

31 October 2015

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction  
Sasakawa Awards 2015  
wcdrr2015\_sasakawa@un.org

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find following our nomination in support of the *Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience & Safer Communities* for the 2015 Sasakawa Awards.

The Australian Business Roundtable is represented by six of Australia's leading CEOs who believe that having resilient communities that can adapt to extreme weather events and natural perils to be of national importance.

Recognising that governments acting alone cannot address the challenge of natural disaster management, the Australian Business Roundtable was formed with the aim of supporting the development of a more sustainable, coordinated national approach to making communities more resilient and the Australian people safer.

The Australian Business Roundtable's vision is to:

- work collaboratively with governments to effect change in public policy and increase investment aimed at building safer and more resilient communities; and
- actively improve the capacity of people and businesses to better withstand future natural disasters.

This remarkable coalition is helping shape Australia's future by releasing evidence based reports to Government, industry and the media that highlight the unsustainable cost of natural disasters to life, property and the economy and outline a new approach to pre-disaster investments in Australia.

In June 2013, the Australian Business Roundtable released a fact-based, comprehensive White Paper, *'Building our Nation's Resilience to Natural Disasters'*, through Deloitte Access Economics. The White Paper:

- models the economics of mitigation activity in helping to inform risk reduction activities versus recovery spend;
- identifies opportunities where governments can work with business, not-for-profit and community leaders in resilience-building activities; and
- provides comprehensive information about risks in our community, particularly in relation to extreme weather events.

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In July 2014, the Australian Business Roundtable released, *'Building an Open Platform for Natural Disaster Resilience Decisions'*; a report which provides an overview of natural disaster data and research in Australia.

The report extends the work of the Roundtable's previous White Paper, *'Building our Nation's Resilience to Natural Disasters'*, which identifies information asymmetries as inhibiting the progress of effective disaster resilience.

*'Building an Open Platform for Natural Disaster Resilience Decisions'*:

- Identifies the strengths and weaknesses of Australia's approach to natural disaster data and research
- Examines best-practice examples from around the world and from other Australian sectors
- Makes three key recommendations to Government to unlock the potential of data and research to lessen the burden of natural disasters in Australia

References to the Roundtable's two evidence based papers by: key Government officials and departments, the *Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements'* along with stakeholder submissions to the Productivity Commission; are all examples of how the Roundtable's work has elevated the issue of natural disaster management in Australia.

The Roundtable welcomed the recently released Draft Report by the Productivity Commission noting in particular the Commission's recommendation in relation to increased funding of \$200m by the Australian Government for pre mitigation as opposed to post disaster reconstruction.

This is in line with the Roundtable's commissioned White Paper which demonstrated that carefully targeted resilience investments of \$250 million per annum has the potential to generate budget savings of \$12.2 billion for all levels of government and reduce natural disaster costs by more than 50% by 2050.

To achieve this however the Roundtable's White Paper notes a program of mitigation activity be developed based on cost-benefit analysis, informed by critical natural disaster information

The Roundtable's Submission (21 October) to the Productivity Commission's Draft Report further addresses the need for the fundamental need for information to be organised through:

- The establishment of a national platform for natural disaster data and information so that end users such as householders, communities, business and government can make informed decisions as to how to mitigate the risk and impact of natural disasters.
- A national platform can then more effectively inform State and locally based land use planning reforms and enhance building codes to protect property as well as life and safety performance.

Both of the Roundtable's commissioned research papers highlight that through the centralisation of decision-making and funding through the appointment of a National Resilience Advisor, and the establishment of a national research agenda, Government will be better able to co-ordinate and prioritise resilience activities across relevant departments and levels of

government and; invest in longer term sustainable community engagement and education programs – all critical to saving lives and property.

By pursuing the key recommendations of the Roundtable papers, economic costs can be materially reduced, as well as relieving long term pressures on government budgets.

More importantly, a safer Australia can be created through building resilience against the trauma and loss of life that all too frequently confronts many of our communities when a natural disaster strikes.

With kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'anna kilmartin', written in a cursive style.

**Anna Kilmartin**

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