

Companion reports

Companion reports commissioned by the Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience & Safer Communities

This report builds on **three companion reports** commissioned by the *Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience & Safer Communities*. A summary of key findings and recommendations from these reports is included in Appendix A. In brief:

- ***Building our Nation's Resilience to Natural Disasters*** (2013) reviewed the economics of mitigating disaster risks facing Australian communities. It identified opportunities for greater coordination between governments, businesses and communities in managing pre-disaster resilience, including carefully targeted mitigation investments. The report offered three key recommendations:
 - Improve coordination of pre-disaster resilience by appointing a National Resilience Advisor and establishing a Business and Community Advisory Group
 - Commit to long-term annual consolidated funding for pre-disaster resilience
 - Identify and prioritise pre-disaster investment activities that deliver a positive net impact on future budget outlays
- ***Building an Open Platform for Natural Disaster Resilience Decisions*** (2014) provided an overview of natural disaster data and research in Australia, and reinforced the need for better coordination and transparency of disaster risk and resilience information. The report recommended three outcomes:
 - Efficient and open – deliver a national platform for foundational data
 - Transparent and available – remove barriers to accessing data and research
 - Enable effective decision-making – establish a prioritisation framework
- ***The Economic Cost of the Social Impact of Natural Disasters*** (2016), developed in parallel with this report, expands on *Building our Nation's Resilience to Natural Disasters* by valuing some of the broader social impacts of natural disasters to better understand the total cost of natural disasters in Australia.

This body of work supports a growing national awareness of the need for disaster mitigation and resilience due to the increasing prevalence and cost of natural disasters. For example, following the release of *Building our Nation's Resilience to Natural Disasters*, the Australian Government asked the Productivity Commission to undertake a public inquiry into the efficacy of Australia's natural disaster funding arrangements. A summary of the inquiry's key findings and recommendations are included in Appendix B.

The Commission's inquiry made a number of key recommendations supporting those advocated by the Roundtable in the recommendations of *Building our Nation's Resilience to Natural Disasters* and *Building an Open Platform for Natural Disaster Resilience Decisions*.

In particular, the Commission recommended an increase in government funding and accountability for natural disaster risk management, and that natural hazard data and information be made publically available. To this end, the *Australian Government Public Data Policy Statement* [2015b], released in December, commits the Government to specific actions to optimise the use and reuse of public data; to release non-sensitive data as open by default; and to collaborate with the private and research sectors to extend the value of public data for the benefit of the public.

The reports also support ongoing progress by the Australian Government to improve infrastructure planning and prioritisation, including in response to the 2014 Productivity Commission inquiry into public infrastructure. For example, Infrastructure Australia was given a role to develop and implement a national best practice framework for project evaluation, including 'determining a robust and consistent methodology for cost benefit analyses for all economic and social infrastructure'.

In 2015, the *Australian Infrastructure Audit* (Infrastructure Australia, 2015a) found that maintenance and resilience were major themes and 'enhancing the resilience of assets will become more important for infrastructure providers as extreme weather events become increasingly likely to threaten certain assets'. The audit called for increased expenditure to enhance resilience, to ensure infrastructure can continue operating during minor disruptions and quickly recover from major disruptions.

Right: May 28, 2008:
Lightning strikes
over the Harbour
Bridge, Sydney,
New South Wales
(Cameron Richardson /
Newspix)