

Emergency management - Disaster assessment and declaration

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Policy statement

Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Area is required under the State Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN) to provide agricultural damage assessments and reports as a result of natural disasters in NSW.

Scope

This policy applies to personnel of NSW Department of Industry, government agencies and participating/supporting organisations engaged in disaster declaration activities under Agricultural and Animal Services Functional Area Supporting Plan.

Requirements

Emergency management arrangements

1. NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is signatory to State and Commonwealth agreements for natural disaster activities. These include the Commonwealth Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) and the State NSW Disaster Assistance Guideline (DAGs).
2. DPI is required under these agreements to accurately assess and report on damage impacting agriculture and animals in accordance with the guide Assessment and Reporting of Natural Disasters.
3. The declaration of a natural disaster triggers a range of assistance measures for those affected.
4. The Rural Assistance Authority (RAA) manages assistance measures for primary producers under NDRRA and DAGs.
5. Recovery centres and committees may be established under EMPLAN. Support provided to centres and committees by the Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Area is informed by the assessment outcomes.
6. Reporting and assessment of disasters should commence when safe and as soon possible, and be completed by four weeks after the event, where possible. Assessments for smaller events should be completed within a week.
7. Reporting for a possible declaration can only be done on a single event.
8. Assessors can be from Department of Industry, DPI, Local Land Services (LLS), participating/supporting organisations or industry as appropriate to the event type and extent.
 - a. Assessors should be independent of the natural disaster and not benefit from the declaration.
 - b. Where there is a potential conflict of interest, assessments must be independently validated.
9. Agricultural natural disaster reports are compiled by the Emergency Management Unit, endorsed by Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Area Coordinator, Deputy Director General, Biosecurity and Food Safety, and Director General DPI.
 - a. Endorsed reports are forwarded to the Minister for Primary Industries for declaration.

Procedures

- Assessment and reporting of natural disasters guide

Roles and responsibilities

- Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Area Coordinator (DPI):
 - Endorses agricultural disaster declaration
- Director General DPI:
 - Endorses agricultural disaster declaration
- Deputy Director General, Biosecurity and Food Safety, DPI:
 - Endorses agricultural disaster declaration
- Local Land Services Manager(s) Biosecurity and Emergency Services (or delegate or as nominated by LLS GM):
 - Organises and manages local level damage and impact reporting and assessment activities in collaboration with DPI Regional Director(s)
- Manager Public Affairs Agriculture & Biosecurity, DPI:
 - Coordinates ministerial release of agricultural declarations
- Minister for Primary Industries:
 - Declares agricultural natural disasters
- DPI Emergency Management Unit:
 - Endorses disaster declaration
 - Liaise with DPI Regional Directors, LLS MBES (or delegate) and industry to coordinate damage assessments
 - Collates agricultural natural disaster assessment reports
 - Provides damage information to Office of Emergency Management (all natural disasters) and Minister for Primary Industries (agricultural natural disasters)
 - Liaise with Office of Emergency Management
- DPI Regional Director(s):
 - Coordinates and approves regional disaster damage and impact assessments
 - Liaise with LLS MBES (or delegate)
- Rural Assistance Authority Director:
 - Activates support according to the NDRRA and NSW DAG
 - Publicises declarations
- Assessors
 - Conduct accurate/unbiased damage assessments and submits report to MBES/RD

Safety considerations

Natural disaster assistance measures improve the safety and well-being of communities through providing emergency relief.

Delegations

- Financial delegations – emergency response delegations.

Definitions

- Agricultural damage: means damage to primary industries such as agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry.
- Agricultural natural disaster: means situations where there has been insufficient public infrastructure damage to support a full natural disaster declaration, but there has been significant agricultural damage. Damage must total more than \$240,000.
- Assistance measure: means financial and non-financial support for relief and recovery from disasters and emergencies.
- Damage assessment: means a report on the extent of damage directly caused by an event.
- Impact: means the impact to persons, property or the environment of any disaster as defined by NDRAA.
- Natural disaster: means a serious disruption to a community or region caused by the impact of a naturally occurring rapid onset event that threatens or causes death, injury or damage to property or the environment and which requires significant and coordinated multi-agency and community response.
 - Such serious disruption can be caused by any one, or a combination, of the following natural hazards: bushfire, earthquake, flood, storm (including hail and severe dust), cyclone, storm surge, landslide, tsunami, meteorite strike or tornado.
 - Damage must total more than \$240,000.

- Natural disaster declaration: means declaration of a natural disaster event activating assistance measures and for reimbursement of eligible response/recovery costs to agencies.
- NSW Department of Primary Industries: means DPI and participating/supporting organisations.
- Personnel: means contingent workers, and personnel of a government agency and participating/supporting organisation, including paid, volunteer and student.

Legislation

- State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989

Related policies

- Emergency management - DPI/LLS alliance
- Emergency management - Finance arrangements

Other related documents

- NSW State Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN)
- Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements Determination 2012
- NSW Disaster Assistance Guideline
- Form - Agricultural natural disaster assessment

Superseded documents

This policy replaces:

- Natural disaster reporting and declaration (2011, No. O-103)

Revision history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1	22/08/2016	For approval	Emergency Management Officer

Review date

15/09/2019

Contact

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