



## Your details

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## Submission details

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I am making this submission as	Other
Submission type	I am submitting on behalf of my organisation
Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	Lions Clubs MD201 N4
Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	District Governor
Consent to make submission public	I give my consent for this submission to be made public

## Share your experience or tell your story

## Terms of Reference (optional)

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The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#).

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### 1.3 Response to bushfires

#### Drought and Disaster Victim Support and Referral

In my role as Lions Clubs District Governor for Central and Western NSW I deal on a day to day basis with requests for assistance regarding our current disaster. To this end we have a District Disaster and Drought Relief Chairperson who manages the day to day activities of the District's response to disaster. I also have a background in Disaster Relief ranging from the provision of Military assistance to major floods, Direct front line involvement with my role in the Federal Police Rescue Squad and as a provider of recovery assistance in my role with the International Association of Lions Clubs

In any disaster/drought we have numerous volunteer/charitable organisations that offer assistance of various kinds to those affected.

There is plenty of money around from donations and special events, but we continually hear of cases where people have missed out or, indeed, applied using false information. In my view the provision of charitable assistance is piecemeal, uncoordinated and inefficient.

One of the major problems is that we cannot share information between relief providers because of privacy legislation. In my particular situation in the 2016 floods around Forbes NSW I had money available to assist victims of the flood but was unable to elicit any information from any Local Government, State Government or Federal Government re persons affected. A prime example of this was that I approached the Rural Assistance Authority staff in Forbes and suggested that I could give the RAA some referral forms that they could hand out to people they knew needed assistance. I explained that if I had a person come to me with one of these forms, I would offer them assistance without any further questions. The response was "If someone came to you with one of these forms, you would know that they'd been to see us and it would be a breach of their privacy!" This meant major delays whilst I set up my own system of identifying those affected, even then I know I missed out on assisting many victims because I had no way of identifying who had been affected.

Our more recent experience with Drought Relief in our district has had similar issues in trying to identify those in need of assistance.

The same thing is happening now with the bushfires. Our local co-ordinator in the Lithgow area is still trying to contact people directly affected so he can offer them our package of financial assistance.

My proposal is this:

1. That either the State or Federal Government set up a Disaster/Drought Victims referral service.
2. That any volunteer/charitable organisation wishing to assist must first register with the referral service detailing the type of assistance offered along with proof of their credentials as a provider.
3. That Persons affected by the Disaster/Drought must register with the Disaster/ Drought Victim Referral Service.
4. That once they are registered their information may be shared with the various organisations that have registered as providers of relief.
5. The referral service can then refer them directly to the organisations who can assist them. Using a referral form that shows they have been assessed and are eligible for assistance.
6. This removes the need for each organisation to do their own research and assess each victim's entitlements.

This process would have many advantages for victims and

service providers.

1. The victims get immediate attention.
2. Service providers do not have to set up their own assessment system.
3. Service providers can respond immediately rather than introduce delays doing assessments.
4. It would also help to remove the dodgy dealer element from the loop.

I feel these changes would make our response to disasters more efficient and effective.

There are many similar types of referral service, in particular The Family Referral Service in NSW which has clear guidelines for Service Providers and the Referral Service itself. I feel that this could well form a basis for the service I am proposing.

## **Supporting documents or images**

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