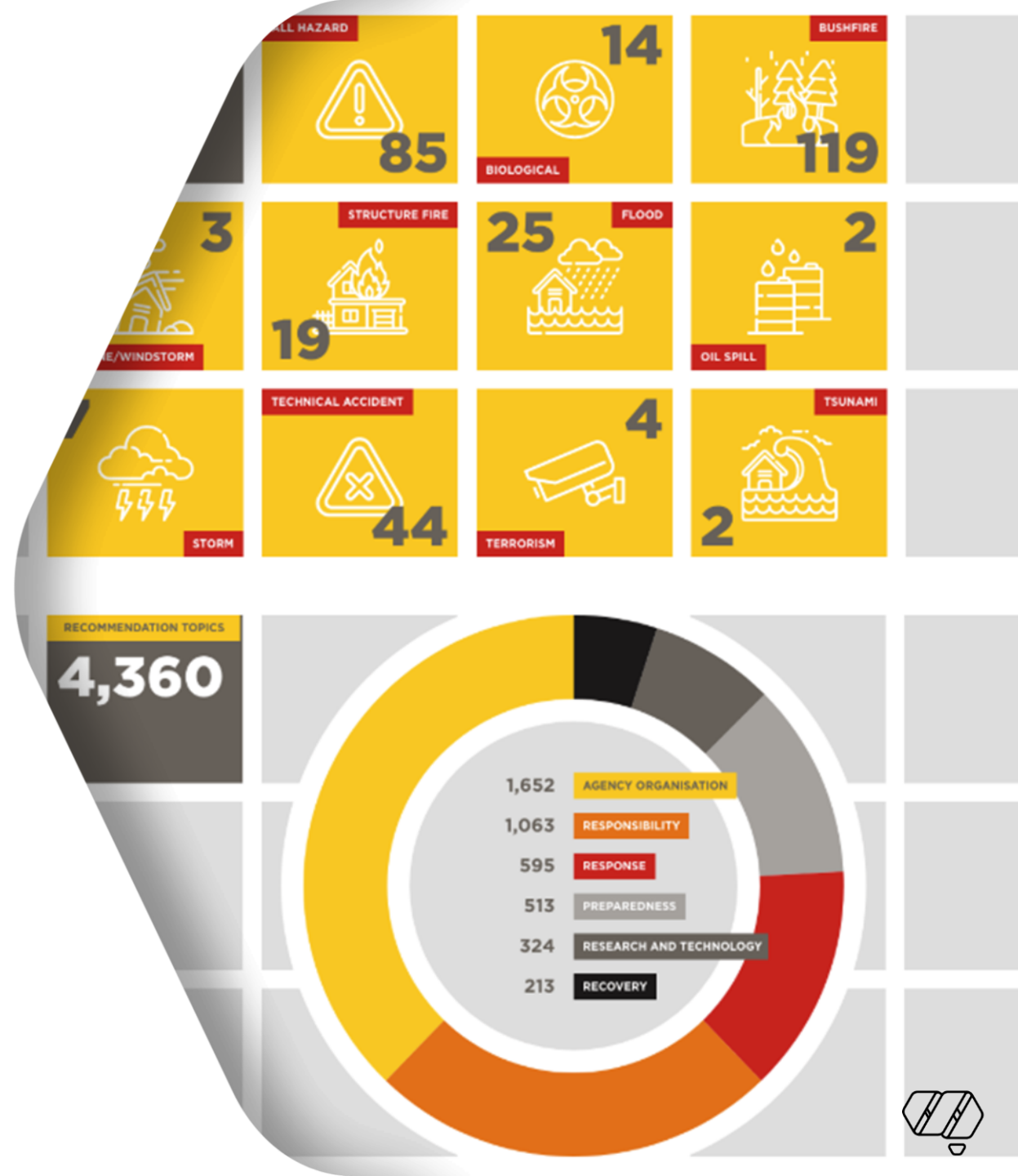


E1-A2 Disaster Inquiries Review

Research Project Overview

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Director
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Overview

Federal and State inquiries following natural hazard events include a variety of recommendations relating to response, recovery, preparedness, responsibility and research and data.

This research has identified four key findings from an analysis of inquiry recommendations. The findings from this research can inform future research and policy direction and can influence the role and advocacy efforts of the Centre.

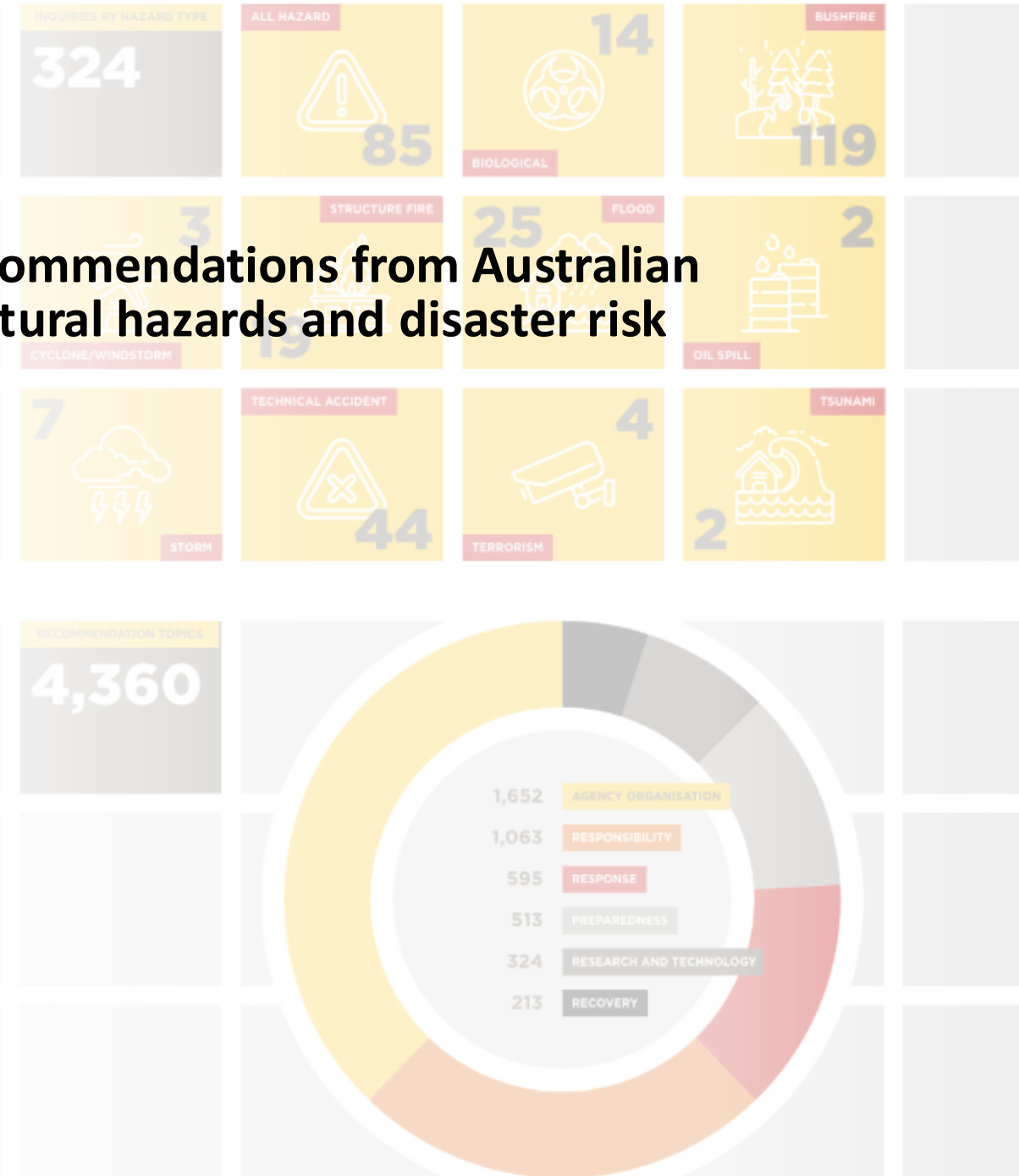


Project purpose

To conduct a comprehensive analysis of recommendations from Australian inquiries, reports and reviews related to natural hazards and disaster risk reduction.

Key phases:

- Updated the database to include relevant inquiries from April 2023 – December 2024
- Thematic analysis of recommendations to identify patterns and trends over time
- Facilitated a workshop to provide weighting to multi-criteria analysis criteria
- Undertook a multi-criteria analysis (MCA) to identify priority themes

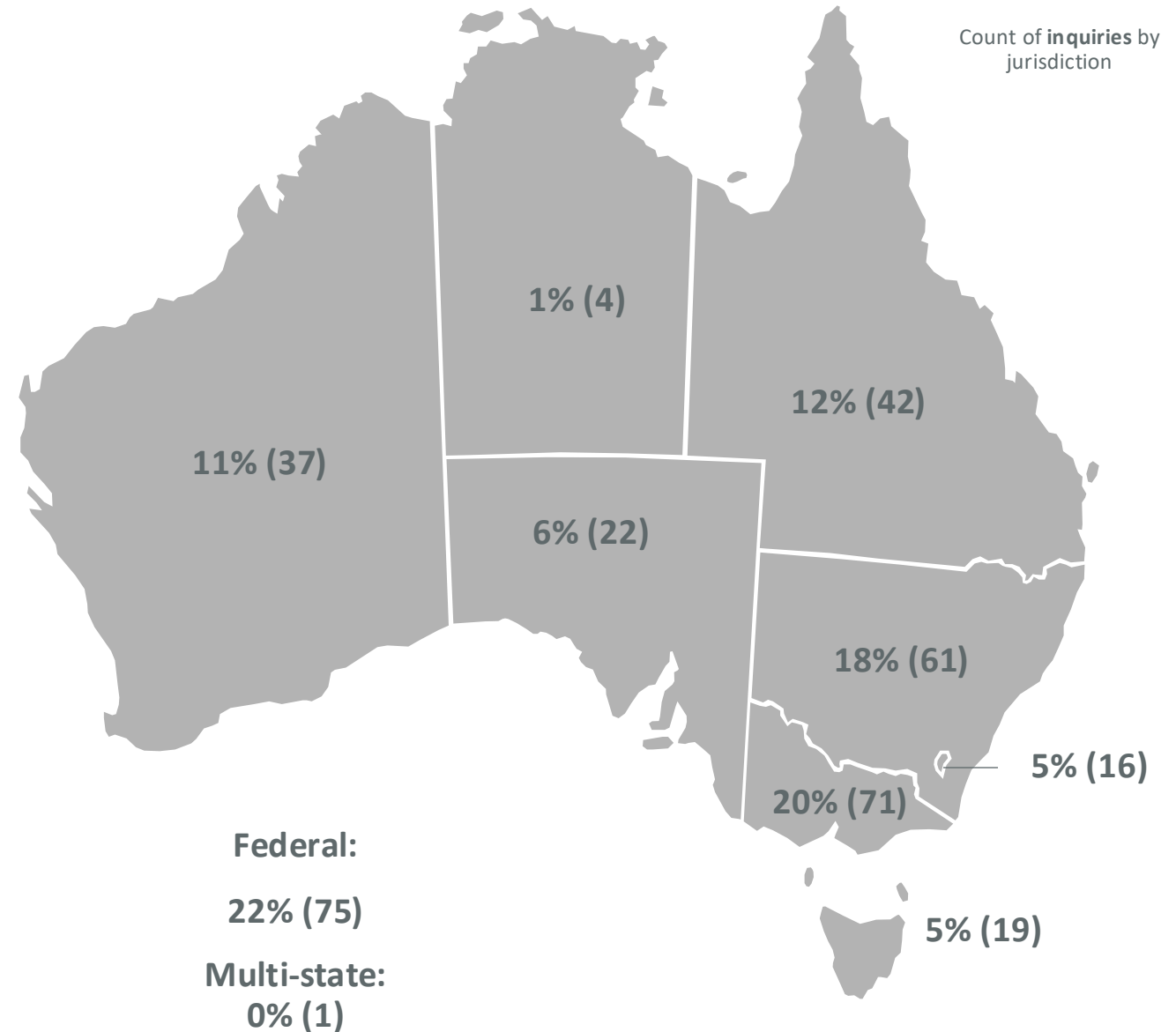


There are **348 inquiries** in the database. Two-thirds (66%) are from the past twenty years.

There are **4,833 recommendations** in the database. 92% (4,452) are from the past twenty years.

Federal inquiries are the most represented (75), followed by Victoria (71) and then NSW (61).

Bushfire accounts for most inquiries (121), followed by all hazards (98).



Responsibility

- **Community education** is a focus area for bushfire.
- Role of governments is less so a key recommendation area for bushfire than many other hazards.

Preparedness

- **Land use and building regulations** recommendations focus on flood.
- **Infrastructure** recommendations focus on storm and cyclones/wind hazards.
- **Emergency management exercise** recommendations focus on anthropogenic hazards.

Response

- **Communications and warnings** recommendations focus on cyclone and flood.
- **Inter-agency communication** is present the most for All Hazard and storm inquiries, while 'Inter-service communication' is a focus for several hazards.
- **Emergency powers** most notably present for anthropogenic hazards, but also flood.

Agency organisation

- **Doctrine, standards and reform** is present across all hazards
- **Funding** is a notable recommendation area for flood and all hazard inquiries.
- **Operational health and safety** is priority area for anthropogenic hazards.
- **Training and behaviour** is priority area for fire hazards, as well as storm.

Recovery

- **Insurance and legal liability** is a strong focus for flood inquiries, while there are no recommendations about this at all against storm.
- **Relief and recovery** is a strong focus for bushfire and storm inquiries.

Research & technology

- **Mapping and data quality** is a strong focus for flood inquiries, followed closely by all hazard and bushfire inquiries.
- **Assets and technology** are a key recommendation area for bushfire
- By raw numbers, bushfire has the most **Research** recommendations, but it is also a key area for flood and all hazards.



Key finding 1

The most frequently coded recommendations were not those identified as highest priority through the MCA.

Themes identified as most frequently used and a high priority include:

- Community education
- Funding
- Assets and technology
- Insurance and legal liability
- Mapping and data quality

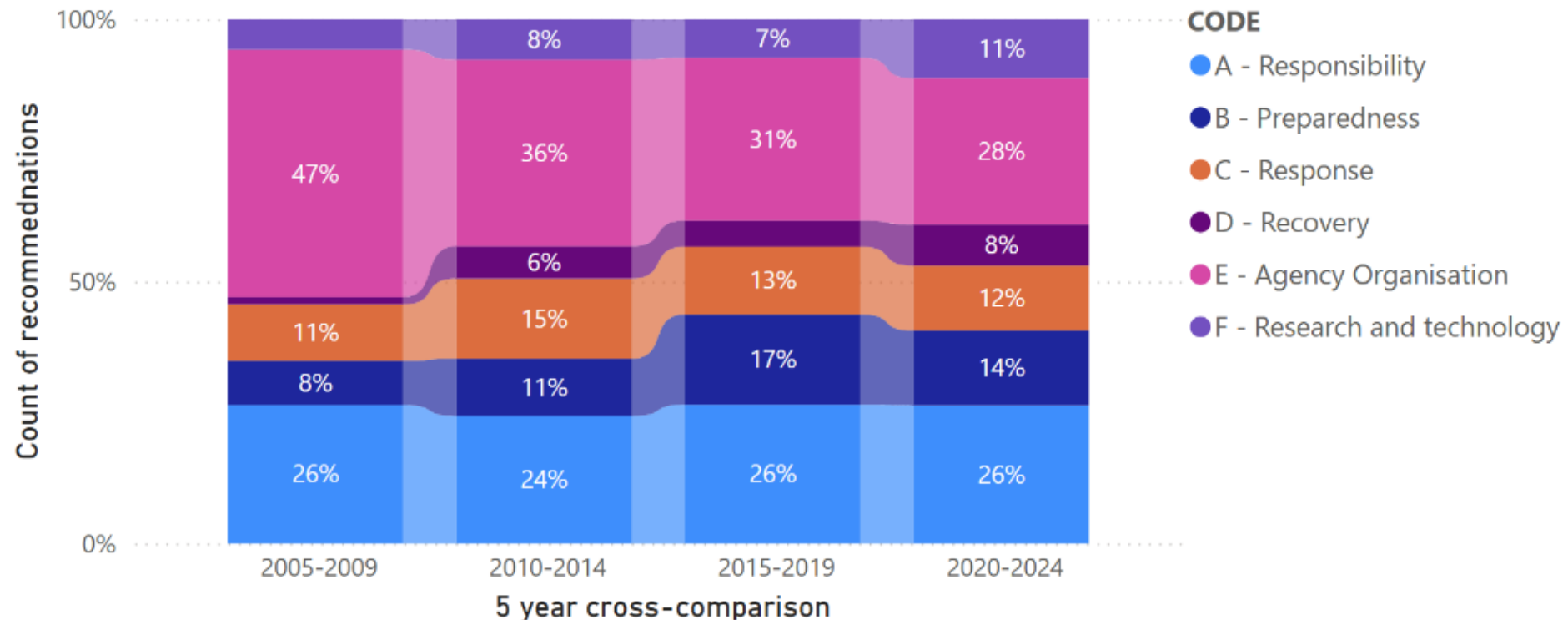
Themes identified as a high priority, but were not frequently used in the database include:

- Climate change
- Biodiversity
- Equipment and consumables



Key finding 2

Recommendations traditionally focused on key aspects like response and agency organisation, but more recent inquiries expand the volume of recommendations which address contemporary risk reduction matters.



Key finding 3

Inquiries are increasingly examining disaster seasons rather than specific events

→ Since 2018 inquiries focused on disaster seasons has been emerging

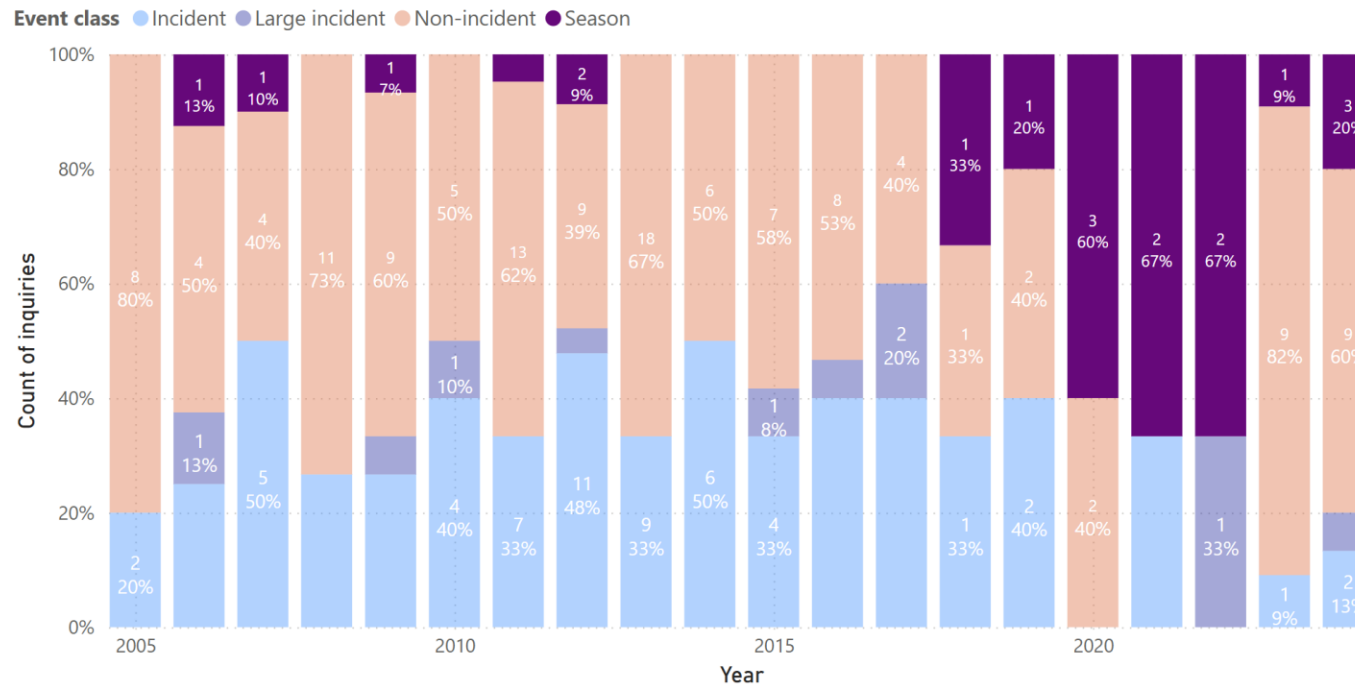


FIGURE 4: INQUIRY INCIDENT/EVENT CLASSES OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS



Key finding 4

There is a clear distinction between traditional response focused recommendations and emerging risk reduction and resilience themed recommendations

- Response and recovery themed recommendations are typically action-oriented and short term.
- Preparedness and research themed recommendations are intrinsically linked in nature and address aspects of disaster risk reduction and resilience.



What does this mean?

Future considerations for the sector

- Bridging the gap between the operational and response focused recommendations, and the risk reduction and resilience recommendations
- Further understanding, embedding, and strategically planning for climate change, biodiversity, and disaster risk management in all stages of natural hazard events including response, recovery, resilience and risk reduction
- Observed broadened scope of inquiries is likely to continue to allow for the identification and recommendation of systemic issues
- Considering disaster risk more strategically and examining disaster seasons is likely to remain a strong focus
- The ongoing implementation and monitoring of recommendations from past reviews, coupled with ongoing research collaboration of key stakeholders, policy development, and advocacy, provides an opportunity to address risk more holistically



Project team



Project webpage on NHRA
website



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