



17 May 2024

# Review of the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022

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Submission to Joint Select Committee on the NSW Reconstruction Authority

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## Response to terms of reference

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The Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM) and the Northern Rivers Co-operative Alliance (CA) welcome the opportunity to make this submission to the Joint Select Committee on the NSW Reconstruction Authority.

The BCCM is the national peak body representing the co-operative and mutual movement across all industries.

The CA is an alliance of leading co-operatives and mutuals in the Northern Rivers region across agriculture, fisheries and financial services. The members of the CA have a combined turnover of \$1.34 billion, directly employ more than 2,500 people and serve more than 28,000 members, including 1,100 farm and fishing businesses.

The BCCM and the CA made a joint [submission to the independent flood inquiry](#) in 2022. We refer the Committee to that submission for information about the role co-ops and mutuals played in flood response and early recovery in the Northern Rivers, as well as for general background information about co-ops and mutuals.

We believe the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022 (the Act) is mostly sound. However, the rhetoric of community collaboration and partnership in the Act has not always translated into practice.

There are many community initiatives that have emerged during the recovery, including with CA member involvement, that demonstrate the type of approach that the Authority should foster. An example is the [Living Lab Northern Rivers](#). Led by two universities, Living Lab demonstrates an approach where local community organisations and institutions can unlock genuine community engagement, leadership and resources.

**We recommend that s10 of the Act is amended to more clearly express an ethos of working 'with and by' community, particularly by working with and supporting local community organisations and institutions (local clubs, business associations, co-operatives, mutuals, universities etc.) that can unlock local networks, resources and leadership.**

The BCCM and the CA would be pleased to provide further information on any matters raised in this submission.

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