

9 January 2020

## Local Government welcomes Commonwealth cash for bushfire-hit communities to 'build back better' and boost resilience

- **Urgent response for payments appreciated**
- **Locally-led response will boost communities' resilience**
- **Councils can build improved infrastructure**

The Commonwealth's initial \$60m for immediate assistance to [42 Local Government Areas hit by bushfires](#) is welcome money that lets local councils continue working with their communities to get back on their feet, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) said today.

The funding package is based on one in place after the 2019 Queensland floods and is streamlined in how it is administered, so councils can reconcile their spending rather than take time completing complicated application forms.

"Local Government is delighted that the Federal Government's initial assistance is simple, urgent, and able to be based on assumed need," ALGA President, Mayor David O'Loughlin, said.

"Councils very much appreciate the Commonwealth's rapid response and announcement that the money will be with them tomorrow.

"This money will go toward immediate needs and things councils are already doing, such as repairing fire-damaged infrastructure, but also means councils can set aside funds for future community events that can bring locals together and boost their resilience and wellbeing.

"We also welcome the acknowledgement from Natural Disaster and Emergency Management Minister David Littleproud that local councils will be able to 'build back better', which is what Local Government has been consistently advocating for after earlier disasters."

Commonwealth public servants, who are calling all 42 councils, are keen to hear about any issues that may constrain the new funding.

"I encourage councils to contact their state local government association or ALGA, so that we can take consolidated feedback to the Commonwealth as soon as possible." Mayor O'Loughlin added.

### **Available for interview:**

Mayor David O'Loughlin, President, Australian Local Government Association.

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