

FOREWORD

Trans-Tasman collaboration setting the new recovery agenda

Andrew Coghlan and Sarah Norman reflect on the increased interest and commitment to disaster recovery in both Australia and New Zealand

Since the events of September 11 and the Bali Bombings, many people have noted the amount of attention given to activities traditionally defined as response. At the same time there has been somewhat of a 'quiet revolution' in the recovery arena as models have evolved and been adapted to meet the ever-increasing range of risks to which communities may be exposed. This edition of the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* highlights the interest and commitment of those working in the area of recovery. It provides a range of articles reflecting both recent and continuing developments in the areas of recovery policy, planning, management and professional development.

Two major activities, both sides of the Tasman Sea, have typified this development, renewal and strengthening of recovery arrangements. In New Zealand, a strategic framework for recovery is being developed, encompassing an holistic approach and activities to enhance New Zealand's ability to recover from disasters. In Australia, a major review of community support and recovery arrangements has been completed under the auspice of the Community Services Minister's Advisory Council's Disaster Recovery Sub-committee.

Recovery developments in New Zealand

The Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management has made a commitment to recovery from emergencies under Goal 4 of the *National Civil Defence Emergency Management Strategy*. The draft document *Focus on Recovery: An Holistic Framework for Recovery* is a discussion document setting the direction and proposing a framework for recovery planning and management in New Zealand. It outlines the context and direction of future work for recovery including the identification of activities that work towards enhancing New Zealand's ability to recover from disasters. The aim is to increase the capability of organisations to undertake short, medium and long-term recovery activities, enabling a timely and effective response to the recovery of affected communities.

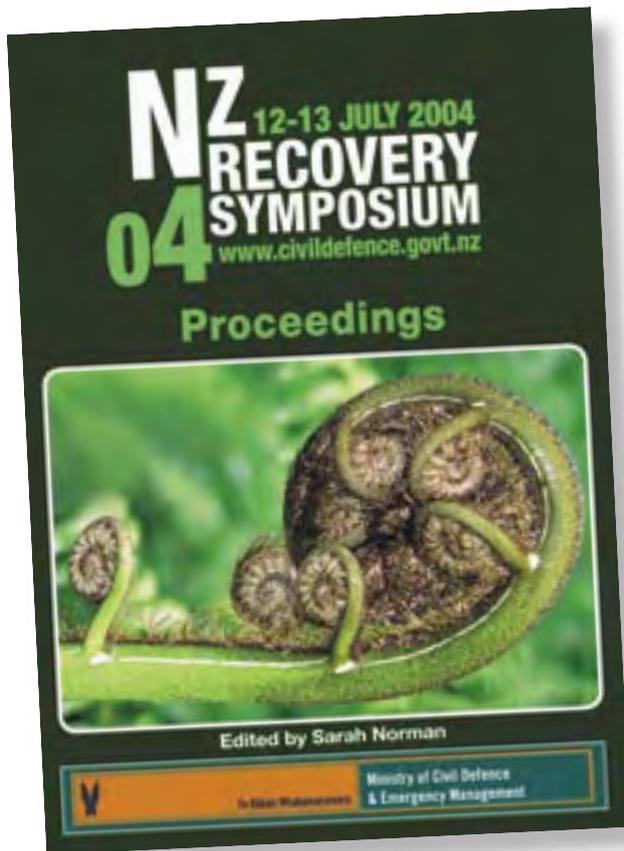


Symposium delegates reflect on both continuing development in recovery policy, planning and management

On 12 and 13 July 2004 approximately 300 delegates from a variety of professions, organisations, and backgrounds gathered in Napier, New Zealand to attend the New Zealand Recovery Symposium. Delegates contributed to the development of the recovery framework through discussion and debate of the multifaceted aspects of recovery outlined in the draft document *Focus on Recovery: An Holistic Framework for Recovery*. A range of international and national experts presented, including Professor James K. Mitchell (USA), Dr. Anne Eyre (UK), Professor Brenda Philips (USA), Professor John Handmer (Australia), Dr. Rob Gordon (Australia), Dr. David Johnston (NZ), and Professor Emeritus A.J.W. Taylor (NZ).

In opening the Symposium, Professor Ken Mitchell, Rutgers University, USA, provided a fascinating insight to the 1976 earthquake in the City of Tangshang in China; an event little-known to many. The earthquake claimed over 250,000 lives and the population is still recovering. This emphasised the complexity and long-term nature of the consequences to be managed as the result of disaster. In this time of discussion and consideration of 'consequence management,' it was a timely reminder of the complexity of post disaster management.

While discussions at the Symposium were energetic and opinions varied, there was clear agreement in a number of key areas. The holistic approach addressing the key components of recovery were endorsed while the naming of the components as suggested at the Symposium, being community, psychosocial, environment, infrastructure and economic, will



be reviewed at the end of a consultation period. Also strongly supported was the notion that individual and community well-being lie at the centre of each of the components. In this regard there was a clear recognition of the importance of people, partnerships and politics throughout the recovery process.

Following the Symposium the core areas of work on recovery include the publication of the Symposium proceedings; a review of *Focus on Recovery: An Holistic Framework for Recovery*; and a new guideline on recovery practice in New Zealand. The strategic areas for future development of recovery in New Zealand will be redefined for implementation by the combined Civil Defence Emergency Management sector.

Recovery developments in Australia

On the other side of the Tasman, those in the recovery field in Australia have been equally busy with extensive recovery programs provided as the result of a range of different events like the Bali Bombings and bushfires throughout three States/Territories at the beginning of 2003. These events have been closely followed by a number of reviews into the effectiveness of emergency management arrangements, including recovery. In addition, a full-scale review of the arrangements for the provision of community support and recovery arrangements following disasters has also been undertaken under the auspice of the Community Services Minister's Advisory Council.

The Bali tragedy in October 2002 presented a significant challenge to the existing community-based recovery arrangements in that it was an extra-jurisdictional event that took place offshore. The nature of the incident required strong central co-ordination and management of the recovery activities, a somewhat different approach from the more traditional one where events were managed at a local level and escalated upwards.

The impact of events such as the ACT and Victorian bushfires in January 2003 also led to an expansion of thinking about dimensions of recovery. Previously, much activity would have focussed on physical and social recovery, but the bushfires and other events highlighted economic and environmental impacts. Consequently, the range of organisations involved in recovery management has broadened, necessitating an integrated approach to the management of community, psychosocial, economic, environmental and infrastructure elements of recovery (similarly to the New Zealand approach).

The review considered it important that:

- the best aspects of individual State/Territory approaches to recovery be identified and developed; and
- arrangements be developed to formalise the role of agencies at the Australian Government level in recovery.

Key attributes of the most effective recovery programs include:

- development of formalised structures, including co-ordination and operational procedures to achieve an integrated, whole-of-government approach to recovery (incorporating the key components of recovery);
- agreed arrangements, such as partnerships or memoranda of understanding, to formalise service delivery arrangements;
- development of positive working relationships with other recovery agencies and broader emergency management networks (often achieved through involvement in committees and practical exercises);



A range of national and international experts presented latest developments in aspects of recovery

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From left to right: John Norton (Director of Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management) Russel Fairbrother (MP for Napier) Chris Blake (Chief Executive & Secretary for Internal Affairs, Department of Internal Affairs)

- use of recovery taskforces or leaders to promote whole-of-government approaches to recovery; and
- a commitment to recovery management principles and concepts, including long-term recovery programs with the aim of empowering individuals and communities to manage their own recovery and enhance ongoing sustainability.

In addition, the development of cross-jurisdictional networks and use of expertise for ongoing mentoring and post-event consultancy, together with the development of a recovery-based research agenda, were identified as key factors to be further developed, formalised and strengthened to promote cross-jurisdictional and national capacity.

Articles

This edition of the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* endeavours to provide a sample of articles addressing issues from a range of perspectives of recovery. A number have been drawn from the 2004 New Zealand Recovery Symposium while others reflect on specific experiences.

The range of articles highlights the diversity of issues requiring consideration in recovery. The range of organisations involved and terminology used vary from place to place and event to event, however, it is clear that the overall aim and objective of the various aspects of recovery described are very similar. This similarity of approach and a willingness to exchange information has seen the development of strong partnerships and alliances, particularly across the Tasman. The broader insight into recovery engendered by a global approach bodes well for the continued development of recovery programmes and support mechanisms to enable sustainable recovery for communities affected by emergencies and disasters in the future.

Authors

Andrew Coghlan, National Recovery Consultant, Emergency Management Australia.

Sarah Norman, Emergency Management Planner, Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, New Zealand.