

# BOOK REVIEW



Editor: Miriam H. Middelmann,  
Geoscience Australia  
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Reviewer: Claire Sullivan, Attorney-General's  
Department

*"An excellent risk analysis resource to aid decision-making in disaster mitigation."*

Natural Hazards in Australia: Identifying Risk Analysis Requirements is an outcome of the 2004 Council of Australian Governments natural disasters review into reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements its contents also relate and contribute to the National Risk Assessment Framework (2007) that identifies the need to produce consistent information on risk.

The report is one of the most comprehensive and succinct accounts on natural hazards in Australia; providing a review of all known natural hazards

in Australia. It addresses the impact of natural disasters, their occurrence in the Australian setting, respective known costs, climate change influences and the factors required in risk analysis (though, not a risk analysis of the hazard). Information gaps and data constraints to the risk analysis of natural disasters are also identified. The report concludes with an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the Australian community – from the Australian Government level to the general community – in managing the risks posed by natural hazards.

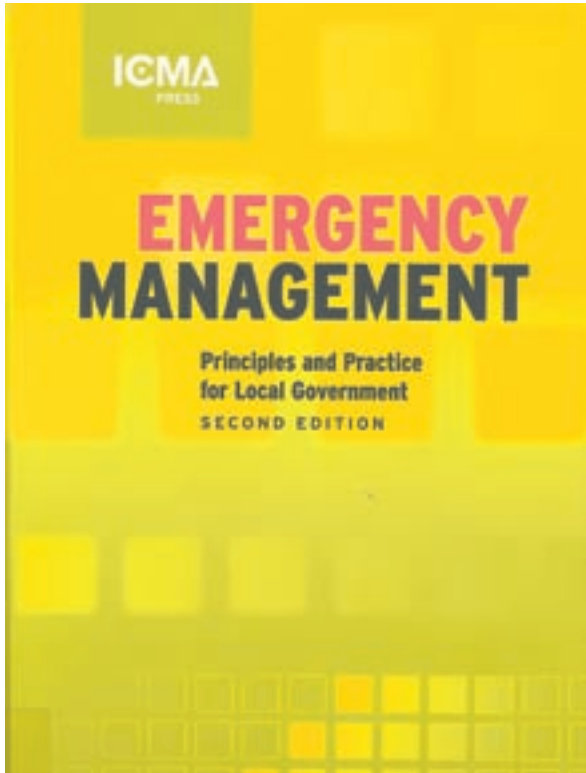
A central source on the process involved in analysing risk, this report highlights how long-term data collection and risk analysis will aid research and policy development to benefit the resilience of communities in being prepared for, responding to, and recovering from natural disasters.

The report is a must read for policy makers and those involved in research and risk analysis in the fields of emergency management, land use planning and construction management.

While the report does not present recommendations, it highlights the needs and gaps in risk analysis, policy and partnerships. It draws the reader's attention to what is lacking and what is needed rather than what should or could be done. The report may also assist readers to improve individual levels of preparedness for natural disaster events and address gaps that currently exist.

The publication offers many opportunities for government and the wider community to consider how they can work together through community engagement and public/private partnerships. The report suggests that through such efforts we can build our awareness and preparedness for managing the potential impacts of climate change, with the resources available and knowledge of the risks posed, to limit the impact of such events upon our Australian community.

# BOOK REVIEW



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Management Association  
ISBN: 978-0-87326-719-9  
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Emergency Management – Principles and Practice for Local Government is a US publication and is therefore based on the US operating environment. The book does however provide a wealth of information for Australian Emergency managers. The text draws together information from more than two dozen authors each a specialist in their own field within Emergency Management. The central theme of the text is managing an emergency management program at local government level. The major sections of the text cover context and organisation of Emergency Management, functions and phases of Emergency Management and major issues in

Emergency Management. The publication takes an all hazards approach to the topics covered.

The text is very comprehensive and contains a large number of interesting case studies. The content also challenges many past ideas and proposes new approaches for the future. For example the old command and control approach is replaced by a dynamic and network-centred approach. The text raises concern over ICS zealots who can hamper the flexibility required in a large scale disaster. Case studies include the World Trade Centre, Hurricane Katrina, Space Shuttle Columbia, Chicago Heatwave and Tokyo Subway Sarin Attack. Of great interest in the text are examples of local government authorities providing mutual aid support following Hurricane Katrina. The range of support required was diverse and over a long period of time.

Community vulnerability is covered extensively throughout the publication. An interesting case study outlines the creation of recovery strike teams after Hurricane Katrina and their use in mutual aid. The text also looks at new technology and its application in emergency management such as the internet and GIS systems.

The central theme of this publication is that successful emergency management depends on communication, collaboration and coordination. The proposal is that successful local emergency management is based upon the community being effectively networked into the world.

This text was enjoyable to read with many interesting ideas and case studies. Although some chapters are highly US-centric there are ample new ideas that may be applied to the Australian context. This text would be a valuable resource for persons studying emergency management or managing a local government emergency management program.