

Natural Disaster Financial Assistance

Bulletin – 5 February 2025

NDFA Bulletin 10

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

Updates to CMS Certified Estimates Module – Optional Stages

The CMS Certified Estimates module has been updated to incorporate four stages as part of the certified estimate process to assist in the provision of timely advice during the key stages of the preparation of the certified estimate package by Council, being:

- Eligibility Review
- Concept Design
- Detailed Design
- Estimate Development

When councils are submitting their certified estimate package, you will now have a choice to go through these stages as the package is developed. Your assessor will be able review and provide feedback before progressing to the next stage or submitting the final package for approval. All the stages are optional. Councils have the option to skip a stage/s or directly go to the last stage seeking approval.

Close out of 2023-24 FY claims

The NDFA Team are currently in the process of preparing the 2023-24 financial year Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements acquittal. The acquittal is required to undergo a dual audit process by both the State and Commonwealth appointed auditors before it is finalised by the Commonwealth.

Noting the timeline to submit to the State's acquittal to the Commonwealth, our assessors have been asked to close off all 2023-24 financial year claims over the coming months. We seek your assistance to work with the assigned assessor to respond to questions/information within the timeframes set by the assessor and thereby maximise claim reimbursement for the council. Claim assessments can only be undertaken on the information provided that supports an external desktop claim assessment. This enables consistency and equity in assessments across events, councils and claims and meets the DRFA evidentiary requirements including the external auditor process that follows. Where the information has not been provided within the timeframes set by the assessors, the claim assessment will be required to be closed out based on the information submitted.

Participation in the Victorian DRFA User Reference Group

As we have entered a new year and noting staff movements which may have occurred within and across councils, a reminder that a DRFA User Reference Group (URG) is in place to discuss improvements to: the Victorian DRFA Guidelines, Website and Claims Management System (CMS). More importantly, it also facilitates upskilling on the DRFA, networking across councils and the sharing of best practice and lessons learnt.

The URG currently consists of members from 22 Councils, as well as members from our DTP Assessor Team and Local Government Victoria. Existing members have provided valuable feedback across the coverage areas and facilitates networking. If your council is not currently represented, we encourage you to nominate a representative and send the details to NDFA@justice.vic.gov.au. On average, the time commitment is approximately 1 hour per month.

Updates to Appendix E – Pre disaster asset condition template

An additional template for Appendix E has been uploaded to the website to cover multiple assets:

- Appendix E (for single asset only)
- Appendix E (for multiple assets)

These templates can be used where Council's do not have photos dated less than four years prior to the disaster event occurring, to demonstrate pre-condition of an asset from other supporting documentation including maintenance logs and inspection reports, and can be used for both Immediate Reconstruction works as well as Reconstruction of Essential Public Assets (REPA) and are uploaded to the 'TOOLBOX':

<https://www.vic.gov.au/category-b-reconstruction-essential-public-assets-repa>

<https://www.vic.gov.au/category-b-immediate-reconstruction-works>

Training on DRFA Guidelines and Eligibility

A reminder that Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Training is available in groups for all Council staff who are involved with the DRFA process and is extended beyond the registered CMS User/s. The group should include a cross section of staff involved with the DRFA activities such as emergency management, asset management, engineering/infrastructure, parks, depot and finance. Training sessions are approximately 2 hours in length.

To arrange group training, please contact Lyndee Peters at: Lyndee.Peters@transport.vic.gov.au

User Guides and Videos

User guides and videos are available in the CMS covering how to complete an event notification, all claim types, requests for advances etc. The 23 videos, each approximately 2 minutes in duration, should be the first point of reference for questions on the CMS.

Once logged into the CMS, this information is available under the User Guide tile from the Home screen.

New Users to the CMS

Councils wishing to add a New User to the CMS portal should email NDFa@justice.vic.gov.au and the form will be emailed. Please note the form will need to be signed by Council's CEO before access can be arranged. Access to the CMS has been capped at five (5) users per Council.

Previous versions of the Bulletin

Previous versions of the Bulletin are now available on the website at the following link:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/ndfa-bulletin-library-councils>