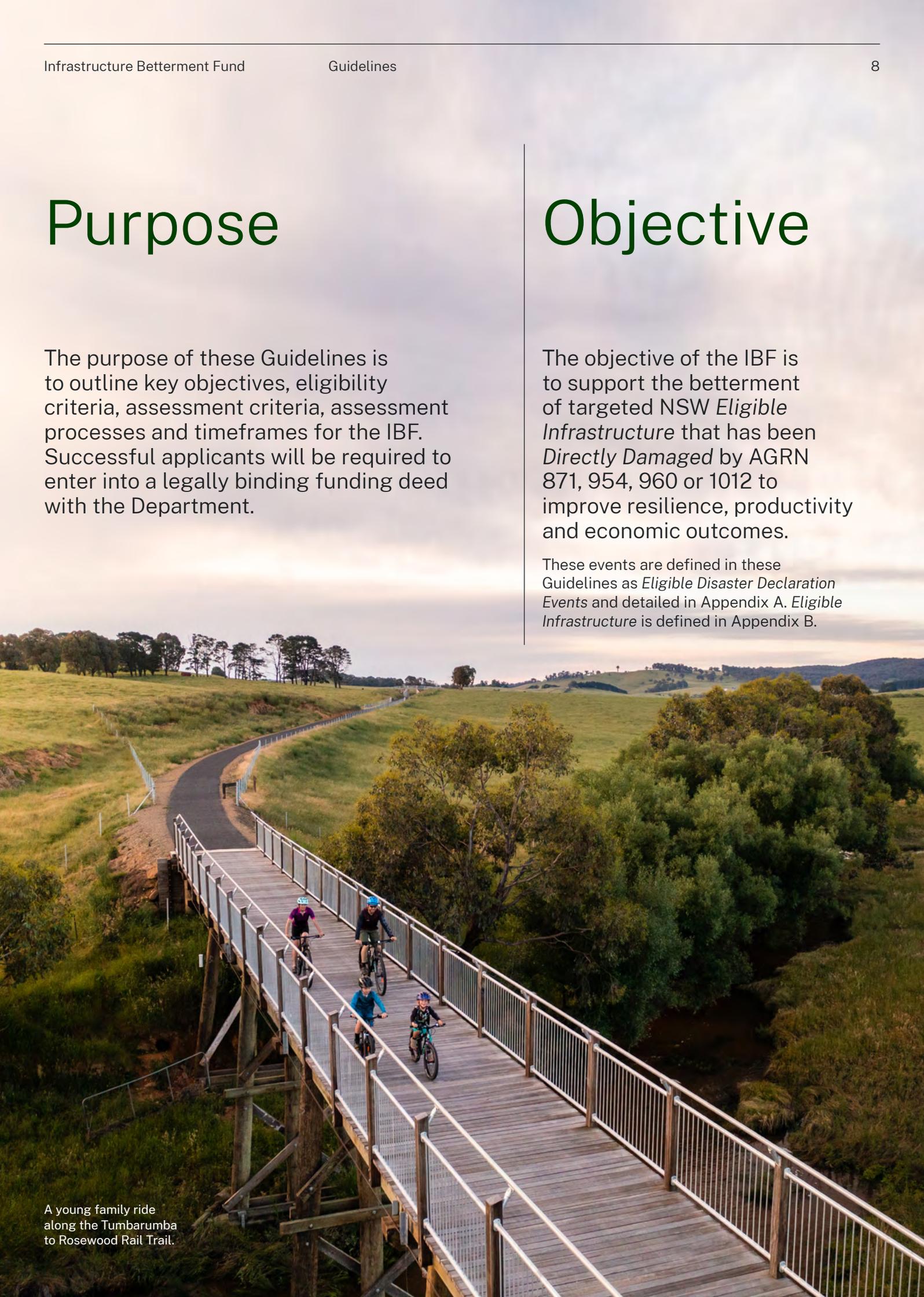
# Purpose

The purpose of these Guidelines is to outline key objectives, eligibility criteria, assessment criteria, assessment processes and timeframes for the IBF. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a legally binding funding deed with the Department.

# Objective

The objective of the IBF is to support the betterment of targeted NSW *Eligible Infrastructure* that has been *Directly Damaged* by AGRN 871, 954, 960 or 1012 to improve resilience, productivity and economic outcomes.

These events are defined in these Guidelines as *Eligible Disaster Declaration Events* and detailed in Appendix A. *Eligible Infrastructure* is defined in Appendix B.

A young family is riding bicycles on a wooden bridge over a valley. The bridge is made of wood and has metal railings. There are four people on the bridge: a man, a woman, and two children. They are all wearing helmets and colorful clothing. The background shows a lush green valley with trees and a clear sky.

A young family ride along the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail.



## Probity and Governance

The IBF will be administered by the Department. The IBF will be subject to strict governance and probity with fair and transparent assessment processes. A Probity Plan has been developed to oversee delivery of the IBF. All decisions made under the IBF will be in accordance with IBF Guidelines and associated Assessment Criteria.

An independent probity advisor will provide guidance on issues concerning integrity, fairness and accountability that may arise throughout the submission, assessment and decision processes. This will help ensure decisions are made with integrity, fairness and accountability, while delivering value for money for NSW. A probity advisor will be present at all Assessment Panel meetings.

A Probity Report will be published by the Department at the completion of the IBF.



## Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluating government programs enables their success to be robustly assessed, provides confidence in integrity and informs future improvements. Funding recipients may be required to participate in the evaluation of the IBF and collect project specific data to support understanding of project outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation of the IBF will be undertaken in-line with best practice to determine effectiveness of the IBF including the *NSW Government Program Evaluation Guidelines (2016)* and the *NSW Treasury TC18-03 Program Evaluation*. Elements will be embedded into the IBF to assess effectiveness.

### *The evaluation will assess:*

- effectiveness of IBF design, implementation and delivery of the IBF objective(s)
- progress towards achieving IBF outcomes
- alignment of delivered IBF objectives and outcomes.



## Consultation

Betterment is a NSW first. The Department has worked collaboratively across Australian and NSW Government agencies on the design of this program to ensure it is robust and responsive to the complexity of bettering infrastructure. This collaboration has included seeking lessons and feedback from Queensland Government Betterment programs and consulting with NSW agencies experienced in constructing and delivering infrastructure for the State, including TfNSW and Public Works.

The Department has conducted extensive analysis around *Direct Damage* to infrastructure experienced from the relevant natural disasters. This has been supported by direct engagement through state and regional recovery subcommittees and various NSW Government agencies.

The IBF complements existing support measures for *Essential Public Assets* in place under the NSW and Australian Government funded \$4.5 billion bushfire recovery package (AGRN 871), the \$790 million Storm and Flood Recovery Package (AGRN 960 and AGRN 954) and the \$3.5 billion 2022 Flood Recovery Package (AGRN 1012) and over \$3.5 billion committed to the 2022 Flood Recovery Package (AGRN 1012).



## Funding allocations

The IBF is a \$200 million program. The funding is evenly split (50-50) as a notional allocation for local and state assets. A notional allocation model has been adopted to ensure local government is not competing with state government agencies for funding.

If applications do not fulfil the notional allocation, the Assessment Panel may consider redistributing funding to other projects where there is demonstrated and direct need for funding beyond what has been notionally allocated. This redistribution is undertaken at the discretion and recommendation of the Assessment Panel and ensures that the unique recovery needs are met whilst maximising the eligible projects that can be delivered within the program budget.

The Assessment Panel may choose to recommend projects above funding notional allocations in the event that significant meritorious projects are submitted and assessed. Funding projects above the allocation will be at the sole discretion of the Australian and NSW Governments.

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## Eligibility and Ineligibility

The IBF is open to Eligible Applicants that own or manage *Eligible Infrastructure* located within one or more of the LGAs disaster declared for the *Eligible Disaster Declaration Events* (refer to Appendix A and Appendix B).

Funding will be allocated towards local and state owned *Essential Public Assets* that are classified as *Eligible Infrastructure* under these Guidelines. This includes transport, tourism, water and sewerage, telecommunications and/or other public service assets that are an integral part of NSW's economy and the typical functions that serve a community (refer to Eligible Project Examples).

Burnt road sign & bushland from the recent bushfires.



## Eligibility

<b>Eligible Applicant Type</b>	<p>The following NSW entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW local government councils</li> <li>• County council that is not for the primary purpose of weed control</li> <li>• Section 355 committees of council are eligible to apply for funding, but the council will be required to execute the funding deed should the project be successful</li> <li>• Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs)</li> <li>• A department or other agency of NSW Government including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Public Service Agencies including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport for NSW</li> <li>• National Parks and Wildlife Service</li> <li>• Crown Lands</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Health</li> </ul> </li> <li>– State Authorities including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW Telco Authority</li> <li>• NSW Police Force</li> <li>• Fire NSW</li> </ul> </li> <li>– NSW Statutory Bodies established or continued for a public purpose such as but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW Rural Fire Service</li> <li>• NSW State Emergency Service</li> </ul> </li> <li>– But does not include state owned corporations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For all of the above entities, they must also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– provide in the operation of the asset, services free of charge or at a rate that is 50 per cent or less of the cost to provide those services other than tourism operations and local council water assets, and</li> <li>– own and/or manage <i>Eligible Infrastructure</i> that was <i>Directly Damaged</i> by one of the <i>Eligible Disaster Declaration Events</i> (refer to Appendix A), and</li> <li>– are an incorporated legal entity, and</li> <li>– hold an Australian Business Number (ABN), and</li> <li>– be registered for GST, and</li> <li>– must have or be able and willing to purchase at least \$20 million in public liability insurance.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Refer to Appendix B for definitions.</p>
<b>Eligible Grant Amount</b>	<p>The Eligible Grant Amount is between \$100,000 and \$10 million</p> <p>Projects will be required to include an economic benefits assessment</p> <p>Cash and/or in-kind co-contributions are not required but will be viewed favourably during the assessment process.</p>
<b>Eligible Asset Type</b>	<p><i>Directly Damaged Eligible Infrastructure</i> as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Transport asset</i></li> <li>• <i>Tourism asset</i></li> <li>• <i>Water and Sewerage asset</i></li> <li>• <i>Telecommunication asset</i></li> <li>• <i>Other public infrastructure asset.</i></li> </ul> <p>Refer to Appendix B for definitions.</p>

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**Eligible Project Type**

Projects must:

- Meet the definition of *Eligible Infrastructure* and/or re-damaged *Eligible Infrastructure* as set out these Guidelines (refer to Appendix B)
- Be for the purpose of Betterment of *Directly Damaged Eligible Infrastructure* as a result of the *Eligible Disaster Declaration Events* (refer to Appendix A)
- Demonstrate an important role in providing *resilience* plus one or more core values:
  - Productivity – Maintain or improve the level of service and sustainable function that an asset provides
  - Economic – Achieve value net benefit across the lifecycle based on the betterment value proposition and provide a return on investment
- Align with relevant NSW Government policies and strategies for example the *NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2042* and the *NSW Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy 2018*
- Have all physical works and expenditure completed by 30 May 2025
- Must be able to commence construction 12 months prior to final expenditure date of 30 May 2025.

Refer to eligible project examples on page 16 of these Guidelines.

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**Eligible Costs**

Eligible Costs include:

- Works directly related to damage incurred as a direct result of the *Eligible Disaster Declaration Events* (refer to Appendix A) that have not already been covered through other government funding and/or insurance claims directly related to the betterment activity(s)
    - This does not exclude projects that have received *Essential Public Asset Repair* funding under the DRFA
  - Retrospective works undertaken prior to receiving IBF funding. This will be in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Department
  - Capital works costs directly related to the requested funding activities
  - Project management and administration costs directly related to the requested funding activities. These costs are capped at 20 per cent of the total value of the requested funding amount
  - Salary/wages and entitlements for new employees specifically engaged for the project(s)
  - Design costs and planning approval costs including consultancy fees and legislative approval costs associated with the proposed works
  - Contingency costs directly related to the project activities capped at no more than 20 per cent of the total value of the requested funding amount
  - Costs related to buying or upgrading non-fixed equipment or supplies as a small component of a larger fixed project. In this instance a small component is considered as no more than 30 per cent of the overall project expenses and no one item is greater than \$80,000.
-

## Ineligibility

### Ineligible Applicant Type

Ineligible applicants are:

- Joint organisations of councils
- County councils that are for the primary purpose of weed control
- Community organisations
- Not-for-profit organisations
- Non-government organisations other than Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- Incorporated companies or associations
- State owned corporations including:
  - Essential Energy
  - Hunter Water Corporation
  - Landcom
  - Newcastle Port Corporation
  - Water NSW
  - Sydney Water Corporation
  - Forestry Corporation
- Commonwealth authorities.

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### Ineligible Asset Type

- Assets that were not *Directly Damaged* as a result of the *Eligible Disaster Declaration Events* (refer to Appendix A)
- Assets that do not meet the definition of *Eligible Infrastructure* under these Guidelines
- Assets that are not associated with the function of *Eligible Infrastructure* under these Guidelines
- Public assets that are:
  - not listed as an eligible asset owned by State, local governments or Local Aboriginal Land Councils
  - not an integral part of the State's *Eligible Infrastructure*
  - funded through other government funding or insurance.

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### Ineligible Project Type

- Projects that have been funded through other government funding and/or insurance claims directly related to the betterment activity(s)
  - This does not exclude projects that have received *Essential Public Asset Repair* funding under the DRFA
- Projects that may be more appropriately resourced or funded under existing or future DRFA arrangements and/or complementary funding programs
- Projects for assets that were not *Directly Damaged* as a result of the *Eligible Disaster Declaration Events* and/or *Eligible Infrastructure* that have not undergone reconstruction works (refer to Appendix A and B)
- Projects located outside of the eligible LGAs (refer to Appendix A)
- Projects that do not relate to betterment of damaged *Eligible Infrastructure*
- Projects that would fund the day-to-day operations and/or business as usual activities of the organisation

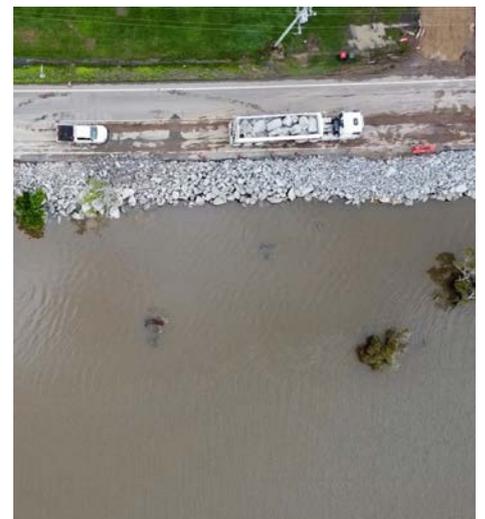
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### Ineligible Project Type continued

- Projects that are not aligned to the objective of the IBF
- *Eligible Infrastructure* that have commenced reconstruction works where the works undertaken are compromised/undermined by the betterment activity(s).

### Ineligible Costs

- *Estimated reconstruction costs for reconstruction works* (note: under Category B, IBF funding is not for the reconstruction or repair of the damaged asset but for the resilience improvement activity (referred to as the betterment activity) that is additional to the reconstruction works)
- Costs that are not directly associated with the betterment activity(s) such as the costs associated with DRFA assistance measures including *emergency works, immediate reconstruction works, and reconstruction works*
- Ongoing operational and maintenance costs directly incurred by the project or for the asset life cycle after the project is completed
- Overhead administrative, operational and/or maintenance costs not directly incurred by the project
- Costs for the same betterment activity(s) that have been funded through other government funding, other DRFA measures and/or insurance
- Repayment of existing debts or budget deficits
- Improvements or repairs to residences privately owned
- Business as usual and/or commercial activities
- Salary/wages and on-costs for existing, budgeted employees not specifically engaged for the project
- Costs related to buying or upgrading non-fixed equipment or supplies unless it is a small component of a larger fixed project. In this instance a small component is considered as no more than 30% of the overall project expenses are non-fixed equipment and no one item is greater than \$80,000. Ineligible non-fixed equipment includes vehicles and mobile items that could otherwise be affixed to the asset
- Costs spent for assets not located in disaster-declared LGAs
- Costs that require recurrent or ongoing funding from the NSW Government including operational and/or maintenance costs.



From left: Repairs take place along a waterfront walkway. Broadwater Riverbank restoration, along the old Pacific Highway

## Eligible Project Examples

Asset Type	Betterment Project Examples
<b>Transport</b> <i>e.g. roads and bridges</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in the function and/or capacity of an asset for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– addition of a lane or increase in bridge span</li> <li>– changing the height of a road or bridge or adding pull-off areas/ stopping bays and/or an increase in drainage capacity</li> <li>– filtration devices and ground stabilisation such as debris traps and scour protection near watercourses</li> <li>– realignment of road or bridge to reduce asset exposure to risk</li> </ul> </li> <li>• engineering re-design works to modify peak flows, drainage size and flow volume</li> <li>• increase in storage capacity and improved flow control for detention basins or weirs</li> <li>• Improvements for user hazard safety through an upgrade or addition of safety items for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– accessibility improvements</li> <li>– hazard notification system installation</li> <li>– barrier systems, signage and other road furniture</li> <li>– line marking, and Audible Tactile Line Marking</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Improvements to the resilience of a bridge, road surface and associated structures (i.e. drainage) for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– changes in material type that something is constructed from</li> <li>– relocation of a critical or high dependency asset beyond natural disaster high risk areas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Tourism</b> <i>e.g. signage, information assets, attractions, walking tracks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to the resilience of a structure or facility for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– changes in material type that something is constructed from</li> <li>– changes to a layout or improved way finding for improved evacuation</li> <li>– changes to protection devices such as increase water tank storage, sprinklers and hazard notification systems</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Improvements to the resilience of a tourism user asset for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ground stabilisation, and drainage works for a recreational area</li> <li>– changes in material type that an amenity is made from</li> <li>– change in the type or use of the attraction to better suit the natural disaster risk of the area</li> <li>– relocation of a critical or high dependency asset beyond natural disaster high risk areas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Water and Sewerage**

*e.g. stormwater management assets, wastewater management assets and water supply and reticulation assets*

- An increase in the function and/or capacity of an asset for example:
  - engineering re-design works to modify peak flows, drainage size and flow volume
  - ground stabilisation such as scour protection in and around drainage lines, intakes and discharge locations
  - increase in storage capacity and improved flow control
- Improvements to the resilience of an asset for example:
  - relocation of a critical or high-dependency asset beyond natural disaster high risk areas
- An enhancement to existing assets such as:
  - replacement of open collection/treatment ponds to tanked systems
  - installation of remote monitoring and control systems

**Telecommunications**

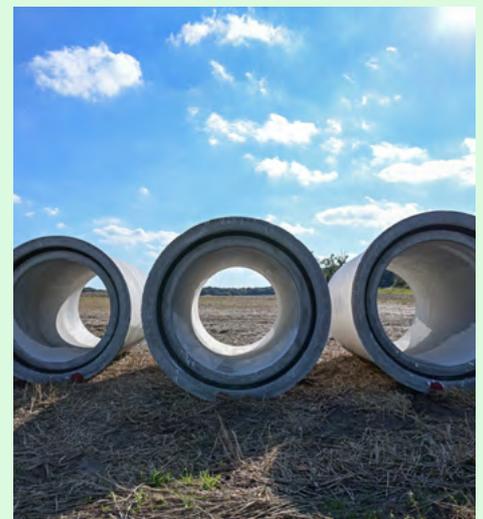
*e.g. radio towers, cabling, relay stations and electricity sub-stations that exclusively support telecommunications*

- An increase in the function and/or capacity of an asset
- Improvements to the resilience of the asset such as:
  - installation of protective shelters for equipment cabinets
  - relocation of a critical or high dependency asset beyond natural disaster high risk areas
- An enhancement to existing assets such as:
  - access improvements e.g. drainage, sealing, realignment
  - installation of remote monitoring systems

**Other public service infrastructure**

*e.g. health, education, justice or welfare infrastructure*

- Improvements to the resilience of a structure or facility against future natural disasters
- An enhancement to existing assets such as:
  - accessibility improvements
  - changes to a layout for improved utility in an evacuation
  - hazard notification system installation
  - relocation of a critical or high dependency asset beyond natural disaster high risk areas



Concrete water and sewage pipes.

# Application and Assessment



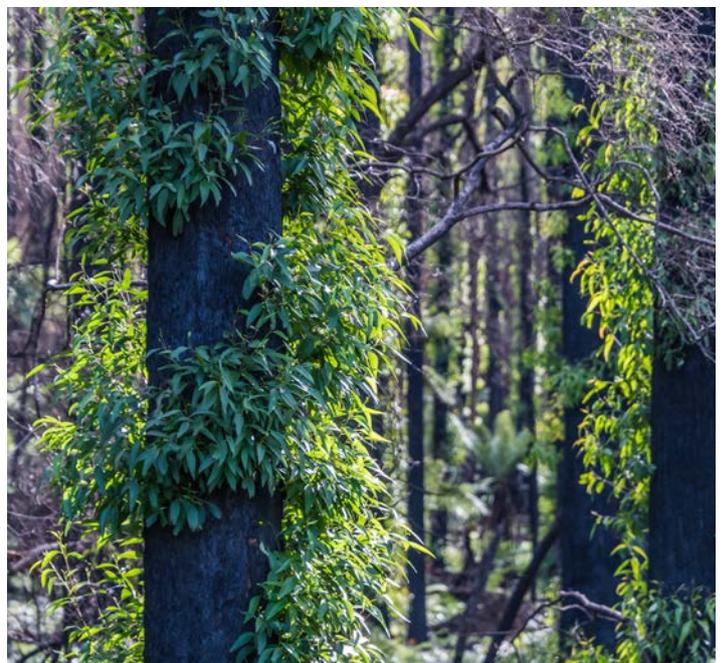
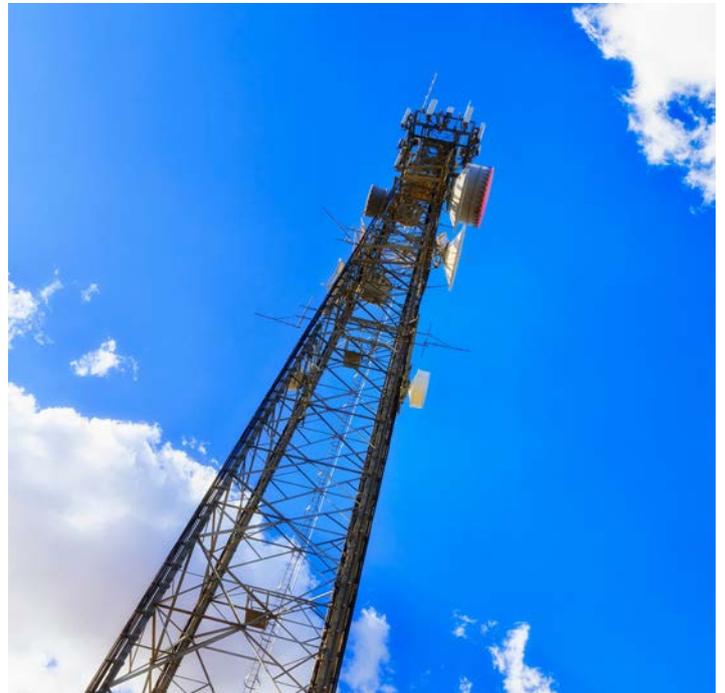
## Application Support

Support from the Department and across the NSW Government will be made available to assist applicants in developing, planning and costing their applications. The Department has staff ready and available to answer questions from applicants. Refer to [Find out More](#) for contact details.

## Assessment Process

The IBF application and Assessment Process will be delivered through a progressive, rolling approach. This approach aims to:

- Reduce burden on applicants through a single-stage application process that will be delivered across complementary betterment programs
- Allows for the prioritisation and assessment of projects over time, which will aim to minimise waiting periods to notify outcomes



From top: Telecommunications transmission tower in rural regions. Bushfire regrowth in the bushland of the South Coast.

## Application, Assessment and Notification Process



**Application Submission**

Applicants identify which complementary Program the application should be assessed under

Applicants submit applications online via SmartyGrants portal

Submission of applications will be confirmed via email.

**Rolling Application Review**

The Department conducts a checkpoint review of all applications for eligibility, suitability and completeness

The Department may work with applicants to clarify information provided to support full project assessment

Application referral to other complementary program offered.

**Rolling Panel Assessment and Recommendations**

The Department undertakes a review of each application as per the Assessment Criteria

An Assessment Panel, including independent members and with advice from subject matter experts, will assess each application based on the Assessment Criteria in the Guidelines.

**Approval of projects**

Projects recommended for funding by the Assessment Panel are submitted to the Deputy Premier for consideration and approval.

**Notification and Delivery**

Successful projects will be announced by the Australian and NSW Governments.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and offered the option for feedback

Projects will be managed through a funding deed which will include requirements for successful applicants to participate in regular reporting and program evaluation.

The progressive approach outlined in the diagram (page 19) is as follows:

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1

Applicant identifies the most suitable fund for their application (either IBF or RRTP) and submits an application via the [SmartyGrants portal](#). There is no limit to the number of applications that can be submitted by an applicant.

**Applications close 2pm AEDT Thursday 15 December 2022**

**Applicants will receive email acknowledgment from the department confirming the application has been submitted.**

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2

Rolling application checkpoint review:

- The Department will undertake the checkpoint review wherein applications are assessed against the eligibility criteria set out in the Guidelines and reviewed for suitability and completeness
  - The Department may work with applicants to clarify information provided to support full project assessment. The Department reserves the right to undertake this activity based on the completeness of the application submitted
  - If it is considered that an application is more applicable to the other complementary program than has been indicated by the applicant, the applicant will be informed as to the reason for the recommendation and offered the option for the application to be considered under the other complementary program.
- 

3

Once an application has been fully completed and has satisfied the requirements of the checkpoint review, the Department will undertake a review of all applications as per the Assessment Criteria (refer to Assessment Criteria below).

Once fully assessed, projects will be provided to the Assessment Panel for consideration.

As part of the assessment, the Panel may use broader assessment considerations (refer to Broader Assessment Considerations below) to consider and rationalise decision making for project funding recommendations.

The Panel will assess applications on a rolling basis. All fully completed applications will be considered by the Panel. During the assessment process:

- Applicants may be requested by the Panel to clarify or provide additional information to assist in the assessment process
- The Panel may obtain subject matter expert advice on the alignment of the applications with the Assessment Criteria

As a capped funding program, betterment funding may be prioritised to shovel ready projects based on: the vulnerability of the asset which may include prior natural disaster damage to the asset; criticality of the asset to the stakeholders/community it serves; and the project's impact on economic or social factors for the community or state.

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4

After each Assessment Panel meeting, a summary of outcomes will be provided to the Deputy Premier for consideration and approval. This will include recommended projects for funding, the amount of grant funding awarded and any terms and conditions associated with the grant. This will also include applications deemed unsuccessful.

There will be no mechanisms to appeal or not approve a grant.

*Continued on next page >*

## 5

Once approved, successful projects will be announced by both the Australian and NSW Governments and applicants will receive a letter of offer. The letter of offer may include conditions of funding that are required to be implemented by the successful applicant. This will be determined by the Assessment Panel and may include conditions on delivery, planning, project management or other factors.

Announcements of projects are likely to be rolling. Unsuccessful and ineligible applications will be notified of the outcome and offered the option for feedback and provided with details on potential support or other funding programs which may be suitable.



Concrete drainage pipe is laid along the roadside.

# Assessment Panel

The Panel will consist of senior representatives from the Department (Chair), Resilience NSW and an Independent Member. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) will participate as an observer to the Panel.

*The Assessment Panel may, at their discretion:*

- assess a project as only partially eligible and could therefore recommend for part-funding
- recommend a project conditionally on the basis that an external, professional project management service with sufficient capability be engaged for the project to ensure the affordability and deliverability of recommended projects
- refer the project to other Australian or NSW Government funding programs for consideration
- defer assessment of an application until a later time in the assessment process
- obtain subject matter expert advice on the alignment of the betterment application with the Assessment Criteria.

In the event that the state or local asset notional allocation does not have sufficient eligible projects to claim the full notional allocation, the Panel, at their discretion and after consideration of all other submitted eligible applications, may seek to redistribute funding to other projects.



From top: Widespread debris and clean up, after recent flooding. Bushfire smoke rises over mountains in NSW. Maclaughlin River crossing and bridge, near Cooma.

# Assessment Criteria



	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Assessment Standards</i>
<b>Strategic 25%</b>	A project's alignment with the IBF objective, betterment core values and relevant government strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent the project aligns with the IBF objective and betterment core values of resilience, productivity and economic</li> <li>To what extent the project aligns with Australian, NSW and/or local government strategies</li> <li>To what extent the project is significant for the region and community</li> </ul>
<b>Resilience 25%</b>	The extent of current and future hazard(s) and risk mitigation expected with the additionality of the betterment activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A risk assessment detailing the hazard current risk(s) and any assumptions around data gaps and future risk</li> <li>To what extent the betterment activity will result in an increased capacity to avoid and/or mitigate those risks</li> <li>To what extent the betterment activity will improve one or more of the elements of infrastructure resilience</li> <li>Any value-add for resilience against other hazards</li> </ul>
<b>Viability 25%</b>	The deliverability and affordability of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project costings and quotes, including appropriate contingency, escalation and project management budget line items</li> <li>Appropriate project designs and approvals required</li> <li>Applicant has demonstrated skills and capacity to deliver the project through past performance in delivering similar projects (for example, detailing managerial capability to carry out the project)</li> <li>Suitability of the staff or arrangements to deliver the project</li> <li>Confirmation of asset lifecycle management considerations</li> </ul>
<b>Economic 25%</b>	The quantification and/or qualification of the economic benefit(s) a project will deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A cost estimate/budget must be submitted with each application</li> <li>An economic benefits assessment of the project(s) must be included and include an assessment of the benefits of undertaking the project and consequences of not undertaking the project (this template is built into the application form)</li> </ul>

## Broader Assessment Considerations

Other factors summarised below may be considered by the Assessment Panel when making recommendations for successful projects.

*This may include:*

- applicability to the *Regional Roads and Transport Recovery Package*
- deliverability timeframe of the project(s)
- quantum of funding available
- project distribution by frequency of natural disaster and impact per LGA
- infrastructure type
- variety of project size, scale, type and focus area
- level of support provided to the community (community impact and benefit), and/or priority of a project to the local and regional business/industry sector and/or economy
- support that the project may provide for vulnerable sections of the community (i.e. such as youth, Aboriginal people and people with disabilities)
- suitability of projects for other government funding opportunities
- broader community recovery context and outlook
- alignment with other existing NSW and/or Australian government policies and strategies
- market failure, market barriers and the role of government.

# Key dates

**IBF launch and applications open:**

Thursday 6 October 2022

**Applications close:**

2pm Thursday 15 December 2022  
(AEDT)

***Rolling application checkpoint and assessment of applications:***

November 2022 - April 2023

***Rolling approval and announcement of successful projects:***

From January 2023

***Funding Deeds executed and works commenced:***

From early 2023

***Projects completed and funding expended:***

By 31 May 2025

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In extenuating circumstances, late applications may be accepted at the sole discretion of the Department.



# Successful Applicants



Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing of the application outcome. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding deed with the Department prior to receiving funds.

## **Successful applicants should note:**

- recipients will be required to participate in regular reporting during delivery and at completion of the project(s) for grant acquittal
- recipients will be required to participate in a program evaluation after project commencement to determine the extent to which their projects have contributed to the objectives of the IBF. Funding recipients will be required to provide evidence of measurable benefits consistent with objectives of the IBF
- procurement of goods and services must be in accordance with the applicant's procurement policy. When procuring goods or services, local governments must act in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 20105 (NSW)* and their own procurement policy. State government agencies must comply with the NSW Procurement Policy Framework
- the Australian and NSW Governments may choose to publicly announce grant funding of projects. Successful applicants may be requested to keep the grant confidential for a period of time if an announcement is to be made by the Australian and NSW Governments
- if successful, the Australian and NSW Governments reserve the right to use recipient and project information in media regarding the IBF. Information may be used in the form of press releases, case studies, promotional material and in response to media enquires
- under the funding deed recipients will be required to provide additional documentation including a copy of all relevant insurances to demonstrate the operation and maintenance of the projects post-IBF funding
- Section 355 committees of council if successful will require the local council to execute the funding deed
- successful applicants will be required to submit project progress reports to the NSW Government and auditing documentation as outlined in the funding deed
- grants will be paid via milestone payments set out in the funding deed and timing and requirements will vary depending on the scope and timelines of the project. All grantees will be required to provide evidence of prior expenditure and completed works in order to access subsequent milestone payments
- requests for variations or changes to the project will only be considered in limited circumstances
- successful applicants will be required to pay back unspent funds or those funds which have not been spent and/or cannot be evidenced as spent in accordance with the funding deed
- that any costs associated with project delivery cost overruns will be borne by the applicant
- the Department reserves the right to undertake an audit of grant funding within seven years. Funding recipients are required to keep appropriate records for audit and assurance purposes.

## Find Out More

[nsw.gov.au/bettermentfund](https://nsw.gov.au/bettermentfund)

### Contact us

**E** [infrastructure.betterment@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:infrastructure.betterment@regional.nsw.gov.au)

**T** 1300 679 673

## Getting support

Frequently asked questions and other resources to assist with applications are available at [nsw.gov.au/betterment](https://nsw.gov.au/betterment)

If you require assistance or advice with your application, please contact [infrastructure.betterment@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:infrastructure.betterment@regional.nsw.gov.au) or 1300 679 673 for a referral to the appropriate team.

## Complaints

Any concerns about the Fund or individual applications should be submitted in writing to [regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au). If you do not agree with the way the Department of Regional NSW handled the issue, you may wish to contact the NSW Ombudsman via [ombo.nsw.gov.au](https://ombo.nsw.gov.au)

## Ethical Conduct

Applicants must not participate in any anti-competitive conduct.

It is a condition of the grant program application process that no gifts, benefits or hospitality are to be made to any Department/Agency employee at any time. Any inducement in contravention of this condition may result in an applicant's proposal not being considered.

## Public Acknowledgment

Under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, all projects under the IBF must appropriately acknowledge and recognise that it is jointly funded by the NSW Government and the Australian Government under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. The announcement of assistance must be done jointly by the Australian and NSW Governments, unless otherwise agreed.

Prior agreement must be reached with the Australian Government on the nature and content of any subsequent events, announcements, promotional material or publicity relating to DRFA assistance measures. This includes but is not limited to media releases, events, social media, signage and advertising.

To obtain the required agreement, IBF grant recipients must contact the Department at [infrastructure.betterment@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:infrastructure.betterment@regional.nsw.gov.au), and the Department will in turn liaise with Resilience NSW and Australian Government representatives regarding the events, announcements, promotional material or publicity.

Publications must include both the Australian and NSW Governments' logos and the following disclaimer: 'Although funding for this product has been provided by both the Australian and NSW Governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of either governments.'

Recipients must follow the NSW Government Signage Requirements [nsw.gov.au/branding/sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgment-guidelines/signage-guidelines](https://nsw.gov.au/branding/sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgment-guidelines/signage-guidelines) to acknowledge the funding source on project signage. All signage must include acknowledgement of the co-funded by the Australian and NSW Governments.

The Department will identify and inform Resilience NSW and the Australian Government of media opportunities relating to the IBF.

## Conflicts of Interest

There may be a requirement for a conflict-of-interest declaration to be submitted with all proposals or in the application form.

Where a conflict-of-interest detrimental to the assessment process is identified, mitigation measures must be put in place, or an individual may be asked not to participate in the application, assessment or delivery stage of the process.

## Disclaimer

Before applying for funding under this Fund or making any decision, recipients should seek advice from their legal, business and financial advisers to determine their eligibility for, and the terms of the funding.

The Department does not guarantee or warrant, and accepts no legal liability whatsoever arising from or connected to, the accuracy, reliability, currency or completeness of any material contained in this publication. Information in this publication is provided as general information only and is not intended as a substitute for advice from a qualified professional.

The Department recommends that users exercise care and use their own skill and judgment in using information from this publication and that users carefully evaluate the accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance of such information. Users should take steps to independently verify the information in this publication and, where appropriate, seek professional advice.

The Guidelines are subject to change at any time at the discretion of the Department, in consultation with Resilience NSW and NEMA.

Costs for the administration, monitoring and evaluation of the Fund will be met from the total budget allocated for funding delivery under the IBF.

## Government Information (Public Access) Act

Recipients should be aware that information submitted in applications and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)*. Information that is deemed to be commercially sensitive will be withheld. The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)* makes government information accessible to the public by:

- requiring government agencies to make certain sorts of information freely available
- encouraging government agencies to release as much other information as possible
- giving the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information
- restricting access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

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Guidelines Version 01 dated 6 October 2022.

## Appendix A: Eligible Disaster Declaration Events

### 2019/20 - NSW Bushfires Disaster Declaration

The NSW Government through Resilience NSW declared 50 LGAs as disaster declared with the Australian Government. These declarations are referenced as AGRN 871.

*The following LGAs are eligible for IBF funding:*

- Armidale
- Ballina
- Bega Valley
- Bellingen
- Blue Mountains
- Byron
- Central Coast
- Cessnock
- Clarence Valley
- Coffs Harbour
- Cootamundra-Gundagai
- Dungog
- Eurobodalla
- Glen Innes Severn
- Goulburn Mulwaree
- Greater Hume
- Gwydir
- Hawkesbury
- Inverell
- Kempsey
- Ku-ring-gai
- Kyogle
- Lake Macquarie
- Lismore
- Lithgow
- Mid-Coast
- Mid-Western
- Muswellbrook
- Nambucca Valley
- Narrabri
- Oberon
- Penrith
- Port Macquarie-Hastings
- Queanbeyan-Palerang
- Richmond Valley
- Shoalhaven
- Singleton
- Snowy Monaro
- Snowy Valleys
- Sutherland
- Tamworth
- Tenterfield
- Tweed
- Upper Hunter
- Upper Lachlan
- Uralla
- Wagga Wagga
- Walcha
- Wingecarribee
- Wollondilly

## Appendix A: Eligible Disaster Declaration Events

### February and March 2021 - Storm and Flood Disaster Declaration

The NSW Government through Resilience NSW declared 78 LGAs as disaster declared with the Australian Government. These declarations are referenced as AGRN 954 and AGRN 960.

*The following LGAs are eligible for IBF funding:*

- Armidale
- Ballina
- Bathurst
- Bega Valley
- Bellingen
- Blacktown
- Blue Mountains
- Bogan
- Brewarrina
- Byron
- Cabonne
- Camden
- Campbelltown
- Canterbury-Bankstown
- Central Coast
- Central Darling
- Cessnock
- Clarence Valley
- Cobar
- Coffs Harbour City
- Coonamble
- Cumberland
- Dungog Shire
- Eurobodalla
- Fairfield
- Georges River
- Gilgandra
- Glen Innes Severn
- Goulburn Mulwaree
- Greater Hume
- Gunnedah
- Gwydir
- Hawkesbury
- Hornsby
- Hunters Hill
- Inner West
- Inverell
- Kempsey
- Ku-ring-gai
- Kyogle
- Lachlan
- Lake Macquarie City
- Lismore City
- Lithgow
- Liverpool
- Liverpool Plains
- Maitland City
- Mid-Coast
- Moree Plains
- Muswellbrook
- Nambucca Valley
- Narrabri
- Narromine
- Newcastle City
- Northern Beaches
- Oberon
- Parramatta
- Penrith
- Port Stephens
- Port Macquarie-Hastings
- Queanbeyan-Palerang
- Richmond Valley
- Shoalhaven
- Singleton
- Snowy Monaro
- Sutherland
- Tamworth
- Temora
- Tenterfield
- The Hills
- Tweed
- Upper Lachlan
- Uralla
- Walcha
- Walgett
- Warren
- Wingecarribee
- Wollondilly

## Appendix A: Eligible Disaster Declaration Events

### February and March 2022 - Severe Weather and Flooding Declaration

The NSW Government through Resilience NSW declared 62 LGAs as disaster declared with the Australian Government. These declarations are referenced as AGRN 1012.

*The following LGAs are eligible for IBF funding:*

- Armidale
- Ballina
- Bellingen
- Byron
- Bayside
- Bega
- Blacktown
- Blue Mountains
- Camden
- Campbelltown
- Canterbury
- Bankstown
- Central Coast
- Cessnock
- Clarence Valley
- Coffs Harbour
- Cumberland
- Dungog
- Eurobodalla
- Fairfield
- Georges River
- Glen Innes Severn
- Goulburn Mulwaree
- Hawkesbury
- Hornsby
- Inner West
- Kempsey
- Kiama
- Ku-Ring-Gai
- Kyogle
- Lismore
- Lithgow City Council
- Liverpool
- Maitland
- Mid-Coast
- Mid-Western
- Muswellbrook
- Nambucca
- Newcastle
- Northern Beaches
- Parramatta
- Penrith
- Port Macquarie-Hastings
- Port Stephens
- Queanbeyan Palerang
- Richmond Valley
- Ryde
- Shellharbour
- Shoalhaven
- Singleton
- Snowy Monaro
- Strathfield
- Sutherland
- Tenterfield
- The Hills
- Tweed
- Upper Hunter
- Waverley
- Willoughby
- Wingecarribee
- Wollondilly
- Wollongong

## Appendix B: Definitions

**Direct Damage / Directly Damaged** – physical damage and/or loss of functionality as a direct result of the 2019/20 NSW bushfires (AGRN 871), the February and March 2021 flooding events (AGRN 954 and AGRN 960) and February and March 2022 NSW Severe Weather and Flooding (AGRN 1012) events.

**Eligible Disaster Declaration Events** – the disaster declared events listed in Appendix A of these Guidelines.

### **Eligible Infrastructure –**

- **Essential Public Assets** that have or have not undergone *reconstruction works* defined as one of the following:
- **Transport assets** - an asset that is an integral part of the State's and region's infrastructure and includes assets associated with roads, road infrastructure (including footpaths, bike lanes, and pedestrian bridges), bridges, tunnels and culverts, or
- **Other Public infrastructure assets** defined as - an asset that is an integral part of the State's and region's infrastructure and is associated with health, education, justice or welfare. This includes: Public hospitals, public schools, public housing, prisons/ correctional facilities, police, fire and emergency services' stations, levees, State/territory or local government offices and stormwater infrastructure, or
- **Tourism assets** defined as - an asset that is an integral part of the State's and region's tourism. This includes signage, information assets, attractions, walking tracks, or
- **Water and Sewerage assets** defined as - an asset that is an integral part of the State's and region's stormwater, mains water and wastewater service provision. This includes weirs, detention basins, stormwater management assets and wastewater management assets, or
- **Telecommunication assets** defined as - an asset that is an integral part of the State's and region's telecommunications service provision. This includes radio towers, cabling, relay stations and electricity sub-stations that exclusively support telecommunications.

**Eligible undertaking** – a body that is one of the following:

- a department or other agency of a NSW State government, or
- established by or under State legislation for public purposes (for example, a local government), and
- in the operation of the asset provides services free of charge or at a rate that is 50 per cent or less of the cost to provide those services.

**Essential Public Asset** – An asset which must be a *transport or public infrastructure asset* of an *eligible undertaking* which, the state considers, and the Department agrees, is an integral part of a State's infrastructure and normal functioning of a community.

**Estimated reconstruction cost** – The estimated cost of reconstruction of an Essential Public Asset damaged by an eligible disaster and calculated in accordance with the DRFA.

**Reconstruction cost** – The cost of reconstruction of an essential public asset damaged by an eligible disaster and calculated in accordance with the DRFA.

**Reconstruction works** – Reconstruction works on an *Eligible Infrastructure Directly Damaged* by an eligible disaster for which an estimated reconstruction cost has been developed. Being the like-for-like or repair to restore the infrastructure to its pre-disaster condition without enhancements other than restoration to current standards.

**Re-damaged Eligible Infrastructure** – An asset that suffers additional damage from one *Eligible Disaster Declaration Events* and a subsequent *Eligible Disaster Declaration Events* which occurs after the development of an estimated reconstruction cost for the preceding eligible disaster.

**Re-damaged** – an asset is considered to be re-damaged if it is *Directly Damaged* by an eligible disaster and suffers further damage in the same location from a subsequent eligible disaster prior to the commencement or completion of eligible restoration or replacement activities in response to the first eligible disaster.

**Resilience** – reducing the risk of impact to an asset over its lifecycle to better withstand natural disasters, while simultaneously improving the ability to respond, recover and adapt after asset disruption.

## Find Out More

[nsw.gov.au/betterment](https://nsw.gov.au/betterment)

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**E** [infrastructure.betterment@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:infrastructure.betterment@regional.nsw.gov.au)

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