

International Workshop on Disaster Management, Hanoi, Vietnam



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Mr Martin Studdert AM, First Assistant Secretary, National Security Capability Development Division, Attorney-General's Department was a keynote speaker on "Australia's Emergency Management Arrangements" at the International Disaster Management Workshop held in Hanoi on Wednesday 10 June 2009. Mr Studdert attended the workshop at the invitation of Mr Tran Quang Hoai, Director, Vietnam Disaster Mitigation Partnership (www.ccfsc.org.vn/ndm-p).

Participants were highly appreciative of Mr Studdert's presentation and found both the presentation and Australia's disaster management arrangements to be extremely relevant. In particular the importance and benefits of having common arrangements that could be applied to any hazard was noted.

Vietnamese Government officials and other stakeholders took the opportunity to ask more detailed questions about the Australian system. The role of the central (or federal) Government was repeatedly raised with a large amount of interest shown in the way the Australian Government supports provinces (or States) and communities to develop their capacity.

This strategic 'whole of country' approach means that all levels of Government and community share responsibilities in disaster management.

The roles and responsibilities of the committees involved in disaster management in Australia were also discussed. Questions focused on the ability of those committees to control and assign resources and the essential work carried out by those committees in preparedness. This includes financial and technical support to provinces and communities for training, simulation exercises and planning.

The use of volunteers was also discussed, along with the Government support provided to volunteers. The need for a standardised approach across provinces and even regions was highlighted. It was also emphasized that even developed countries like Australia sometimes need and use international support. Requests for support are triggered whenever the Government is unable to deal with an event, be it for size, scope, technical or financial reasons.

For more information or to access a copy of the outcomes report of the International Disaster Management Workshop please contact ajem@ema.gov.au