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## Improving Disaster Resilience

**Media Release**  
**12 May 2009**



The Rudd Government will invest \$79.3 million to strengthen efforts to prepare for and combat major natural disasters.

A comprehensive 'Disaster Resilience Australia Package' will integrate a number of existing emergency management grant programs, providing the flexibility to effectively meet the requirements of local communities threatened by disaster. The additional funding will be part of this new package.

"This represents a significant reform of Australia's disaster resilience arrangements," Mr McClelland said.

The package will integrate the current Bushfire Mitigation Program (BMP), Natural Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP), and the National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund (NEVSF). The funding will:

- support disaster mitigation works including flood levees and fire breaks
- assist Local Government meet its emergency management responsibilities
- support the work of volunteers in emergency management
- build partnerships with business and community groups to improve their ability to respond to emergencies.

"The Government is not only providing additional funding, but we are also streamlining the administration of various programs to release even more funds for grass roots disaster resilience projects," Mr McClelland said.

In addition, the Commonwealth will also provide more than \$12.8 million over the next four years to assist States and Territories lease additional fire fighting aircraft for longer periods during bushfire seasons.

Aircraft will be leased through the cooperative National Aerial Firefighting Arrangements (NAFA) and will help individual States and Territories access a range of specialised aircraft that would otherwise be out of reach.

"Aerial firefighting has emerged as a valuable tool in the fight against bushfires and the national arrangements have proven to be an efficient, collaborative approach that shares the cost of these specialised assets," Mr McClelland said.

This additional funding brings the Government's total contribution to the National Aerial Firefighting Arrangements to \$14 million per year from 2009-2010.

Following recommendations of the 2008 Homeland and Border Security Review, the Government will also establish new briefing facilities and establish an enhanced Government Coordination Centre to support decision-making in the event of a national crisis or major natural disaster.

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