What is an essential public asset?

Under the DRFA, an essential public asset is a transport or public infrastructure asset of an eligible undertaking (e.g. state agency, local council etc) that the state considers (and the department agrees) is integral to the state’s infrastructure and normal functioning of a community.

Examples of essential public assets include:

- roads
- road infrastructure (including footpaths, bike lanes and pedestrian bridges)
- bridges
- tunnels
- culverts
- public hospitals
- public schools
- public housing
- prisons/correctional facilities
- police, fire and emergency services stations
- levees
- state/territory or local government offices
- stormwater infrastructure

Assets not considered to be essential public assets include:

- sporting, recreational or community assets, e.g. playgrounds, ovals, showgrounds, skate parks and swimming pools). Funding may be available for these items under other categories of the DRFA, so please discuss with Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF)
- religious buildings, e.g. churches, temples and mosques
- privately-owned assets
- memorials.
Why do I need to know about essential public assets?

If you work for a state government agency or a local government organisation, you may need to collect information and evidence for DTF to include in a state claim for financial assistance to reconstruct essential public assets.

If you work for a local government organisation, you can seek assistance to reconstruct essential public assets through the Local Government Disaster Recovery Arrangements. The definition of an essential public asset under these guidelines is the same as under the DRFA.

Funding to repair essential public assets

After a disaster, the Government of South Australia can apply to the Commonwealth Government for help to fund the reconstruction of essential public assets (REPA).

To work out if an asset is eligible for REPA\(^1\) funding under the DRFA, you need to be able to answer ‘yes’ to the following questions:

- Does the asset meet the DRFA definition of transport or public infrastructure essential public assets?
- Is the asset owned and maintained or operated and maintained by an eligible undertaking (e.g. a local government or state government agency)?
- Is operating the asset provided free of charge to businesses or the community, or at a rate that is 50% or lower than the cost to provide the service?
- Is the damaged asset necessary and integral to the normal functioning of the community?
- Has the asset been directly damaged by an eligible disaster, and can this be demonstrated?
- Does evidence clearly link the asset damage to the eligible disaster?
- Does evidence demonstrate the exact location, nature and extent of event damage to the asset, i.e. is there pre-disaster and post-disaster condition evidence, or has an inspection report been done?
- If the asset meets all of the criteria above and is covered by insurance (e.g. public hospitals or schools), has a claim been sent to the insurer?

\(^1\) Refer to REPA Fact Sheet 6: Reconstruction of Essential Public Assets for information.
If a claim has been sent to an insurer, does it exclude works and costs that are covered by insurance?

If you are unsure if an asset is eligible for funding under REPA, or if you think it should be, contact DTF, which can then check with the Commonwealth government. For any assets not listed here, the state must write to the Commonwealth for approval to treat the asset as an essential public asset under the DRFA.

For more information

www.disasterassist.gov.au

Local Government Disaster Recovery Assistance Guidelines