

## National Emergency Medal – Frequently Asked Questions

### ELIGIBILITY

#### **Who is eligible for the National Emergency Medal and is it only for emergency services personnel?**

A range of service personnel, both paid and voluntary, may be recognised with the National Emergency Medal, including:

- emergency service personnel;
- federal, state and local government employees;
- private sector employees;
- volunteer and community groups; and
- private citizens.

#### **Do I need to be on the frontline of the emergency to be eligible for the National Emergency Medal?**

No. You do not need to be on the frontline of the emergency response to be eligible for the National Emergency Medal, but your service does need to be in direct response, including support that enables or facilitates the emergency response. You must have rendered sustained or significant service during the nationally-significant emergency. The service must be in the protection of lives and property; or in the service of interests, that are not your own; in direct response to the declared emergency.

If you believe your service meets the criteria and was in direct response to the emergency, including support that enables or facilitates the emergency response, we encourage you to put forward an application.

Details about applying for the National Emergency Medal can be found [here](#).

#### **What is the difference between sustained service and significant service?**

**Sustained service** is awarded to those who have rendered sustained service in the declared nationally-significant emergency for the purpose of the Medal. The criteria for sustained service describes what constitutes 'sustained service' for each emergency and is determined by the National Emergency Medal Committee, in considering advice from relevant organisations and jurisdictions.

**Significant service** is awarded to those who rendered significant service in the nationally-significant emergency. The significant service criteria stipulates that the service must be extraordinary. The National Emergency Medal Committee considers each nomination on a case-by-case basis before making a recommendation to the Governor-General. Applicants do not need to meet the sustained service criteria to be eligible to apply for significant service (e.g. minimum duration of service, eligible dates of service).

Successful applicants through both the sustained and significant service channels are awarded the same medal and relevant emergency clasp.

**Can I nominate someone for the National Emergency Medal who died or was evacuated due to illness or injury during the nationally-significant emergency?**

Yes. The National Emergency Medal Committee may advise the Secretariat whether the service requirements for the award of the Medal for sustained service may be waived for a person who:

- died during the nationally-significant emergency; or
- was evacuated during the nationally-significant emergency due to illness or injury.

The Committee considers these on a case by case basis.

For more information, refer to Section 4 10 (5) (a) and (b) of the [National Emergency Medal Regulations 2011](#).

**Do I need to be physically located in a declared geographical area to be eligible for the National Emergency Medal under sustained service?**

No. The National Emergency Medal Committee considered the criteria and reviewed feedback for past declared emergencies, and determined that individuals physically located outside a declared geographical area may still be eligible for the National Emergency Medal, provided the service rendered was in direct response to the emergency in a declared area.

**I rendered service during the eligible emergency period but the days were not consecutive. Can I still apply?**

Yes. The minimum duration of eligible service required to qualify for the award of the Medal for sustained service is outlined in the Declarations for each declared national emergency.

To note:

- days served do not need to be consecutive;
- service may be a combination of paid and unpaid service; and
- service may include up to two days of travel time.

For more information, refer to the [National Emergency Medal](#) page, including the Declarations for each declared national emergency.

**Do travel days count towards meeting the minimum duration of service?**

Yes. Up to two travel days may be counted towards the minimum duration of service; one on either side of the deployment.

**What constitutes a 'day' of service for the purposes of the National Emergency Medal?**

A 'day' for the purposes of the National Emergency Medal refers to a calendar day. A minimum of four hours of service per day is required.

**Do I need to be an Australian citizen to be eligible for the National Emergency Medal?**

No. The awards are not exclusively for Australian citizens. Anyone who renders service in direct response to the nationally-significant emergency, including support that enables or facilitates the emergency response, can apply for the National Emergency Medal.

**Is there a minimum age requirement to be eligible for the National Emergency Medal?**

No. There is no minimum age requirement to be eligible for the National Emergency Medal. Anyone of any age who renders service in direct response to the nationally-significant emergency, including support that enables or facilitates the emergency response, can apply for the National Emergency Medal.

**I already have the National Emergency Medal. Can I apply again if I render service in another nationally-significant emergency and will I receive another Medal?**

Yes. You may apply for the National Emergency Medal again if you render service in another nationally-significant emergency.

If you have previously been awarded the National Emergency Medal, please note that you will not receive another Medal. You will receive the relevant emergency clasp, which will attach to the ribbon of the Medal you were previously awarded.

**I responded to the same emergency twice, through two different agencies with both deployments meeting the criteria. Can I apply twice and receive two clasps?**

No. You can only receive one clasp for each declared national emergency.

**I believe I meet both the sustained and significant criteria for the same emergency. Can I apply for both and receive two clasps for the same emergency?**

No. The clasps for sustained and significant service for each emergency are the same. You can only receive one clasp for each nationally-significant emergency.

If you submit a significant service application but have enough days and meet the sustained service criteria, the Secretariat may process your application as sustained service.

## **SUBMITTING A NATIONAL EMERGENCY MEDAL SCHEDULE ON BEHALF OF A GROUP, AGENCY OR ORGANISATION**

**How do I submit a schedule on behalf of my group, agency or organisation?**

To submit a schedule on behalf of a group, agency or organisation, please download a schedule template for the relevant emergency and a covering letter [here](#).

Please only include those who meet the criteria and are eligible for the National Emergency Medal in the schedule submission.

After populating the required data into the appropriate template, please email the electronic schedule and a scanned version of the signed covering letter to [nem@gg.gov.au](mailto:nem@gg.gov.au).

**What information is required to complete a schedule?**

The following information is required for each applicant in a schedule:

- Service number (or AGS number);
- Surname;
- Given names;
- Title;
- Date of birth;
- Sex;
- Deceased;
- Dates of service;
- Geographical location of service;
- Role/position during the nationally-significant emergency; and
- Brief description of service.

**Who can sign the covering letter?**

It is expected that your agency head (e.g. Chief Officer, Secretary, Director-General) sign the covering letter. Alternatively, there may be another suitable recommending authority with the delegation to verify service, such as the Honours and Awards branch of the organisation or the Local Disaster Coordinator. If uncertain, please contact us.

We only require one covering letter per schedule submission, regardless of how many individuals are on the schedule.

**Personnel from different agencies were deployed under our agency's taskforce. Can we submit their applications on behalf of their home agencies?**

Yes. We recommend the relevant agency verify the service of applicants (dates of service, location, roles, description of service) and submit the applications in a schedule. In most cases, this will be the agency that headed the deployment.

**Is there a deadline for schedule submissions?**

No. Applications for the National Emergency Medal may be submitted at any time.

**Can an agency submit more than one schedule?**

Yes. There is no limit to the number of schedules that agencies can submit.

**Can I request an unlocked schedule template?**

No. The schedule template is locked, to secure the input of data for bulk applications processed by the Secretariat. Please do not attempt to unlock the schedule template or add additional columns in the document. Please rely on templates provided on our website for information and guidance.

**Our agency does not have service numbers for our personnel. How do we complete the schedule template?**

Service numbers are not mandatory; however, they assist the Secretariat to process applications efficiently. If you are unable to provide a service (or AGS) number, please leave this field blank.

**Our agency's state control centre is not located in a declared geographical area. How do we complete the schedule template?**

Please leave the geographical area field blank on the schedule.

**The eligible emergency periods highlighted in the schedule template do not capture all dates of service for the applicant, during the nationally-significant emergency. How do we complete the schedule template?**

You do not need to provide all dates of service during the nationally-significant emergency; the minimum number of days to meet the criteria is sufficient.

For example, where the minimum duration of sustained service for a nationally-significant emergency is five days, the five periods in the schedule template will sufficiently capture the minimum duration of service required, even if all five days were non-consecutive.

**Our staff were deployed during the emergency, but we are unable to provide exact dates of service for our personnel. Can we still put forward a schedule?**

The dates of service, type of service rendered and location of service must be verified by the Chief Officer (or other recommending authority) of the organisation, prior to submission to the Secretariat.

It is the responsibility of the agency to provide accurate dates and to ensure that individuals on a schedule meet the sustained service criteria for the relevant emergency.

To note, you do not need to provide all dates of service in the eligible period; the minimum number of days to meet the criteria is sufficient.

## **SUBMITTING A NATIONAL EMERGENCY MEDAL APPLICATION AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN**

**I rendered service with a group, agency or organisation during the nationally-significant emergency. Can I submit a National Emergency Medal application myself?**

If you rendered service with a group, agency or organisation during the nationally-significant emergency, we recommend you contact your primary service organisation to be considered for the National Emergency Medal. The Secretariat expects applications for those who rendered service with a group, agency or organisation to come from the relevant primary service organisation.

Your primary service organisation will consolidate applications, verify each applicant's service and submit the applications to the Secretariat for processing.

For those who did not render service as a member of an organisation, please complete the [online nomination form](#) on our website.

### **What information is required?**

The following information is required:

- Service number (or AGS number);
- Surname;
- Given names;
- Title;
- Date of birth;
- Sex;
- Deceased;
- Dates of service;
- Geographical location of service;
- Role/position during the nationally-significant emergency; and
- Brief description of service.

### **What evidence is required?**

We need as much information as possible to verify the service of the applicant. Please provide evidence from a local government agency, community group, emergency services agency or other relevant persons, to verify the applicant's service. This should be on letterhead and include the following information:

- Role/position during the nationally-significant emergency; and
- Brief description of service.

### **I rendered days of service with a number of agencies during the eligible period of the emergency. How do I apply?**

If you meet the sustained service criteria and minimum duration of service with one group, agency or organisation, please contact them in the first instance, to be included in a schedule submission from that agency.

For those individuals who only meet the sustained service criteria through an accumulative total of service with more than one agency, please complete the [online application form](#) on our website.

### **Is there a deadline for applications?**

No. Applications for the National Emergency Medal may be submitted at any time.

### **I have started an individual online nomination form but need to compile additional information before I am ready to submit. How do I do this without losing all the information I've provided?**

Your online nomination form is saved for 14 days from each time you access and save your form. You can access your nomination form and continue editing, using the tracking ID provided.

Unfortunately, if you do not access and re-save your nomination form in this 14 day period, your nomination form times out and cannot be retrieved, as the data is destroyed for privacy reasons. To retain your information, please ensure you select the 'Save for later' button each time you step away from the form or before closing your web browser.

## **THE PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS**

### **How long do applications take to process?**

Applications can take up to 12 months to process. Nominations will be processed in the order in which they are received from organisations.

### **What happens when the Secretariat receives a sustained service application?**

All applications are assessed for eligibility. Additional information is sought if necessary. Relevant agencies may be contacted to confirm service, if required.

The Secretariat, then makes a recommendation to the Governor-General for the award of the Medal.

For more information on the functions of the Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat, refer to Section 5 12 (4) of the [National Emergency Medal Regulations 2011](#).

For more information on sustained service, refer to the Section 4 10 (4) and (5) of the [National Emergency Medal Regulations 2011](#).

### **What happens when the Secretariat receives a significant service application by an individual or organisation?**

All applications are assessed for eligibility. Additional information is sought if necessary. Relevant agencies may be contacted to confirm service, if required.

Applications by organisations are received on schedules for nominees who have already been verified by the Chief Officer or recommending authority of the agency.

The Secretariat, then prepares each nominee's significant service application for consideration by the National Emergency Medal Committee.

The National Emergency Medal Committee considers each application on a case-by-case basis, before making a recommendation to the Governor-General for the award of the Medal.

For more information on the functions of National Emergency Medal Committee, refer to Section 4 10 (1) to (7) of the [National Emergency Medal Regulations 2011](#).

For more information on significant service, refer to Section 4 10 (6) and (7) of the [National Emergency Medal Regulations 2011](#).

## **NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOME**

### **Will I receive an outcome advice for an application I made?**

If you applied for the National Emergency Medal on behalf of another person, you will be advised of the outcome in writing.

If you applied for the National Emergency Medal as a private citizen or volunteer, you will be advised of the outcome in writing.

If your service was rendered as part of a group, agency or primary service organisation, the outcome advice will be directed to the head of your agency, or specified recommending authority.

### **How is the National Emergency Medal presented to successful applicants?**

The Secretariat does not manage the presentation of medals for recipients.

The presentation of the National Emergency Medal is managed by the primary service organisation.

### **My application for sustained service was unsuccessful. Can I re-apply?**

If your application for sustained service is unsuccessful, please seek advice from your group, agency or primary service organisation who can review your dates of service and amend accordingly. You may then apply again if the dates meet the criteria.

You may also apply again through significant service, if you meet the significant service criteria.

For more information on sustained and significant service, refer to Section 4 10 (4) to (7) of the [National Emergency Medal Regulations 2011](#).

### **My application for significant service was unsuccessful. Can I request an appeal?**

Yes. You can seek an appeal and the National Emergency Medal Committee may reconsider a nomination. However, for this to occur, you are required to provide substantial, additional information or advice that was not previously considered.

Please note, all appeals are assessed on a case by case basis, and not all appeals will be considered by the National Emergency Medal Committee.

## **EMERGENCY and SERVICE DECLARATIONS**

### **How does the National Emergency Medal Committee determine the eligibility criteria for each emergency?**



In establishing the criteria for sustained service for each nationally-significant emergency, the National Emergency Medal Committee seeks advice from the relevant jurisdiction and from organisations deploying staff or volunteers to each of the disasters.

The National Emergency Medal Committee then provides advice to the Minister about whether the emergency should be declared a nationally-significant emergency.

The Governor-General may, on the recommendation of the Minister, declare the emergency to be a nationally-significant emergency for the purposes of the *National Emergency Medal Regulations 2011*.

More information on the functions of the National Emergency Medal Committee can be found [here](#) and in the [National Emergency Medal Regulations 2011](#).

**Why are some emergencies, such as Cyclone Tracy 1974, not declared nationally-significant for the purposes of the National Emergency Medal?**

The National Emergency Medal was instituted in 2011. The [National Emergency Medal Regulations 2011](#) provide that a recommendation for a nationally-significant emergency should only be made if the emergency happened during the previous three years. As such, earlier emergencies, such as Cyclone Tracy 1974, do not fall within the scope of the Regulations.

**Is the Covid-19 pandemic declared a nationally-significant emergency for the purpose of the Medal?**

No. For the purpose of the National Emergency Medal, the Covid-19 pandemic is not a declared nationally-significant emergency.