

Ref: Public Hearing 20th February 2026

19th February 2026

Joint Select Committee on the NSW Reconstruction Authority
Committee Manager
Email : nswreconstructionauthority@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Re: Opening statement - public hearing Friday, 20 February 2026 for the Review of the operations of the NSW Reconstruction Authority regarding the NSW East Coast severe weather from May 2025.

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Hearing.

Service NSW plays a key role in supporting recovery, predominantly by providing individual and business grants.

This is achieved via our digital teams who design, deliver, and support the grants, and through direct support provided in Recovery Assistance Points (RAPs) where we deploy dedicated staff trained in trauma informed care that can connect customers with support across Government and help prepare grant applications.

This response is, however enabled by teams from across Service NSW, including

- Local Service Centre staff and our statewide Contact Centre network while events occur, but also once Recovery Assistance Points close (often by staff that have been impacted themselves), as well as
- Support teams that
 - Coordinate and manage deployment
 - document eligibility and support processes, and
 - prepare dedicated communications resources for communities, and
- Assessment teams – that review applications and work with customers for missing documentation

We would like to thank all our dedicated teams that perform all these roles, especially those that volunteer to spend long periods away from families in supporting recovery.

For the East Coast Severe Weather event in particular, Service NSW delivered a personal hardship and small business grant. We assisted almost 10 thousand customers between May and August 2025, which involved 90 frontline staff (from across Service NSW), and covered 34 locations on the East Coast.

Importantly, with each event – which has been demonstrated since response in the Central West, Broken Hill and more recently in Bondi, improvements have been made to make it better for our staff, and easier and fairer for customers (in a shorter timeframe with each event). This included several enhancements to digital processes, and the translation of service centre practices and technology to RAPs.

Perhaps of most significance in this event were the improvements made for vulnerable customers and challenged standard Proof of Identity and Proof of Address requirements, and a dedicated outreach process for Aboriginal communities – that will form as a blueprint for our response to future events.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'G' followed by a horizontal line and a small dot.

Greg Wells
Managing Director – Service NSW