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Hon John Barilaro MP

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Resolved to publish Yes / No

Questions

If asked about the process to identify known priority local infrastructure projects:

- Department of Regional NSW worked with Resilience NSW, Bushfire Recovery Coordinators, local staff, NSW Government agencies the NBRA and other stakeholders to develop a list of suitable *known shovel-ready* projects that were deemed to meet the LER criteria and are suitable for early co-funding.
- Projects were sought from every bushfire impacted Local Government Area (47 in total), then narrowed to options for high and moderately impacted Local Government Areas only (30 LGAs in total)
- The process included direct consultation on project options in eligible metro-classified LGAs including Blue Mountains, Wollondilly and Hawkesbury.
- Projects were identified from a range of sources such as Local and Regional Recovery Action Plans, existing NSW Government programs and directly from councils.
- As the process progressed, a \$1 million minimum for individual projects was set. Closely linked, shovel ready packages of works totalling over \$1 million were also considered.
- Each project was assessed against the national LER criteria of balance and need; alignment; enduring benefit; local participation, support and delivery; evidence base; and feasibility.
- Projects were required to be shovel ready and align with local or regional Recovery Action Plans, Regional Economic Development Strategies Bushfire Addenda or other community and council recovery priorities and have confirmed local support.
- At the time of this process, projects were required to be completed by June 2022. This has subsequently been extended to June 2023.
- Where a suitable project for early co-funding was not identified in a highly impacted area, projects will be prioritised through the open application process to ensure funding is committed to the most impacted regions.
- A package of suitable projects was considered by the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet.
- Final approval of the package of projects that were submitted to the NBRA was by the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet.
- All projects needed to be endorsed by the NBRA as meeting the National LER Framework in order to be co-funded.

How is NSW rating 'fire impact' for the purposes of the LER?

- At the Local Government Area (LGA) level, the official Rural Fire Service Building Impact Assessment numbers are used to classify LGAs as either high, moderate or low based on the below thresholds:

High impact >	100 buildings damaged or destroyed
Moderate impact	15 – 99 buildings damaged or destroyed
Low impact <	15 buildings damaged or destroyed

- At the Functional Economic Region (FER) level, the Department is using the Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) Bushfire Addenda that were developed after the bushfires for 22 FERs that were most affected by the bushfires.
- FERs are one or more regional LGAs grouped together that work together to create smaller economies with strong economic links.
- The REDS bushfire addenda identify economic impacts, how strategic priorities in each REDS have been affected and key levers and focus areas for economic recovery.
- The Bushfire Addenda were developed in consultation with local communities, industries and local government to reflect localised needs.
- To consider funding distribution under the LER, the Department of Regional NSW (DRNSW) is using both the FER and LGA impacts due to the variation between the impact experienced by each LGA within a FER and the variation in the number of LGAs in a FER.
- Where an impacted LGA is not part of a REDS, the LGA rating will be used to form an overall impact.