



**SENATOR THE HON MURRAY WATT  
MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY  
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

MC22-059778

Dr Bronwyn Orr  
President  
Australian Veterinary Association  
Unit 40, 6 Herbert Street  
ST LEONARDS NSW 2065

Dear Dr *Orr Bronwyn*

Thank you for your recent letter regarding disaster impacted livestock and companion animals that require veterinary care. I understand you have also written to Mr Brendan Moon, Coordinator-General of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). Please accept my response on behalf of both myself and the Coordinator-General.

I commend the work of the Australian Veterinary Association and its members in caring for impacted animals during times of disaster. In your letter you request the inclusion of emergency veterinary care for owned disaster impacted animals as an eligible measure under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

State and territory governments (the states) have primary responsibility for responding to disasters, including providing assistance to disaster affected communities. The Australian Government provides financial support to the states through the jointly funded DRFA to assist with the costs of certain relief and recovery activities.

Under the DRFA, the states can automatically claim certain costs associated with undertaking animal welfare activities, including evacuating companion animals and establishing evacuation facilities to provide them with basic care (e.g. food and shelter). For severe and catastrophic disasters, additional assistance for animal welfare may be approved, including through the activation of recovery grants for primary producers or more targeted support such as the \$2 million extraordinary fodder supply recovery package for the 2019 Queensland Monsoon Trough.

Through review work being undertaken on the DRFA, a series of pre-agreed 'off-the-shelf' recovery packages are being developed to address common gaps in assistance. This work provides an opportunity to develop a specific animal welfare assistance package that could include the veterinary care activities noted in your letter. This is something I have asked NEMA to explore with the states.

I agree the inclusion of animal loss and injury statistics in annual major incidents reports would contribute to a more accurate description of impact, and help raise awareness of animal welfare during disasters. I have asked NEMA to raise this matter with the states as they are best placed to collect this type of information through impact assessments, as well as the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience.

Thank you again for your letter.

Yours sincerely



MURRAY WATT

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