Local Government Association Tasmania

Our Ref: TB| DJL | LR

27 October 2025

Resilience and Recovery Tasmania
Department of Premier and Cabinet

Sent via email: recovery@dpac.tas.gov.au

Dear Resilience and Recovery Tasmania

Review of the Tasmanian Relief and Recovery Arrangements

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the Review of the Tasmanian Relief and Recovery Arrangements. This submission has been prepared by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) on behalf of Tasmanian local government in collaboration with our members; all 29 councils.

LGAT is incorporated under the *Local Government Act 1993* and is the representative body and advocate for local government in Tasmania. Where a council has made a direct submission to this process, any omission of specific comments made by that council in this submission should not be viewed as lack of support by LGAT for that specific issue.

Please contact Tim Boyle, Senior Policy Advisor, if you have any questions or would like further information, at tim.boyle@lgat.tas.gov.au or 0437 136 798

Yours sincerely

Dion Lester
Chief Executive Officer

LGAT Submission: Review of the Tasmanian Relief and Recovery Arrangements

Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the Tasmanian Relief and Recovery Arrangements (TRRA), particularly the Natural Disaster Relief to Local Government Policy (NDRLGP). Councils play a critical role in disaster response and recovery, and it is essential that the TRRA supports timely, flexible, and accessible funding arrangements that reflect the operational realities of councils—particularly smaller councils with limited resources.

General Comments

Support for expanded eligible activities

We support the proposed expansion of eligible Category B activities to include extraordinary counter-disaster operations and emergency works to essential public assets.

Councils frequently assist their neighbours with activities such as debris removal, sandbagging, traffic management, and temporary infrastructure repairs. These are critical to regional response efforts and should be eligible for reimbursement.

Concerns with evidence requirements

We do not support the proposed changes to evidence requirements in their current form.

We agree that accountability is important, however, the proposed evidentiary burden is excessive and risks deterring participation—particularly from smaller councils. Many councils do not have pre-disaster photographic records of assets, and the proposed requirements exceed those typically required by insurers. The complexity of the current system already discourages engagement, with councils stating that they prefer to go through capital project avenues rather than recovery avenues. This is particularly the case where only like-for-like replacement is permitted, which does not align with community expectations for building back better or to current standards.

Timeframe for submitting claims

We do not support the proposed reduction in the timeframe for submitting financial year claims to the Tasmanian Audit Office.

The proposed October deadline places undue pressure on councils generally at their busiest time of year. Smaller councils have stated they will not have the resources to meet the new deadlines. A rushed process increases the risk of errors and non-compliance, potentially leading to rejected claims, financial hardship, and further rectification work.

Certification of claims

The requirement for the certification of TRRA claims by the General Manager, coupled with the proposed timeframes will pose a significant challenge for some councils. This requirement may also be disproportionate to relatively small claims. The discussion paper has not explained this requirement, and we seek further clarification whether another suitable senior council officer with the appropriate delegation could certify TRRA claims depending on the nature and scale of the claim. This option would provide flexibility for councils to meet the new timelines.

Additional Comments

Procurement challenges

Smaller councils already face significant challenges in procuring contractors within the required TRRA timeframes, particularly during widespread events when contractor availability is limited. Currently, some councils that cannot source contractors within required timelines are excluded from TRRA claims. The TRRA should acknowledge these constraints and provide flexibility to suit real-world challenges in procurement and delivery timelines in Tasmania.

Building back better

There is strong and consistent interest across local government in the ability to 'build back better' following disasters. The current requirement for like-for-like replacement represents a missed opportunity to enhance community resilience by upgrading damaged infrastructure to contemporary standards and construction codes and adapting to climate change risks. As a result, councils seeking to improve local assets to better serve their communities, are often left to bear the additional costs themselves. Where councils cannot 'build back better' the community is left exposed to the same level of risk.

Councils are disappointed that the State Government has not yet embraced this principle and strongly encourages its inclusion in the revised TRRA.

Discretion in Claims

Councils would welcome greater discretion in determining the particular claims to submit under the TRRA. A more flexible approach would enable councils to prioritise recovery activities that best meet local needs, rather than being constrained by rigid eligibility criteria.