



Australian Government
Australian Business Register

21 October 2014

Ms Karen Chester & Mr Jonathon Coppel
Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2
Collins St East
Melbourne Vic 8003

Dear Ms Chester and Mr Coppel

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Productivity Commission's draft report on Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements.

Please find attached a submission to the draft report.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Yours sincerely

Mark Jackson
Deputy Registrar
Australian Business Registrar

Submission to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements

The Registrar of the Australian Business Register (the Registrar) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Productivity Commission's Draft Report on Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements.

The Registrar acknowledges the comprehensive report of the Productivity Commission into Natural Disaster Funding and offers the following points which may assist the Commission in finalising its report for Government consideration.

As noted in the Registrar's Submission to the Inquiry of 13 June 2014, the Australian Business Register (ABR) is a valuable tool available to government agencies to support more timely and efficient disaster response and recovery activities, while also assisting with the prevention or mitigation of emerging risks. Feedback from government agencies using ABR information suggests that it is highly valuable in supporting disaster response activities.

The draft report acknowledges the importance of information to understanding and managing natural disaster risks. This is consistent with some of the submissions to the Inquiry, including the submission from Geoscience Australia (sub. 111, p. 7) which suggests that '[t]here is an opportunity to improve the availability of impact and recovery information during the post-disaster response and recovery period ...' (draft report, Volume 2, page 203).

The draft report notes the Registrar's submission in the context of the importance of access to information. However, the report could benefit from a more comprehensive discussion about the services of the ABR and how they could contribute to more timely and efficient disaster response and recovery activities. These efficiencies could then in turn lead to a reduction the amount of disaster funding required.

The ABR may not typically be well known for its contribution to natural disaster mitigation or recovery. While there are many government agencies that access ABR data for a variety of purposes, including disaster recovery, there are many other agencies entitled to access ABR data. It is important that government agencies are aware of the ABR as a valuable tool to support them in their disaster mitigation and recovery planning. A more direct and expanded reference in the Commission's report may be a practical way of expanding the use of the ABR in disaster recovery within government agencies.

While it is acknowledged that a key focus of the report relates to natural disaster funding arrangements, ABR services appear directly relevant to the importance of information that is necessary to understand and manage natural disaster risk.

An increased profile of ABR may expand the range of users of the data, but would also increase opportunities for further expansion of the ABR dataset to support more efficient disaster recovery and response activities. This would further promote the increased use by government of a complete and single source of business information, the ABR, for government planning and service delivery.