

Children and youth in emergencies 'Paper-in-a-Day'



Professionals and practitioners in the field of emergency management came together in Melbourne for the 'paper-in-a-day' workshop.

In early August, 29 professionals and practitioners in the field of emergency management came together to discuss and write a series of papers related to selected topics in emergency management. The workshop was co-ordinated by Save the Children Australia and included a variety of organisations from academia, emergency management, non-government, state and federal government, and young people.

The papers related to seven critical topics:

- Children and youth participation in emergency management planning in the Australian context
- Child protection in emergencies
- Recovery from emergencies
- Disaster resilience
- Emergency management education
- Disaster risk reduction
- Young people's perspective on emergency management planning

Group members collectively developed a title for their paper, confirmed the style and the key areas of content. A variety of hard copy reference material was supplied

to assist with the papers, including the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* editorial policy and contributors guidelines.

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Image: Susan Davie

Participants collaborated across their organisations to share diverse viewpoints promote discussion.

During the workshop members discussed their expertise and focused on their strengths. The allocation of tasks in writing the papers was organic as some individuals wrote sections, while others researched references or provided case studies. The workshop allowed participants to collaborate across organisations. This provided diverse viewpoints and many robust discussions.

Two secondary school students participated in the workshop to document their recent experience of engaging with local government emergency management planning. This was a new experience for the students and was an opportunity to give young people a voice in emergency management.

By the end of the day all groups had achieved a draft of a paper. They further liaised to develop their papers post workshop. Drafts were provided to the workshop co-ordinator for circulation to all participants for

comment. Some of the papers addressed similar concepts and this provided cross referencing between papers and an informal peer review. Resulting papers will be formally peer reviewed and submitted for publication in the January 2014 special *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* edition on this topic.

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One of the benefits of the paper-in-a-day format was the opportunity for people with a common interest to work together, develop and refine their ideas and document this in a way that can be shared broadly with the emergency management sector. Focusing on a particular theme helped to make a significant contribution to the literature and provides a basis to further develop knowledge and share best practice. An added benefit was the opportunity to form new relationships particularly between practitioners and academics.

'Paper-in-a-day' originated from a concept derived by Dr Eva Alisic (Monash University), and has, more recently, been adopted as a Victorian Department of Human Services initiative. The workshop was funded by the Attorney-General's Department National Emergency Management Projects. It highlights the need for continued discussion and action surrounding children and youth in emergencies, an area attracting increasing focus and recognition worldwide. This aspect is the theme of the January 2014 edition of the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*.

"The paper-in-a-day concept, held with like-minded colleagues in the field, was a great networking opportunity and an opportunity to start more conversations around child/youth empowerment."
Dawn Hartog, CFA

"Paper-in-a-day was an unusual experience in writing an academic paper but also very rewarding. The groups were multi-disciplinary and writing a paper together helped us to tease out different perspectives on a topic of shared interest." Dr Lisa Gibbs, University of Melbourne

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