



**ASSISTANT MINISTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS
MEMBER FOR PERTH
The Hon Patrick Gorman MP**

Reference: MC25-145962

Ms Jodie Belyea MP
Chair, Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Belyea 

Thank you for your correspondence dated 24 November 2025 to the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister, regarding petition EN8433, which requests that the Australian Government considers retrospective recognition for emergency personnel who assisted in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy through the National Emergency Medal (NEM). The Prime Minister has asked me to reply on his behalf as the Minister with responsibility for Australian honours.

The Government strongly supports recognition of those who undertake hazardous service on behalf of the community and we are mindful of the valuable contribution, often under very difficult circumstances, that Australians have made in response to many events, both domestically and overseas.

Cyclone Tracy was a disaster on a scale unparalleled in Australian history that had a profound impact on the Darwin community with more than 70 per cent of Darwin's homes destroyed or suffering severe damage. I acknowledge the significant contribution of the Australian Defence Force, together with other emergency services and civilian personnel, who were part of the response and clean-up operation. It is an example of the Australian ethos of assisting fellow Australians at times of national distress.

The NEM is an operational service medal, which recognises significant or sustained service to others in response to nationally-significant emergencies within Australia, and was intentionally created in 2011 to have limited retrospectivity.

The *National Emergency Medal Regulations 2011* set out that an emergency event must have occurred within the previous three years to be considered for a decision on whether to declare the event as a nationally-significant emergency. As Cyclone Tracy occurred in 1974, the National Emergency Medal Committee, which operates independent of government, has no authority to consider it as a nationally-significant emergency.

The establishment of new awards in the Australian honours system requires a strong case that national recognition is appropriate and that existing awards do not suffice. New medals in the Australian honours system are created by His Majesty the King on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

As such, proposals for new awards, or significant changes to existing awards, are generally developed by peak bodies and supported by the Chief Officers of relevant organisations and relevant state and territory Ministers. In the case of multi-jurisdictions, it is common for these proposals to be sponsored by one jurisdictional Minister who submits it to the Australian Government on behalf of all interested parties.

Unfortunately, Australia has a long history of natural disasters, including for example the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires in Victoria and South Australia. There are many Australians who have provided assistance in difficult, uncomfortable and often dangerous circumstances, who are not eligible for an award.

Thank you again for bringing this petition to the Australian Government's attention. I have provided a copy of this correspondence to the Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely

PATRICK GORMAN

/ / 2025

