

Foreword

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Australian Journal of Emergency Management



This is an exciting time for the *Australian Journal of Emergency of Management* (AJEM) as it moves into a new era with the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience.

In the emergency management sector, doing things as they have always been done is no longer an option. The complex demands of technological change, regional geo-politics, rising expenditures, shared responsibilities, and the need to shift the focus from response to mitigation, all add to the relevance of this journal in particular, and more generally the broader work of the Institute.

I see the AJEM as a documenter of lessons learnt, an explorer of new models of thinking about disaster resilience, and as an advocate for research to improve emergency management in Australia and New Zealand, and throughout our region.

Information sharing is not just about pushing information out in a printed and online journal format. Technology lets us communicate using a variety of media, shaped to the different ways people take up information. It is important to work beyond traditional formats by creating forums for discussing, critiquing and reshaping information to maximise its value. The Institute, supported by the AJEM, will be a significant contributor to this information-sharing network.

In the last few years in Australia each state and territory has dealt with significant natural events; major fires, supercell thunderstorms and east coast lows, cyclones, heatwaves, storms and floods. There

are also longer-term conditions forecast such as drought and climate change that will affect the country.

Close by in recent times, Fiji was hit by the strongest cyclone ever recorded in the southern hemisphere, Indonesia experienced terrorist attack, and Christchurch in New Zealand continues to experience earthquakes. These are all reminders that preparation is an ongoing effort when emergencies can strike with little warning.

Australia has an ongoing responsibility to better understand and contribute support to regions beyond its shores. This regional cooperation enabled firefighters from New Zealand to provide support to Tasmania and Victoria this southern fire season, and Australians were sent to New Zealand, Fiji, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and elsewhere in recent years to assist during and after disasters events.

At the same time there is increasing pressure on expenditure as the cost of emergency-related activities escalates. The Productivity Commission report¹ recommended a greater focus on mitigation activity to reduce the long-term cost of recovery but did not identify how such mitigation efforts should be funded. Meanwhile, the Australian *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* places significant emphasis on the sharing of responsibility for disaster resilience across entire communities.

So, what is the role of the AJEM in this changing environment? Over the coming year we will be reshaping it to ensure continued relevance to its audiences and integrate it with the Institute's suite of resources and activities.

Be part of this journey, let us know your ideas, bring your creativity to this effort – it's your journal: ajem@aidr.org.au.

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¹ Natural Disaster Funding Inquiry report. At: www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/disaster-funding/report.