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of South Australia



RESCUE

Emergency Management

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SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S DISASTER RESILIENCE NEWSLETTER

2014 AFAC Conference

Recently SASES and other SA emergency services organisations sent representatives to the 2014 AFAC and Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC Conference in Wellington, New Zealand *After Disaster Strikes – Learning from Adversity*. The conference was attended by over 1000 delegates from across the emergency services spectrum, as well as key stakeholders and allied industries.

Held over four days, the conference consisted of one day of research topic presentations, a two day conference and one day of field trips and professional development workshops, along with a trade display.

A broad cross section of national and International speakers presented papers covering a range of emergency management topics and themes including:

- Severe Weather
- Understanding and enhancing Community Resilience
- Community safety
- Land management and biodiversity
- Economics of Natural Hazards
- Volunteering within emergency management
- Emergency management capability & policy
- Strategic challenges
- Fire modelling and experimentation
- Managing people
- Capability development

Presenters explored how emergency management agencies, land managers and communities prepare, respond and assist with recovery following major disasters. The AFAC President, Commissioner Greg Mullins stated that the knowledge gained is vital in developing evidence based policy and informing emergency management practice into the future.

The Conference also displayed impressive poster presentations covering topics ranging from *Building capability – Leadership on and off the incident ground* through to *Flood management in a changing climate*. Copies of these poster presentations, as well as conference papers and abstracts can be accessed through the following website:

www.afac.com.au/events/proceedings

Some takeaway points that the SASES representatives noted were:

- Emergency management/response is a people business - don't lose sight of this- need to invest in building the skills/knowledge/ability to handle future fire/natural hazards.
- Develop culture of safety in your responders who are multi-faceted – they are managers of emergencies not just fire fighters.



Train your officers around managing people rather than only dealing with an emergency.

- Climatic change and emergency management need to be integrated when developing policy around emergency management
- Critical linkage between operations, training & organisational capability
- Mission command – one possible way forward in emergency services operational doctrine
- Empower communities – work towards community driven emergency management
- Managing and dealing with emergencies is a dynamic and changeable environment. Organisations, their staff and volunteers need to be adaptable, innovative and flexible when dealing with them.

The conference provided the opportunity to reflect on learnings from fires and other emergencies around the world. It also enabled delegates to network with emergency management peers and leaders. They were able to explore over 100 trade exhibition stands displaying new and emerging tools and technologies to assist in our response to managing emergencies.

Next year the 2015 AFAC and Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC Conference will be held in Adelaide. The theme for next year's conference will address the rapidly evolving nature of emergency management. Driven in part by the escalating cost and complexity of major incidents, the emphasis is shifting towards a holistic view that encompasses research, readiness, risk reduction, response and recovery. At the same time, our emergency agencies are being comprehensively reformed to improve their effectiveness before, during and after a major event.

This conference will build on and provide an opportunity to discuss and share new approaches in an all hazard emergency management environment, and work together to examine sector reform, the challenges and opportunities of a "Shared Responsibility", and seek out new and engaging ways to partner with the community, researchers and the sector to foster and build disaster resilience.

To access a video showcasing the highlights of the conference please follow this link: <http://vimeo.com/105084269>



Each decision and action makes us more vulnerable to disasters – or more resilient to them. Thus disaster risk reduction involves every part of society, every part of government, and every part of the professional and private sector." United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.



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Review of the Fire and Emergency Services sector

Over the last four months the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Tony Piccolo, has been conducting regional and city based meetings and visits to discuss potential reforms for the fire and emergency services sector. During this period the Minister has also been receiving comments and submissions associated with reform from volunteers, staff and interested parties and on Tuesday 16 September he released a discussion paper outlining key concerns with the current arrangements and a vision for the future.

The paper, which is available from the SAFECOM website www.safecom.sa.gov.au outlines how there has been a consistent theme emerging from stakeholders that supports the single point of leadership and integration of non-operational services. It also suggests any future model would retain a frontline service delivery model as currently exists with minor improvements such as realignment of boundaries consistent with the uniform state administrative boundaries which would simplify interoperability between agencies and other stakeholders.

The proposed model envisages a single agency under the leadership of a Chief Officer with a community focussed service delivery model relying on the retention of CFS, MFS, SES and VMR at the brigade/unit/station/floatilla level supported by a fully integrated agency from regional level to executive management.

Public and sector consultation on the discussion paper is occurring and the Minister has sought comments and suggestions which may be sent to ministerpiccolo@sa.gov.au and must be received by Friday 24 October 2014.



Collaborating Emergency Organisations



This article showcases the initiatives by two Emergency Management organizations to enhance response in emergency events. Both organisations are fully volunteer based.

WICEN SA is the South Australian group of an Australia-wide organisation consisting of Amateur Radio enthusiasts. Amateur Radio have made positive contributions to emergency response since 1996. For example, in Cyclone Tracey and Ash Wednesday incidents when other communications infrastructure was damaged.

WICEN provide communications infrastructure to community activities such as Rally of SA, Horse endurance rides and ANZAC Vigil in the South. Additionally, this organisation has interests in emergency events both in South Australia and in other states including communication capability mapping and providing resources to improve in-field communications. WICEN is equipped to erect temporary radio repeater or translator towers around or selectively within the emergency ground.

South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management (SAVEM) was formed at the time of the 2009 Victorian bushfires. Its on-going role is to rescue, triage, treat and return all animal species including companion animals and wildlife after

an emergency event. Although formed by veterinarians, it draws on the allied resources of vet nurses and wildlife carers to provide a sustainable response capacity. The organisation has built its own structures paralleling other emergency agencies using AIMS protocols

Both SAVEM and WICEN are Participating Organisations for specific Functional Services. SAVEM is under the Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Service, while WICEN is under the Communications Functional Service.

SAVEM has recently acquired its first dedicated vehicle, a Jeep fitted out for its five person First Response Team. This adds to capacity previously limited to volunteer provided private vehicles.

WICEN approached SAVEM with regard to building the latter's communications capacity, and were warmly welcomed. The collaboration has several directions for evolution.

The first pragmatic steps are to provide SAVEM with built-in UHF Citizen Band radio capability in its First Response Team vehicle. This will be extended to include a satellite phone and the existing team member individual hand held units.

Mapping of recent emergency event areas such as the Eden Valley 2014 fire ground,

highlights the complexities and difficulties associated with communications in deep gullies and high lying ground across a wide area with limited access from perimeter safe ground.

The goal is to provide both reliable communications capacity and not add to the load on existing systems. Attention to cross linking UHF and VHF communications, securing dedicated frequencies, and developing monitoring and in-field suitable temporary towers capacity are on-going WICEN SA foci.

Both organisations expect to continue their evolution, drawing on the interest and skills of their dedicated volunteer member base and organisers. The goal is to continue to build resource capability to be increasingly effective in emergency event response.

For more information on:

- the South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management group (SAVEM Inc.) visit www.savem.org.au.

- the Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network, South Australia (WICEN SA) visit www.sa.wicen.org.au

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Risk assessment workshops in Lower Eyre Peninsula and Limestone

The CFS has begun the delivery of bushfire risk assessment workshops in the Lower Eyre Peninsula and the Limestone Coast in preparation for the drafting of Bushfire Management Area (BMA) Plans.

The CFS Bushfire Management Planning Unit has facilitated risk assessment workshops for each of the three member local councils in the Lower Eyre Peninsula BMA.

Workshop participants were able to provide local knowledge on assets at risk, fire weather, fire behaviour and familiarity with the landscape and vegetation. Those that attended also generally represented various localities or regions across the council area as well as CFS groups and brigades.

The data gathered from the workshops has been collated and the first draft of the Lower Eyre Peninsula BMA risk

register and the identified assets has been provided back to the workshop participants for confirmation and evaluation.

Current and proposed treatment strategies are now being assigned to each asset and in due course will be referred back to the BMC working group for comment and endorsement.

Through the risk assessment workshops CFS has developed linkages with a number of agencies and organisations which have a state-wide responsibility for the management of assets at risk from bushfire. This will greatly assist the gathering of data for risk assessment workshops for the remaining Bushfire Management Areas.

The risk assessment software (which has the acronym SABRR) used in these workshops has seen ongoing

improvement as a result of the initial workshops. The determination of the likelihood and consequence of bushfire is now far more rigorous and refinements have been made for ease of use of the risk register and data management.

Future development will enable the risk register and interactive bushfire risk maps to be accessed via the Cloud using mobile tablet devices. This will greatly enhance the use of bushfire risk management plans by local council fire prevention officers in the field and other emergency services.

Workshops have been held at Naracoorte Lucindale Council and the Tatiara District Council and the remaining council's workshops will be completed by the end of this calendar year.

Leigh Miller

Director Preparedness Operations
SA Country Fire Service



Organisational
Resilience



Organisational resilience is critical for business to be able to respond to short term shocks such as natural disasters. In particular, organisational resilience will help critical infrastructure organisations better manage unexpected risk and threats to the continuity of essential services.

A new Australian Government website designed to strengthen organisational resilience in Australian Business and Industries has recently been launched. It features a free tool to help businesses evaluate their resilience and identify possible treatment actions. The site also provides some interesting case studies. You can visit the website at www.organisationalresilience.gov.au

New Floodplain Management Guide

A new floodplain management guide has been developed under the National Emergency Management Program. It is one of a series of five manuals on flood management whose review was instigated and managed by the National Flood Risk Advisory Group, a reference group of the Australian – New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC).

The handbook promotes the underlying principles that need to be considered when managing flood risk and formulating floodplain management plans with a view to establishing effective, equitable and sustainable land use across Australia's floodplains.

It provides advice on management of flooding within the floodplains and catchments of waterways affected by both catchment and coastal flooding and can be applied to the management of floods in urban and rural areas, including water flowing overland through urban areas to waterways. The new guide is available for download from <https://ema.info.services.com.au/collections/handbook>

Considerations for children and youth in emergency management planning

A new national guideline has been launched to assist local, regional and state governments plan for the needs of children and youth in emergencies. The guideline, titled, Emergency Management planning for children and young people has been distributed nationally to local government associations and peak bodies and key Commonwealth level emergency management committees. The initiative, funded under the National Emergency Management Program has also raised awareness of the unique needs of children and young people in emergency management and has explored opportunities to progress planning for these members of the community. It is available for download from <http://bit.ly/1o7ovFn>.





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Emergency Management Australia Podcast Series

The EMA Podcast series was launched six months ago and is consistently ranked in the Top 10 of the Government and Organisation Podcast category. Each month, the EMA Podcast Team talk to people in the sector, ranging from those with international experience to front-line volunteers. This month's podcast examines the huge increase over recent years in the cost

of natural disasters and what can be done to address the challenge.

Find out how to download the podcast on the [Emergency Management Australia website](#). You can also follow the EMA Podcast series on [twitter](#). If you have a suggestion for a podcast story you can email the [EMA Podcast Team](#).



National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters

This is an important issue because more than half of all Australians owns a pet, and many people will risk their lives to save their pets. The community also has a strong interest in the fate of animal wildlife and livestock.

The National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters was endorsed by all states and territories in June 2014. A copy is available on the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy website.

While the responsibility for the welfare of animals at all times remains with the person in charge of the animal, the National Planning Principles recognise that government can play a supporting role in helping people exercise their responsibility for the animals in their care. The national principles highlight compelling reasons for integrating animals into disaster management planning.

IMPORTANT MILESTONE REACHED FOR ZERMS PROJECT

The Zone Emergency Risk Management System (ZERMS) Project initially focused on the assessment and treatment of priority hazards identified by Zone Emergency Management Committees (ZEMCs) in each of the State's 11 emergency management zones.

Twenty months on, after a total of seventy five workshops focusing on establishing the context and conducting risk assessment and risk treatment processes across all hazards in all zones, the team are focused on finishing stage one. The ZERMS project is reaching a critical milestone of delivering the first iteration Zone Emergency Management Plans (ZEMPs) and associated Risk Management Reports by December 2014. There are still more workshops scheduled in some zones through to the end of 2014 to enable the completion of Stage One.

The ZERMS project will then move into Stage Two and complete the risk assessment and risk treatment process for all ten hazards as identified in the State Emergency Management Plan.

However, it is expected that for some hazards, depending on such things as the associated risks and vulnerabilities, it may be that a presentation by the Hazard Leader will provide sufficient assurance to a ZEMC that the risk is being managed effectively, and a full risk assessment/risk treatment workshop process may not be required.

There will be ongoing support provided to ZEMCs in Stage Two and priorities will include establishing a systematic process for identifying and reporting multi hazard treatments at state level and communicating risk at zone level.

As the result of a reduction in funding, the project team has transitioned to a smaller group with three ZEMPOs (Bridgett Leopold, Priti Meda and Pippa Pech) led by project manager Liz Connell.

As an inevitable consequence of the reduction in resources, the pace of implementation of the ZERMS project will slow. Stakeholders are asked to be understanding and to continue to provide the exceptional support received to date.

A ZEMP will be a high-level document containing the following information:

- a summary of the State Emergency Management Arrangements and how they relate to the Zones and their Committees
- an agreed description of the zone context
- an overview of the NERAG process, how it has been applied to the zone, and the identified risks for the zone
- summaries of the risk assessments and possible treatment options for the identified risks
- a Zone Recovery Plan

The ZEMP will be updated annually and is intended to guide the work programs of ZEMCs into the future, including prioritising which risks need to be communicated to the public and how treatments should be prioritised, implemented and monitored.

It is worth reinforcing that the ZEMP is not an operational 'response-focused' plan to be used during emergencies or disasters. The focus is more on mitigation and higher level prevention, preparedness, recovery arrangements and activities.

Liz Connell

Zone Emergency Risk Management System Project Manager
SAFECOM