

Release of the Bureau of Meteorology's new website

Communications and engagement approach

Revision history and review status

Revision history

Date	Version	Author	Description
17/06/2023	1	External Communications Manager	First draft
11/08/2023	2	GM Comms	Feedback in document
11/08/2023	2	External Communications Manager	Apply feedback

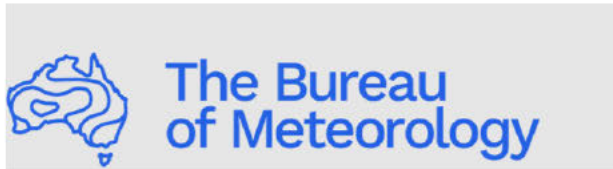
Review status

Date	Version	Reviewer	Description
July 2023	1	See log	Feedback Log - Website Communications Approach.xlsx
July 2023	1	GE DDG	Feedback in document
4 Aug 2023	1	GM DCCED GM Business Management GM DSS GM Ag & Water GM NPS	Feedback in document Follow up consultation session
Aug 2023	2	GE ESG	Cleared

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Aug 2023	2	Web steering group	Endorsed
Nov 2023	3	CEO	CEO feedback incorporated

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1. Executive summary

The Bureau of Meteorology website (bom.gov.au) is one of the most visited Australian government websites, with more than 2.6 billion page views per year. The website is a trusted source of weather, climate, water, ocean and space weather information and is a cornerstone of the Bureau's reputation with Australians.

The Bureau's website has evolved over 30 years without any significant investment in security, resilience or user experience. The website is being redeveloped as part of the ROBUST program to improve the long-term security, stability and resilience of critical business functions. This also presented an opportunity to better meet modern user expectations and organisational needs.

The new site will deliver improved navigation and accessibility, and provide equivalent localisation features to that of the popular BOM Weather app. The Bureau is also upgrading the site's security and putting in place modern technological standards, creating a platform that supports incremental function improvements.

This communications and engagement approach sets out principles to positively position the Bureau's new website. It will guide communications to support impacted audiences through the website release journey while we continue to deliver critical weather services to Australians. This approach is an overarching framework, with tactical implementation staged to align with the website delivery phases.

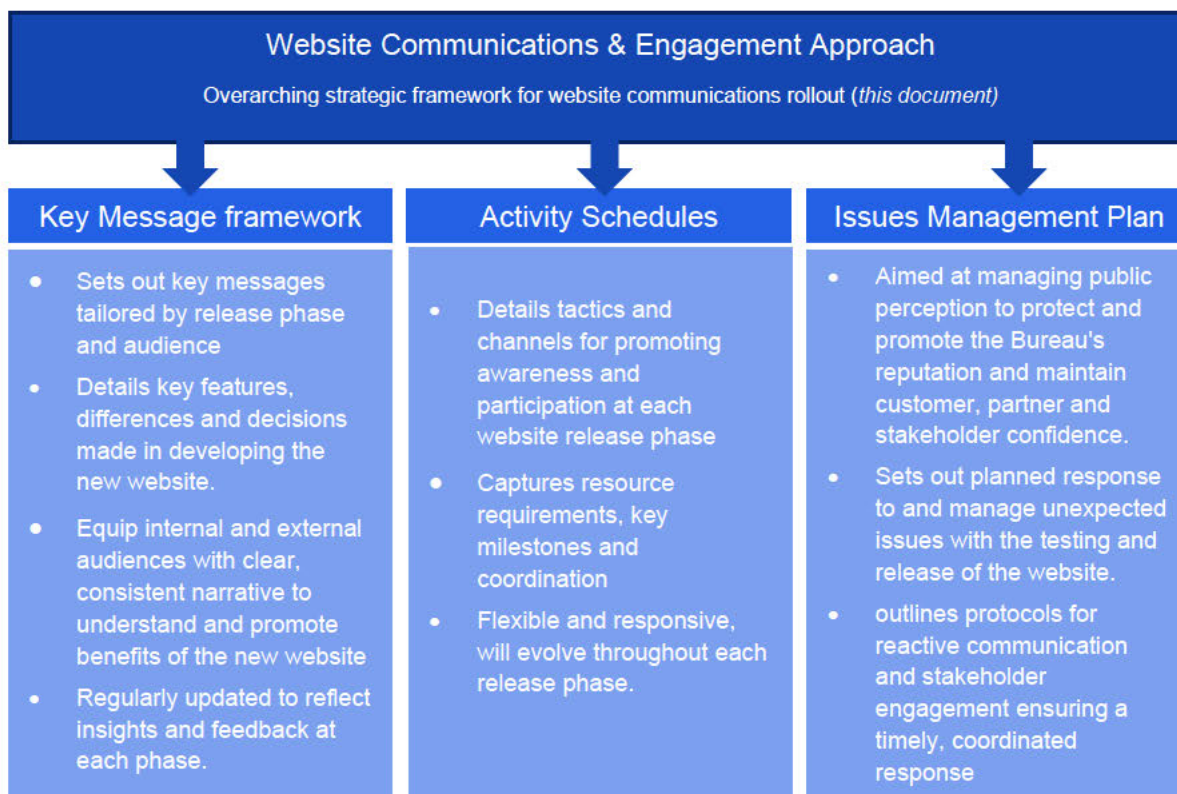
Given the website's high traffic and the Bureau's profile, the release is expected to attract significant attention.

This communications and engagement approach is guided by the [Bureau's Communication Plan](#) to support the release of the new website.

Communications approach

This communications and engagement approach replaces the 2022 version and reflects the ROBUST delivery model changes, with a stronger focus on internal communications, aligning messaging and activities to release phases, and a broader risk lens appropriate to a high-profile activity.

Three tactical documents underpin the communications and engagement approach (see below).



The Key Message Framework, Activity Schedules, and Issues Management Plan enable communications to be flexible and adaptable by phase and allow learnings from user experience and tester feedback to be applied, making the overall communications approach responsive to audience needs.

The Key Message Framework, Activity Schedules and Issues Management Plan will be updated as the project progresses. This iterative and staged way of working ensures communications and content remain current and accurate, and aligned to scope and timelines.

1.1. ROBUST delivery model changes

- This approach is aligned to the changes within the ROBUST delivery model that is driving iterative website releases, including the new internal private Beta. It is more flexible to work with website delivery.
- The combined focus on flexibility and key audiences allows for planned, responsive communications triggered by delivery milestones and that match user needs and expectations.
- The approach also aligns to the [ROBUST Delivery Plan for the website](#) to support and communicate the new Bureau website and take a quality delivery approach focused on customer experience and risk management.

1.2. Managing reputational risk

After the BOM Weather app, the Bureau of Meteorology's website is the organisation's most used digital asset. Used by customers, partners and stakeholders, many consider it the face of the Bureau and have spent considerable time learning how to get the information they need. The website is a critical tool that amplifies Bureau insights and data and is relied on by media outlets in the daily preparation of weather broadcasts.

Given the significant sense of ownership across internal and external users messaging will be adapted to user experience through each website release phase.

While the proposed Activity Schedule and Key Message Framework will work to proactively manage risks, an Issues Management Plan will minimise the impacts of any unexpected negative response from the media, stakeholders or general public.

2. Communications principles and terminology

2.1. Communications principles

The approach for the release of the Bureau website is:

- **Informative:** timely and accurate communications to inform activities and set expectations
- **Authoritative:** reinforces our history and expertise
- **Warm:** builds on the relationship between the Bureau and Australians through a positive and approachable tone, and accessible language
- **Reassuring:** delivering stable and reliable services and information throughout release phases with minimal impact on users.

The approach will be demonstrated through messaging, choice of channel and frequency of tactics, as captured in the Activity Schedules. Messaging will follow these principles:

- Use plain English to be more accessible to all audiences and build trust and credibility in the Bureau.
- Showcase the benefits and features for users, using tone to engage and excite audiences.
- Reassure audiences they will be supported to ease the transition to the new site and show appreciation for continued support and involvement.
- Assure audiences that every effort will be made to minimise disruption in the move from public beta to the new website, and the new site will have the same level of trusted information.
- Communicate through the right channel to the right audience at the right time to protect and promote the reputation and credibility of the Bureau.
- Deliver informative and authoritative communications that explain the website; use this as a platform to highlight the Bureau's services to the Australian public.
- Reassure audiences there will be no impact on delivery of the Bureau's critical weather information and warnings throughout the website releases.

2.2. Terminology

Some terms may be new to audiences; clear, concise and consistent application will build confidence in audience understanding of the website changes. Terms align with the [Digital Transformation Agency's](#) agreed definitions and other government agency website releases.

Phase (internal use)		Description	Website terms (external use)
1	Internal private Beta	In this phase, the Beta site is open to Bureau employees only. The primary difference between internal private Beta and private Beta is determined by testing group. Each phase has entry and exit criteria determined by the project.	beta.bom.gov.au • Beta site • Beta test site • Beta website • Beta test website bom.gov.au • Current site • Current website • Existing site • Existing website
2	External private Beta	In this phase, the Beta website is open to select invited customers and stakeholders in a secure testing environment. These testers could be identified by Bureau customer relationship owners and other cohorts such as people with disabilities, CALD and indigenous communities.	
3	Public Beta	In this phase, the Beta test site is open to all, concurrently with our existing site. The Beta website is a standalone version - beta.bom.gov.au – open to everyone within Australia. We will direct visitors to the current website for severe weather warnings. The Bureau will deliver a number of iterative releases during public Beta, sometimes referred to as a 'capability release' in project documentation. External communications will promote these by feature or functionality, not release numbers.	
4	Live stage Launch	Sometimes referred to as 'cutover' in project documentation, the new website will be migrated to bom.gov.au Terminology will shift 6 months post-launch and the site will no longer be referred to as new.	• New website • New site • Legacy website • Legacy site

3. Audiences

Communications will be tailored by audience based on a strong understanding of their needs and interests, and how they prefer to engage with the Bureau. Audience definition and understanding is aligned to the Bureau Communications Plan.

There are 3 key audience cohorts:

1. Internal: staff and contractors
2. Customers: community and service users
3. Stakeholders and partners: government departments, information users and elected officials

The Key Message Framework incorporates messaging to address the audience analysis by phase. The appendices list external audience groups.

3.1. Audience analysis

3.1.1. Internal

Internal audiences include all Bureau of Meteorology staff and contractors based across Australia, its external territories and Antarctica. Bureau staff are both a key audience and a key channel for communication.

Everyone at the Bureau will be very interested and want to be confident understanding and talking about the new site. Some Bureau teams may also have a deeper interest because they regularly use it for their work or have externally facing roles or are responsible for ongoing customer relationship management. Information about the releases will be available to all and Bureau teams with externally facing roles and specific requirements will be supported through in-depth workshops and training sessions.

Goal – Bureau teams can confidently use the website for their job and engage and lead conversations with other audiences about the website. They feel informed and are well-equipped to champion and support the new website. Teams will be able to raise concerns that could impact their customers and stakeholders.

Interest level – High, both as users and anticipating feedback from external audiences.

Concerns – Bureau staff want to continue to use the website to be able to do their job efficiently and effectively. Those who represent the Bureau want to ensure the information they share is accurate, timely and comprehensive. They want to make sure the Bureau commitments made about the website, including release dates and benefits realisation, live up to expectations. There is a strong sense of organisational pride – they want to feel informed and involved in something significant for the Bureau.

Communication preferences – workshops, training material, demonstrations, resource library, collateral to share with customers, partners and stakeholders.

3.1.2. Customers

Customers are the direct and indirect users of the Bureau's products and services and include the public, emergency services and other government entities and businesses across a range of weather-affected industries. Audience definition and understanding is aligned to the Bureau Communications Plan and covers 2 primary customer segments – the community and service users

Goal – Customers understand the features of the new website and how it will benefit them. They feel informed and supported through the release phases. They trust and adopt the new website with minimal disruption.

Interest level – Very high; this audience is very invested in the website and the critical products and services provided by the Bureau.

Concerns – Customers will want to understand why the website is changing and how they will be impacted. Most importantly, they will want to know if they will still be able to access the information and functionality important to them. Timing and understanding of new functionality being released will also be of interest. This audience will be attuned to any discrepancies between the Beta site and the existing site. Sub-groups within the general community will closely review the information they need for their hobby, past-time or interest, e.g., maritime enthusiasts. Service users will also want a point of contact to provide direct feedback.

Communication preferences – social media, media, eDMs, webinars, virtual and in-person engagement sessions.

3.1.3. Stakeholders and partners

Partners are those with whom the Bureau collaborates with to deliver, develop, or distribute products and services. Stakeholders are those who indirectly use products and services or represent those that do, such as parliaments, parliamentarians and other representative bodies.

Goal – The Bureau fosters strong relationships with stakeholders and partners through transparent and timely communications to ensure they understand, support and engage with the new website.

Interest level – Very high; this audience is very invested in the critical products and services provided by the Bureau.

Concerns – Our partners rely on the website as a critical source of accurate information and will want to know where to find the information they need; they will be very sensitive to any disruption. Elected officials, and in particular the Minister's Office, will want to understand community impacts and reaction to the release of the website, and who has been consulted through the project.

Communication preferences – formal briefings and supporting documents through Customer Relationship Owners, heads-up awareness, engagement and outreach.

4. Objectives

Communication objectives are the goals that influence awareness, knowledge, liking and preference. The approach scaffolds the objectives into primary, secondary and tertiary. The secondary and tertiary objectives roll up to ensure the approach supports the primary objective.

Activity schedules capture the detail to achieve tertiary objectives.

Primary objective

- The Bureau maintains its position as Australia's most trusted and reliable source of weather, water, climate, ocean and space weather information.
 - Key performance measure of 56% as per public perception survey by EY Sweeney

Secondary objectives

- Audiences test and provide feedback on the Beta site and are ready to adopt the new website when it launches.
 - 25% of bom.gov.au visitors navigate to the Beta site during Beta.
- Audiences feel informed about the changes and know why the new website is an improvement on the existing one.
- Reputational risk related to the website launch is managed.
- Grow the supporter base for the new website over time, with the Bureau achieving a Preference rating of 64% (EY Sweeney) 12 months following launch
 - Stable net promoter score of 58% (EY Sweeney)
- Grow awareness of the changes and benefits over time, with Bureau customers, partners and stakeholders provided with proactive and tailored communications regarding the new service.

Tertiary objectives

Each audience has its own set of tertiary objectives.

Internal – Bureau teams

Goal – Bureau teams can confidently use the website for their job and engage and lead conversations with other audiences about the website. They feel informed and are well-equipped to champion and support the new website. Teams will be able to raise concerns that could impact their customers and stakeholders.

Achieved by:

- Proactive engagement during the internal Beta phase to generate interest and buy-in in the success of the project
- Teams understanding the website's enhancements and functionality by release phases
- Build internal capability to ensure externally facing teams have the tools they need to answer questions and lead conversations about the new site
- Clear channels to capture, assess and address feedback
- Knowledge to inform and guide audiences of specific impacts release phases may have
- Training so teams can confidently take part in new online publishing and website processes
- Information that is accessible at a time and format convenient to them, including those who work on a shift or remote basis
- A positive and supportive experience through the change and communication process
- Responsive issues management process to reduce impact on morale from negative public attention

Customers – community and service users

Goal – Customers understand the features of the new website and how it will benefit them. They feel informed and supported through the release phases. They trust and adopt the new website with minimal disruption.

Achieved by:

- Proactive engagement and information throughout release phases, to promote a positive impression of the website and the Bureau in general
- Website releases communicated in a timely manner through their preferred channel so customers are suitably prepared
- Having clear channels and opportunities to share feedback
- Bureau teams address feedback promptly and comprehensively
- Customers are prepared for any specific impacts and understand clearly what is and is not changing with the site
- Understanding where to access up-to-date and critical weather information at all times, before the release of the new site

Stakeholders and partners – elected officials, government departments, official organisations, media

Goal – The Bureau fosters strong relationships with stakeholders and partners through transparent and timely communications to ensure they understand, support and engage with the new website.

Achieved by:

- A 'no surprises' approach with key elected officials and government departments through regular briefings or updates outlining the website release progress and achievements – particularly where there may be community impact or positive feedback
- Sharing of information with official organisations, where there is a specific need to know and the organisations won't be captured through other audiences
- Media outreach and engagement to explain public beta and the launch of the new site; respond promptly to questions and feedback with accurate and reliable information

5. Messaging

Messaging to enable the delivery of the new website adheres to the communications approach and principles outlined above. It will be consistent through all supporting documentation including the Key Message Framework, the Issues Management Plan, and all material developed as part of the Activity Schedules. Detailed messaging tailored by audience and phase will be included in the Key Message Framework.

5.1. Message architecture

The message architecture supporting the website releases organises and structures key messages in a clear and accessible way. It outlines the key benefits of the new website that resonate with audiences, in order to deliver on communications objectives.

Messages are aligned to corporate documents like the Bureau of Meteorology Strategy 2022-27, the Bureau Communications Plan and ROBUST Delivery Plan. They are applicable across all release phases of the website. Adhering to the principle of accessibility, community core messaging below is at a grade 7 reading level.

In addition to the core messages below, the [Key Message Framework](#) details the messaging for each audience segment at each Beta phase of the new website release schedule.

Overarching message

The Bureau of Meteorology is building a new website for all Australians – it's secure, stable and resilient and it will help us to deliver trusted services to all Australians, when it matters most.

Core messages – Internal

- The Bureau of Meteorology website (bom.gov.au) is one of the most visited Australian government websites, with more than 2.6 billion page views per year. The website is a trusted source of weather, climate, water, ocean and space weather information and is a cornerstone of the Bureau's reputation with Australians.
- The website has been redeveloped as part of the ROBUST Program to improve the long-term security, stability and resilience of critical Bureau business functions. This also presented an opportunity to better meet modern user expectations and organisational needs.
- The Bureau is transforming its information and observations technologies, and the way it

operates, so we can continue meeting the changing needs of Australians and be there when it matters most.

- The agreed scope of the website project is to deliver a secure, stable and resilient Beta website that meets the needs of at least 90% of customer website traffic (visits). This includes:
 - Public weather (observations and forecasts)
 - Mapping for temperature, rainfall and rain radar, wind and UV
 - Public warnings
 - Access to Climate (outlooks)
 - Media
 - Corporate content
 - Linking pages (to pages not yet transitioned).
- Some products will become available in incremental public Beta website releases, such as:
 - heatwave, tropical cyclone and tsunami warnings
 - additional map layers.
- The Beta website project scope does not include:
 - Aviation, Defence, Energy & Resources, Space Weather, Water Information or Real-time data services
 - long-range weather and climate information
 - forecast rainfall (nowcasting)
 - specialised forecasts and observations
 - some static and interactive maps.
- The Beta website has been designed in consultation with the Australian community to make sure it delivers the benefits our customers have told us they want and need. We conducted user research and testing to understand how people use the website and identified improvements.
- It has been designed to deliver content consistent with the BOM Weather app, which is aligned to the objectives of the Bureau's [Distribution Channel Plan](#).
- It is governed to enable the delivery of consistent, clear and accessible content that meets the needs of our users – and keeps our content up to date. Learn more about the Bureau's new [Content Governance](#) and [Content Operating Model](#).
- The quality, security and reliability of Bureau data underpins our products and services. Several significant ROBUST projects have been critical to the delivery of the Beta website, including:
 - The [Data Platform](#) project delivered a new secure suite of database technologies for the management and servicing of metadata, object data, gridded data and relational data.
 - The [Geospatial Platform](#) project established a centralised approach to data stores and services for the ingestion of geospatial data, which facilitates a consistent and secure approach to visualisation of observations, forecasts and warnings information.
 - The [Integration project](#) implemented a new Enterprise Integration Platform which facilitates secure sharing of data both internally and externally, using industry standard technology such as Application Programming Interfaces (API).
 - The [Observations Network](#) project is improving the collection, processing, archiving

and quality control of observations and climate-related data.

- This is just the beginning of our journey to improve our online services. Our new secure and resilient website enables us to plan and deliver future improvements for customers, partners and stakeholders.

Core messages - Community

- The Bureau of Meteorology website (bom.gov.au) is one of the most visited Australian government websites. Millions of Australians use it every day to make decisions about their safety and security.
- The Beta website has improved navigation and accessibility, it's easy to use and easy to find local weather information.
- You can customise your weather experience by location, just like the BOM Weather app.
- The new website is hypertext transfer protocol secure (HTTPS) and mobile friendly.
- The new website gives us a secure, stable and resilient platform to continue to build and improve our website into the future.

Core messages – Service users, partners and stakeholders

- The Beta website is part of a large program of work to make Bureau IT systems more secure, stable and resilient.
- The Bureau has made a significant infrastructure investment to ensure we continue to provide trusted, reliable and responsive weather, water, climate, ocean and space weather services for Australia – all day, every day.
- The Beta website has been designed in consultation with the Australian community to make sure it delivers the benefits our customers have told us they want and need. We conducted user research and testing to understand how people use the website and identified improvements.
- The Beta website delivers design and functionality improvements to our most frequently used pages, including forecasts, observations and weather warnings.
- Bureau customers access vital information through more than 72,000 unique web pages. To ensure change is sustainable, updates will be rolled out over time, starting with the most-used content.
- The Beta site will run in parallel with our current website. You can continue to access the current site and all its content while beta.bom.gov.au is live.
- There will be a series of public Beta updates and improvements. We want to make sure the site meets user needs and expectations before we launch the new site.
- This is just the beginning of our journey to improve our online services. Our new secure and resilient website enables us to plan and deliver future improvements for our customers, partners and stakeholders.

6. Reputation management and risk mitigation

Identifying risks to the Bureau's reputation and proactively managing them are opportunities to enhance the Bureau's position with all Australians.

The table below identifies anticipated communications risks and mitigation activities. Project risks are managed outside this communications approach.

The Issues Management Plan will facilitate response to serious and unexpected issues with the release of the website, including project risks that could generate a material negative public response.

Risk	Mitigation
Negative public response – strong community negative reaction to the release of the public beta site driven by a sense of ownership and sentiment	• User feedback from testing phases will be incorporated into proactive messaging and communications activities. • The timeframe for public Beta is long enough to allow the public to get used to the site information and structure, reinforced through communications, before the release of the new website.
Unclear or inconsistent communication and engagement confuses customers, partners and stakeholders and erodes trust in the Bureau	• The Key Message Framework provides cohesive messaging to support Bureau teams and ensure consistency across all channels • Feedback and support channels – establish channels to capture and address external feedback on user experience • Conduct ongoing review of effectiveness of messages and update as needed
Poorly timed communications – incomplete data or severe weather communications lead to confusion and public safety concerns.	• Severe weather communications will be prioritised over project communications to ensure we are not competing for attention • Clear and timely communication – proactively engage internally, providing detailed information about the website release timing, functionality and benefits
Lack of engagement – failing to engage users hinders feedback and reduces user satisfaction	• Actively solicit user feedback and make it easy for users to provide input; use a range of channels to gather and address input responsively • Regularly monitor feedback and apply learnings to future engagement activities • Optimise messaging – review and apply learnings after engagement and communication activities

	• Issues Management Plan in place to address public / media enquiries reactively, and media is part of engagement process
Insufficient or inappropriate internal stakeholder communications – inadequate engagement with internal teams can lead to delays and lack of buy-in with the website release	• Clear communication channels and internal engagement will facilitate seamless information sharing • Feedback and support channels – establish channels to capture and address feedback on user experience, internally and externally • Provide regular feedback and status updates on the release of the site • Share user feedback transparently to create a collaborative learning environment with shared goals and objectives • ADKAR surveys or readiness assessment will ensure learnings are embedded in communications at each phase

7. Monitoring and evaluation

The effectiveness of the communications approach will be closely monitored and evaluated throughout the life of the project, due to the complexity of the release phases and high number of website users. This ongoing assessment is necessary to ensure the approach remains effective and the needs of the audiences, internal and external, are met.

The approach will not measure or track user satisfaction with the new website experience, or track website performance, as these will be monitored by other teams.

In addition to ongoing monitoring, a formal review will be held at the end of each communications milestone to ensure objectives remain on track by audience.

7.1. Evaluation of activities

Activities below will be used to monitor the approach and ensure tertiary objectives are met. Some activities are project related and needed to deliver the communications approach.

- Activity schedules are delivered in a timely way
- User feedback is reviewed and informs updates to communications approach
- Minister's Office briefed and demo / walk through of the website offered / provided
- Ongoing updates provided to elected officials, as required
- Social media engagement metrics monitored and activities optimised, as required
- Social media sentiment is monitored and activities optimised, as required

- EDM open rates / click through rates monitored and activities optimised, as required
- Enquiries from community in relation to the new website acknowledged within set guidelines
- Customer feedback reviewed and assessed monthly to inform updates to communications approach, and to support management of any live reputational risks
- Enquiries from service users responded to promptly
- All ministerial and parliamentary correspondence responded to within requested timeframes
- Media coverage is monitored and sentiment captured
- Message pull-through in media is monitored

8. Budget

ROBUST funding is available to support communications implementation.

Budget requirements will be identified against Activity schedule at each phase, in agreement with the project team.

9. Appendices

9.1. Audience detail sample

Audience definition and understanding is aligned to the Bureau Communications Plan.

Customers

General community segments

- BOMideas community
- Bureau observers
- Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- Metropolitan, regional, rural and remote communities
- People with disability
- Youth

Service users – Emergency management

- State Emergency Services
- National Emergency Agency

Service users – Industry sectors

- Agriculture
- Aviation, land and maritime transport
- National security and space
- Energy and resources
- Water

Service users – third parties and suppliers

- Commercial weather services

Stakeholders

Elected officials: Australian Government

- Minister for the Environment and Water
- Minister for Emergency Management and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy etc.

Elected officials – local, state & territory governments

Partners

International and Australian Government departments and agencies

- Commonwealth agencies
- State and territory emergency management agencies
- State and territory fire agencies
- Emergency management committees
- Murray Darling Basin Authority
- Australian Energy Market Operator
- World Meteorological Organization

Information users

- Media outlets
- Researchers and universities

9.2. Activity Schedules

The Activity Schedules will be finalised along with the release phases, allowing time for internal and external audiences to understand and adapt to the website features and functionality.

[Private Beta Communications Activity Schedule Nov 2023.pptx](#)

[Public Beta Release Communications Activity Schedule 2024.docx](#)

[New-website-launch-activity-schedule.docx](#)



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