

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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New recovery funding to support disaster-declared regions

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), with support from the Australian Airports Association (AAA), is urging the Federal Government to provide \$250 million per year over four years for a new Regional Infrastructure Recovery Program to protect regional infrastructure against future disasters.

There were 46 disasters declared in 2022, with 524 disaster support declarations over 316 local government areas in Australia, according to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

ALGA President Councillor Linda Scott said unprecedented natural disasters throughout 2022 and 2023 had devastated regional communities and infrastructure.

“Local governments appreciate the significant investment both federal and state governments have made in disaster funding over the past twelve months,” Cr Scott said.

“However, many of our disaster-declared regional councils have small ratepayer bases and simply can’t afford to build roads and infrastructure that will be more resilient to future disaster events.

“We need up-front investment that will help our regional and rural councils to build back better, saving all governments money in the long-term.

“With smarter, targeted investments that capitalise on our strengths and assets, we can grow our cities, towns and regions to bolster long-term national prosperity and economic growth.”

AAA Chief Executive James Goodwin said regional and remote airports and aerodromes cannot be forgotten in this proposed program funding.

“Airports and aerodromes have played a critical role in responding to recent natural disasters by hosting Defence and civilian aircraft engaged in search and rescue, food and supply drops, aerial firefighting, aeromedical evacuation, and patient transport flights,” Mr Goodwin said.

“Remote and regional airports and aerodromes are just as vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters, with significant damage to airport pavements, lighting and other critical systems from fires, floods and other extreme weather events.

“The Regional Infrastructure Recovery Program would not only help local councils prepare for future disasters but allow these communities to remain connected to the rest of Australia in times of need.”

In summary, in the upcoming Federal Budget, ALGA supported by the AAA, is calling for:

- \$250 million per year over four years, on top of existing Disaster Recovery Funding, to enable disaster-declared regional councils to support communities, repair infrastructure and rebuild to a more resilient standard.

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About ALGA

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is the national voice of local government, representing 537 councils across the country. In structure, ALGA is a federation of state and territory local government associations.

About AAA

The AAA is the national voice for airports, representing the interests of more than 340 airports and aerodromes across Australia. It also represents more than 150 corporate members supplying products and services to airports and the wider aviation industry.