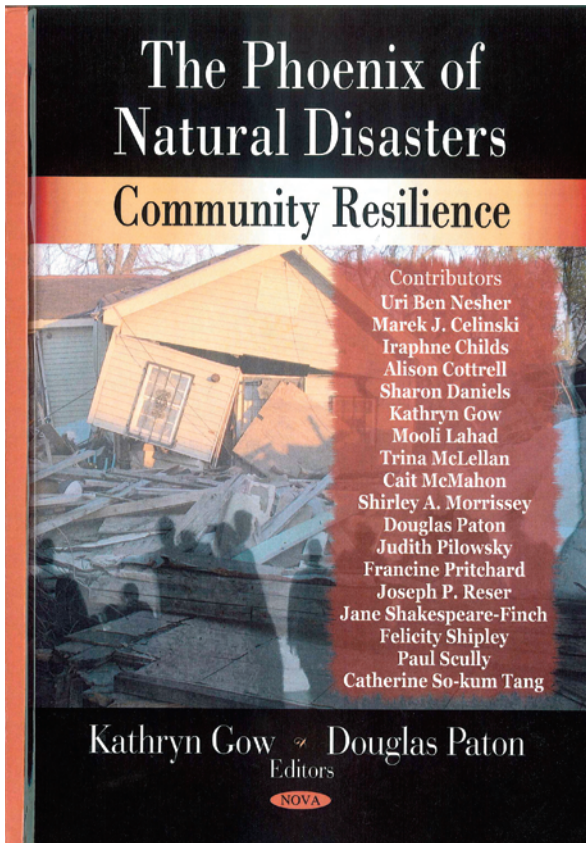


BOOK REVIEW

By George Seymour



**The Phoenix of Natural Disasters:
Community Resilience.**

Kathryn Gow and Douglas Paton (eds.)
(2008) Nova Publishers.

Spanning 15 chapters from 18 contributors, *The Phoenix of Natural Disasters: Community Resilience* is an academic resource which examines and interprets the nature of resilience in communities and individuals. The contributors come from academia, the emergency services sector, support agencies and the media. It is edited by Kathryn Gow and Douglas Paton, both of whom are psychologists who have studied stress, burnout, trauma and resilience on an individual and community level in times of natural disaster.

Resilient societies recognise that they need to put in place procedures and capabilities for their benefit when disaster strikes. The distinct chapters, which can be read in isolation, address a number of aspects of resilience, coping and recovery at the individual and community levels, the broad aim is to canvass topics that provide an overview of the issues that societies must address to develop and maintain resilience.

The text is organised into three parts. Part 1 outlines the overarching frameworks that provide insights into the scope and applicability of the resilience concept as a device that can facilitate planning and policy making in societies for whom the risk of experiencing disaster is high. Part 2 focuses on the individuals and organisations, such as the State Emergency Service and the Royal Australian Navy, that are responsible for enacting plans and policies when disaster strikes. Part 3 examines the implications for the citizens and communities that comprise contemporary societies.

The contributors stress the importance of engaging and supporting communities to prepare for, and manage, natural disasters. As is noted by several of the contributors, disaster readiness and preparation initiatives can make a longer term contribution to social capital.

The style of the book reflects the background of the majority of its contributors; academia. Like the development of resilience itself, the text is not suitable for quick access or consultation during the heat and drama of an emergency. It is a useful, welcome and somewhat rare contribution on the role and importance of resilience in coping with, and moving on, from natural disasters.

Preparing for the unexpected – third edition

When emergencies strike, maintaining food and grocery supplies is among the top priorities. To assist communities prepare for an emergency event, the Australian Food Sector has recently released a pantry build-up list. This list assists households to identify basic food and grocery essentials that may be pre-stored to live on for up to 14 days during an emergency event.

The Australian Government seeks various ways to assist in building the resilience of the Australian people. Since 2003, Emergency Management Australia has published the booklet, *Preparing for the Unexpected*. This booklet is a ready reference for Australian households and provides clear advice and practical actions to prepare for and deal with a range of emergencies.

Emergency Management Australia has recently revised this publication to incorporate the pantry list in support of the Australian Food Sector's initiative and to provide a comprehensive information source to assist communities and households prepare for the unexpected. The new edition of *Preparing for the Unexpected* was presented by the Attorney-General at the launch of the pantry build-up list in February 2008.

The booklet *Preparing for the Unexpected – Third edition* is available from Emergency Management Australia or via the website www.ema.gov.au. The Australian Food Sector pantry list is available at www.pantrylist.com.au.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Australian Journal of Emergency Management

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