

# 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
- ***Building Resilient Infrastructure*** (2016), was developed in parallel with this paper. It investigates the decision-making process for new 'hard' infrastructure assets in light of disaster risks, including the various Commonwealth and state guidelines for comparing project options through cost-benefit analysis. It also builds the case for embedding resilience considerations into this process, and offers practical steps to do so.

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 designed 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 Australian public.

The reports also support ongoing progress by the Australian Government towards improving infrastructure planning and prioritisation, including in response to the 2014 Productivity Commission inquiry into public infrastructure. Importantly, the report also calls for more focus on 'soft mitigation' measures such as community education and other preparedness measures that can yield significant benefits over time where it modifies behaviour and results in the avoidance of disaster risk.

A man comforts his daughter on their roof as they inspect damage to their neighbourhood as parts of southern Queensland experiences record flooding in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Oswald on January 29, 2013 in Bundaberg.  
*(Chris Hyde / Getty Images)*



"A picture of my sister and me with a crew of army personnel who spent their 'day off' helping us at our house. They were happy to have time out from wading neck deep in water in the nearby Lockyer Creek, searching for bodies. We were forever grateful for their help." *Cathy Finch*

*Cathy Finch is a photographer who grew up in Grantham and had friends and family impacted by the 2011 floods. She continued working in the impacted communities, interviewing people on their experiences and capturing these moments, while working for the Courier Mail.*

