

# Emergency Services Portfolio Project Team provides rapid support during emergencies

The people of NSW have experienced a range of life-disrupting emergencies over the past two years, from bushfires and floods to a global pandemic. To support the immediate needs of both our employees and the citizens of NSW, Service NSW supported the creation of several specific project teams to deliver services quickly to the people most affected.

The Service NSW Partnerships, Projects and Insights team is dedicated to working closely with agencies on an ongoing basis. As part of this work, executives and steering committees meet regularly to discuss service delivery for citizens. Leveraging these existing relationships allowed Service NSW to establish the Emergency Services Portfolio Project Team and liaise across NSW Government agencies to quickly respond to the emergencies facing NSW.

The Emergency Services Portfolio Project Team was created to provide rapid support to customers and the NSW public sector. It brings together teams from across the Department of Customer Service (Service Delivery, Partnerships, Projects and Insights, Digital, Risk, Strategy and Performance, Legal, Policy and Communications), and from partner agencies including Resilience NSW, NSW Health, NSW Treasury, Department of Regional NSW and Destination NSW.

The cross-sector nature of the Emergency Services Portfolio Project Team – and the speed with which it was set up to respond to the emergencies facing NSW – allowed Service NSW to quickly roll out numerous initiatives across the state. Service NSW clearly defined roles and responsibilities, setting expectations of what it could do for these partner agencies. This aided the visibility and transparency of decision making and avoided costly jurisdictional delays when rolling out critical initiatives and support for citizens.

Co-locating staff – at first in the same building during the bushfire and flood emergencies and then virtually during the pandemic response – has been a key tool enabling collaborative service delivery. It enabled effective daily stand-ups and regular project meetings with the right decision makers in the room when decisions needed to be made.

To help manage the pandemic, the Emergency Services Portfolio Project Team created border declarations and business grants in a matter of days. The COVID Safe Check-in was another product supported by the project team – a whole-of-government initiative to support COVID safety in the NSW community and the critical work of NSW Health contact tracers. Developing the check-in involved working directly with industry peak bodies and businesses to deliver a check-in tool that is easy to use for both customers and businesses.

The team was also entrusted with supporting the NSW Health workforce, including the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines among health workers. Following an urgent request from NSW Health, the team created an expression of interest web form over one weekend, working tirelessly to have the platform up and running for a Monday launch. This program helped manage interest and demand among NSW Health employees as they became eligible to participate in the rapid vaccine rollout across NSW Health clinics.



In response to the bushfires, floods, mouse plague and COVID-19 pandemic, the teams quickly created and established ongoing support for grants, vouchers, rebates and customer care initiatives. This has helped support the health and wellbeing of NSW public sector staff and the people of NSW.

By working across government, the Emergency Services Portfolio Project Team has delivered around \$1 billion in grants, \$250 million in Dine & Discover NSW vouchers and \$14.5 million in rebates to help stimulate the economy. The team has established more than 31 initiatives, including:

- The NSW Bushfire Clean-up Program
- Council rates relief for homes, farms or business properties damaged by bushfire
- \$10,000 and \$50,000 bushfire grants for small businesses
- \$3,000 and \$10,000 grants for small businesses highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Automated COVID-19 pathology notifications
- Border permits.

None of these programs could have been achieved without such effective collaboration across departments, business streams, government agencies and industry, not to mention across state jurisdictions.

“Without the financial support from the NSW Government and Dine & Discover, our iconic business would not be operational – let alone profitable. We’ve been impressed by how seamless it all is, the Service NSW app is easy to use, and the money comes back to us quickly. The best part of Dine & Discover is the flow-on effect. People cruise with us, and then visit other businesses here in Huskisson. It’s great to see money flowing back into the region.” – Business owner

The Emergency Services Portfolio Project Team has created a supportive culture across the Department of Customer Service and its partner agencies. This work has significantly improved Service NSW's internal digital capability, while also enhancing its ability to collaborate digitally across government. The whole Customer Service cluster will build on this digital uplift as it works to provide NSW citizens with more integrated platforms in the future.

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