



## Australian Business Roundtable welcomes Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements report

The Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience & Safer Communities (ABR) has welcomed the final report recommendations for the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.

Representing the collective views of its members – Australian Red Cross, IAG, Munich RE, Optus and Westpac Group – the ABR provided a submission to the Royal Commission which highlighted the importance of government investment in mitigation ahead of severe weather events.

The submission also emphasised the need for cross-sector collaboration between governments, the private sector and community organisations, to improve data sharing and to inform decision-making around mitigation projects and land management and planning.

The ABR was established in 2012 following a series of natural disasters which devastated Australian communities. Since then it has outlined the benefits of greater investment in mitigation to protect communities. The ABR believes the Royal Commission recommendations are a significant step towards achieving this.

The ABR is pleased that the final report incorporates a number of recommendations that relate to those outlined in its submission including;

- incorporating 'build back better' within the Disaster Recovery Funding arrangements and broadening the arrangements to encompass funding for resilience measures;
- the creation of a national resilience and recovery entity focused on long-term disaster risk reduction;
- improving the use of data and the development of consistent data sharing standards and platforms;
- continued disaster education for individuals and communities; and
- reviewing approaches to land use planning and existing building regulation to improve the resilience of buildings and infrastructure.

However, with natural disasters forecast to reach \$39 billion annually by 2050, according to the ABR's commissioned white paper *Resilience in our States and Territories* (2017), it reiterates that greater investment in mitigation to reduce natural hazard impacts should continue to be a main priority for governments.



The ABR's commissioned white paper, *Building our Nation's Resilience to Natural Disasters* (2013), demonstrated that a greater investment in resilience and mitigation would deliver a 'double dividend' in the form of budget savings for government, including reducing the cost of natural disasters by more than 50 per cent, as well as added social benefits.

IAG Managing Director and CEO Nick Hawkins said: "Each ABR member played a crucial role supporting communities across the nation through last summer's bushfires.

"Natural disasters leave deep, emotional, physical and financial impacts on communities for many years. Our members have unfortunately seen the impact of many natural disasters firsthand over the last few decades, which has driven us to work collaboratively to make communities more resilient and people safer.

"We've been grateful for the opportunity to provide our insights to the Royal Commission to ensure we can all learn from the previous season to protect Australians in future; and our members would welcome the opportunity to offer our expertise and insights to government to realise these recommendations," Mr Hawkins said.

For the full ABR submission visit:

[www.australianbusinessroundtable.com.au/news/submissions](http://www.australianbusinessroundtable.com.au/news/submissions)

### **About the Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience & Safer Communities**

The Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience & Safer Communities was formed in 2012 to influence public policy via evidence-based reporting on the unsustainable cost of disasters on life, property and the economy.

The Roundtable members are Australian Red Cross, IAG, Munich Re, Optus and Westpac Group.

Members of the Roundtable champion the need for a sustainable, coordinated national approach to make communities more resilient and people safer. They believe that national investment in disaster resilience and preventative activities is the most effective way to protect communities and reduce the impact of disasters.

For more information please go to our website:

[www.australianbusinessroundtable.com.au](http://www.australianbusinessroundtable.com.au)

Media Contact:

Catherine Guyder

M +61 (0)411 014 783

E [Catherine.Guyder@iag.com.au](mailto:Catherine.Guyder@iag.com.au)