

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY REVIEW

SUBMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND FAMILY SUPPORT.

RECOMENDATION

That consideration is given for ongoing operational costs of the Register, Find, Reunite service to be provided as part of the Emergency Services Levy funding.

BACKGROUND

The Department for Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS) is mandated under the *Emergency Management Act 2005* to provide specified immediate welfare responses and ongoing community recovery services to people affected by disasters.

CPFS is designated as a support agency. CPFS undertakes this role in support of Hazard Management Agencies across all identified hazards.

- The main welfare support services provided by the Department are:
 - **Accommodation:** Ranging from short term emergency shelter to medium term accommodation.
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 - **Food:** Provision of meals in emergency shelters/accommodation or financial assistance to help people buy food for themselves.
 - **Clothing and personal items:** e.g. clothing, toiletries, essential items and pharmaceuticals.
 - **Personal support:** This includes information, referral, advocacy, counselling, child care and psychological services.
 - **Financial assistance and personal hardship and distress relief payments where applicable:** Assistance for immediate essential items Other categories of assistance may be available depending on the event
 - **Registration and reunification:** Of persons evacuated or affected by the disaster thereby providing a means for families to locate each other and reunite.

REGISTER, FIND, REUNITE. (RFR)

RFR is a service operated and managed by the Australian Red Cross (ARC) on behalf of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments. It provides a means to register, and help to find and reunite family, friends and loved ones during and after an emergency, including cross-jurisdictional disasters, and provides data about emergency affected people for recovery purposes.

CPFS is the Commissioning agency for RFR in Western Australia and activates the program during responses to most emergency events in the State. This is done on behalf of the relevant Hazard Management Agency (HMA) and applies to all identified hazards, with Bushfire being the predominant activation.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The RFR system was redeveloped with the agreement of the Commonwealth, States and Territories in 2009 and to date its operation has been funded through the National Emergency Management Projects (NEMP) program. The Australia and New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) agreed that operational funding for 2016-17 be provided through the National Partnerships Agreement but that future funding for 3 years (2017-2020) should be provided from both the Commonwealth and States and Territories.

Western Australia's contribution to RFR operational costs will be \$48,228 per year till 2020. As there are no current alternative funding sources CPFS will fund this commitment for 2017-2018.

The funding arrangement is due for review after 2020; however it is highly likely that States and Territories will be required to continue with operational funding subsequent to this.

As the program is of benefit to the community and all HMA's it is suggested funding fits well within the ethos and parameters of the ESL.

RECOMENDATION

That consideration is given for ongoing operational costs of the Register, Find, Reunite service to be provided as part of the Emergency Services Levy funding.

Mr Kim Dean, Director Emergency Services can be contacted for further information if required. Mr Dean can be contacted on 6217 8194 or via email kim.dean@cpfs.wa.gov.au

Emma White
Director General
Department for Child Protection and Family Support