

NSW Budget 2023-24



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NSW Budget to boost communications for emergency services and communities during natural disasters

The NSW Government is rebuilding essential services and delivering a safer New South Wales by investing **\$26 million** into new emergency services communications upgrades in the 2023-24 NSW Budget.

Disaster resilience and response and recovery programs will be boosted through an **\$11.3 million** investment in four new broadband Cell on Wheels (COWs) to be delivered by the NSW Telco Authority. Self-powered and mounted on trailers, the COWs can be deployed to disaster areas to provide internet and mobile phone (Wi-Fi and 4G) coverage during and after emergencies.

An **\$11.3 million** investment in 2023-24 will also begin the rollout of fit-for-purpose Vehicle as a Node (VAAN) technology to the Rural Fire Service fleet. The upgrades will provide seamless internet connectivity to firefighting vehicles, enhancing communication and operational efficiency.

The NSW Government will invest **\$3.2 million** in a suite of products providing community members and emergency services access to timely, accurate and actionable hazard warnings. This includes the mobile Hazards Near Me app, the HazardWatch flood and evacuations website, and the HazardPublisher public warning management tool for emergency services.

In addition, **\$3.3 million** will be spent on early warning detection systems for fires and floods, such as smart sensors, to better protect communities. Hazard reduction teams are also receiving **\$10 million** to be invested as part of bushfire season preparations.

Natural disasters are becoming more frequent and more severe as we deal with the impacts of climate change. Since 2019, NSW has seen more than 60 declared disasters, costing the State \$5 billion. In 2022 alone 20,000 homes in NSW were damaged.

Having been neglected by the previous government, the NSW Reconstruction Authority will now be properly resourced with a **\$121 million** injection of new money, including **\$6 million** of capital. This will allow the authority to fulfil its mandate of better preparing NSW communities for natural disasters and helping them recover faster.

After 12 years of waste and mismanagement, the Minns Labor Government's Budget will put people first while slowing down the growth in the Liberal Party's \$188 billion of debt.

Through responsible and considered decision making, the Minns Labor Government is addressing the significant issues left unresolved by the Liberal Party. The Government has a clear focus to manage the State's finances responsibly so it can provide support where it's needed most.

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