

Fact Sheet

Allowable Time Limit Under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018

December 2025

This fact sheet is for administering agencies, local councils, asset owners and non-government organisations. It details the process on how to apply for an Allowable Time Limit (ATL) extension, key dates for ATL extension applications and information on the standard ATL for Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements funded activities.

Key definitions

- Administering Agency refers to the organisation responsible for the administration of the DRFA funding associated with the delivery of the Program
- Asset owner refers to a local government entity (councils) or other agency of state government (Transport for NSW in relation to State Roads)
- Delivery Agency refers to the organisation responsible for delivery of the Program. Multiple delivery agencies may be responsible for the delivery of the Program.
- 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).

Under some DRFA funded programs Administering Agency may also be the Delivery Agency. Please contact the NSW Reconstruction Authority (RA) should you require clarification.

What is an ATL under the DRFA?

Under the DRFA, the NSW Government has a specific timeframe to incur expenditure that can be claimed under the cost share arrangement with the Australian Government. This timeframe to incur DRFA program expenditure is called an Allowable Time Limit.

Under Clause 12 of the DRFA, if the State is unable to comply with any clause, including the prescribed timeframes to incur expenditure, states can seek an exemption by notifying the Australian Government in writing via an ATL extension request form. Category C/D requests will need to be submitted to the relevant decision maker as per the Variation Framework.

What is the standard ATL under the DRFA?

The Australian Government allows a maximum of 24 months after the end of the financial year following a disaster for incurring expenses on eligible measures under the DRFA. The 24 month maximum ATL applies to all DRFA Categories (A, B, C and D) except for Category B measures

relating to the restoration of damaged essential public asset infrastructure, including emergency, immediate and reconstruction works.

The Australian Government may grant extensions in certain circumstances.

What is the DRFA ATL under Category B – Essential Public Asset Works?

DRFA Clause 4.3.2 (d) Essential Public Asset Reconstruction Works

For essential public asset reconstruction works, the estimated reconstruction cost must be established within 12 months after the end of the financial year in which the relevant eligible disaster occurred.

An estimated reconstruction cost is established when the estimated reconstruction cost is approved (signed off) by a suitably qualified professional within RA.

If it is not possible to establish the estimated costs for Category B – Essential Public Asset Reconstruction Works within the first 12 months following an eligible disaster event, an ATL extension request through the RA to obtain additional time to establish the estimate. Exceptional circumstances for the cause of the delays must be demonstrated.

The ATL to establish estimates for Essential Public Asset Reconstruction (EPAR) works is different to the timeframes for EPAR project delivery and timeframes to establish Total Upper Grant Limits (see [NSW Essential Public Assets Restoration Disaster Grant Program Guidelines](#))

DRFA Clause 4.3.2 (b) Emergency Works

Emergency Works for essential public assets are urgent activities necessary to temporarily restore an essential public asset so that it can operate at an acceptable level of efficiency and contribute to the immediate recovery of a community. All works must be completed within three months from the date the damaged essential public asset becomes accessible, noting for Councils not opted in to the NSW Day Labour Co-Funding Arrangements, timeline for works completion is within 21 days from the date the damaged essential public asset becomes accessible.

DRFA Clause 4.3.2 (c) Immediate Reconstruction Works

Immediate reconstruction works occur following an eligible disaster and are carried out by eligible asset owners (including but not limited to just councils) within 3 months from the date the essential public asset becomes accessible.

If it is not possible to complete these works within the three month timeframe, these works must be established under clause 4.3.2 (d) Essential Public Asset Reconstruction Works. For more information on ATLs under Category B – Essential Public Asset Works, refer to the [Allowable Time Limit – Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Category B Fact sheet](#).

When to submit an ATL extension request to RA

An administering agency or asset owner can submit an ATL extension request form to RA at any point prior to the completion date of a DRFA program. The ATL extension request form will then be submitted to NEMA by RA in line with the biannual ATL submission rounds (March and September each year).

Councils and non-government organisations (NGOs) will need to consult and collaborate with the relevant NSW government agency to coordinate an ATL extension request submission to RA. The NSW government agency will need to make the submission to RA on behalf of the council or NGO.

RA will make a state submission of ATL extension requests to the Australian Government twice a year (end of March and end of September).

All program and project delivery should continue until a formal ATL decision is made by NEMA and the outcome is advised by RA. An out of session ATL request may be considered. NSW government agencies need to consult with RA prior to making a submission.

Asset owners should email ATL requests to Reconstructioncoordination@reconstruction.nsw.gov.au

What to consider when applying for an ATL extension request

Local councils, NGOs and NSW Government agencies are responsible for identifying when ATL extensions are required due to the risk of the program not being completed within the required timeframe.

- Where a program includes a monitoring and evaluation component, this work must be finalised within the ATL.

Local councils, NGOs or NSW Government agencies have the responsibility to submit timely and accurate ATL extension request forms to RA.

An ATL extension request form must clearly demonstrate the exceptional circumstances and clearly articulate the financial implications across the relevant financial years.

RA will advise local council, NGOs, or the relevant NSW Government agencies by email prior to each ATL round that submissions for ATL extension requests are open.

Relevant NSW Government agencies will coordinate submissions with local councils and NGOs.

RA will formally notify the contact that submitted the request, where the relevant NSW Government agency has submitted on behalf of another organisation they will notify councils and NGOs at the Australian Government's decision.

What is the process of submitting an ATL extension request?



Figure 1. Process of submitting an ATL extension request.

What are the key dates for ATL extensions between RA and relevant NSW Government agencies?

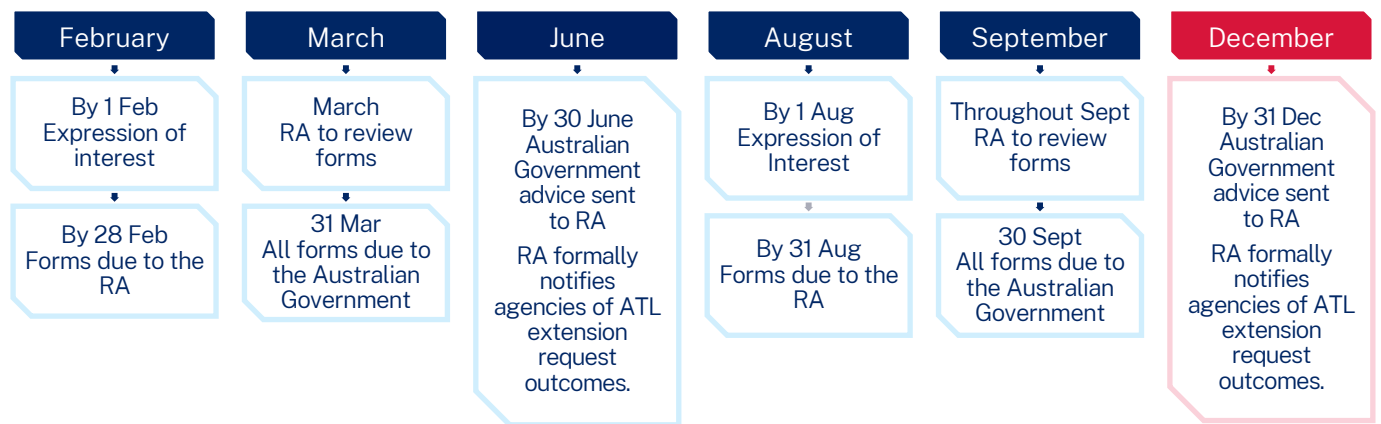


Figure 2. Timeline and key dates for allowable time limit extension requests

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I access the ATL extension request form and who do I contact if I need help in completing the form?

Administering agencies can email DRFACompliance@reconstruction.nsw.gov.au to obtain a copy of the ATL extension request form and for any assistance in completing the form.

Prior to each ATL extension request round, the NSW Reconstruction Authority will send the ATL extension request form to program contacts.

What supporting information is required to complete an ATL extension request form?

In addition to the ATL extension request form, the following documents should be provided:

- Original Project Management Plan
- Amended Project Management Plan
- Project Risk Management Plan

Additional documents can be included to convey the need for an ATL extension request and the exceptional circumstance for the request.

The ATL extension request form template includes red text with tips on how to complete the form and details on what is considered an exceptional circumstance.

How long does it take for a decision on my ATL extension request?

The Australian Government will provide written advice three months (where possible) after the ATL extension request submission date.

Example: ATL request submitted by 31 March should have an outcome by 30 June

Additional information may be requested once ATL extension request forms are submitted to assist NEMA with the assessment.

Can I seek a review of the NEMA decision regarding my ATL extension request?

Yes, a local council, NGO and administering agencies has the option to seek a review of the ATL extension request decision made by the Australian Government.

Administering agencies can submit a request to RA for review of the decision on an ATL extension request by emailing DRFACompliance@reconstruction.nsw.gov.au. The request must include detailed reasons why the review is required and include additional evidence (not previously provided) to support the review.

RA will make the decision whether to escalate the ATL extension request review to the Australian Government on behalf of the local council, NGO or administering agency.

Is expenditure incurred outside of the ATL period eligible for reimbursement?

No, expenditure incurred after the ATL period is not eligible for reimbursement unless otherwise agreed by the NSW government under exceptional circumstances. Where additional funding is sought for a program, administering agencies should contact RA for advice.

Do we stop project delivery while our ATL extension request is being assessed?

No, all project work must continue during the ATL extension request assessment period.