



# IGEM *Connect*

Inspector-General Emergency Management

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Welcome to the latest edition of IGEM Connect.

Recently I had the privilege of being a judge for the Resilient Australia Awards (Qld). I've had the great honour of being involved with these awards for a few years now and what has encouraged me over this time is the growing breadth and depth of nominations.

The awards are open to individuals, groups, organisations and government entities and are designed to acknowledge activities that demonstrate excellence and innovation in community resilience and preparedness. Over the course of my involvement with the awards, I have noticed that each and every year the quality of the entries has increased, as has the breadth of application into the community across the full spectrum of PPRR.

This year's winner of the Resilient Australia Community Award category - Carlyle Gardens Retirement Village at Townsville - is a great example of this.

Recognising the risks that extreme weather posed to people in the retirement complex, a group of residents proactively formed their own disaster management group. Working across all aspects of disaster management the group identified key risks, then actively planned and practiced for extreme events. Not only is the group now better prepared, its actions mean residents are far more resilient and less reliant on response agencies.

Other State winners this year included the Sunshine Coast Council in the Resilient Government category for the development of their online Disaster Hub. The Resilient Business category was won by Suncorp for their 'Protecting the North' campaign focusing on cyclone resilience in North Queensland. All of these entries are now being considered in the finals of the Resilient Australia National Awards, to be announced later in the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend all nominees and encourage any individuals or organisations to consider submitting an entry in next year's awards.

## Making the Standard part of everyday business

It is critical that the application of disaster management good practice is shared across the sector and accordingly my Office is continually on the lookout for such examples to detail more broadly. To that end, Moreton Bay Regional Council's application of the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland into regular business fits that bill.

The six shared responsibilities under the Framework have now been applied to the regular briefing process undertaken by all agencies reporting to the Moreton Bay LDMG. While Coordinator for Disaster Management for Moreton Bay Regional Council, Carl Peterson, did not think the process was "out of the box", he said the practical application of the Standard had led to a range of small but valuable changes.

"Primarily we decided to use the Standard for the reporting process to both reinforce the value of applying the Standard as well as bringing it to life. What we found by having all the shared responsibilities in the template was that it drew attention to all the elements of disaster management not just those we previously focused on in the past, such as the response phase," Carl said.

While reporting is still by exception it has often led the group into broader discussions, in particular what responsibilities may need more attention. This has been reinforced by the Moreton Bay LDMG decision to include a wider range of agencies in the LDMG, particularly organisations which are often engaged with the community well after the initial response phase has passed.

This is demonstrative in my mind of the numerous practical ways the Standard is being embedded into our many and varied pieces of work across the sector and also highlights how simple actions can often seed broader conversations that challenge our thinking, and in turn our actions, across all the emergency management responsibilities.

### Lexicon Project progressing strongly

I have previously flagged with you a very important project being overseen by the IGEM Advisory Panel – the establishment of a common disaster management lexicon in Queensland. The project grew out of the development of the Emergency Management Assurance Framework, where stakeholders identified a need to work within a common language, contextualised to Queensland's disaster management sector. Since its inception in April, a dedicated working group has been wrestling with definitions for a number of words and phrases including damage assessment v impact assessment; relief v recovery; declaration v activation; and mitigation.

The initial definitions developed by the working group will be provided to nominated stakeholders within the sector in due course, for further comment. In addition to the on-going lexicon work in Queensland, the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience is also reviewing the Australian Emergency Management Glossary. My Office will participate at a national steering group level to assist in the delivery of this project, using the working group as the operational and consultation base in Queensland.

### IGEM International Women's Day Award to recognise champions of change

I am passionate about creating equality and diversity in the workplace. One way to support this is to recognise the work of those in the DM sector who actively champion change, to bring about greater equality for women. To this end, I have established an IGEM-specific International Women's Day (IWD) award. Open to all those in the DM sector, we are seeking nominations from those who have demonstrated a significant contribution to improving access, equity and support for women. Application forms will be available on the IGEM website from 5 December. Importantly, nominations will be required to address identified criteria and be endorsed by a second referee. Applications close on 31 January 2017, with the winner announced at the IWD event to be held in conjunction with QFES, QPS and PSBA in Brisbane on 8 March.

### LGAQ Workshops

The local government elections in March ushered in a number of changes involving elected officials and staff, charged with disaster management responsibilities. In the wake of those changes, the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) undertook a series of 10 workshops across the State, designed to provide an introduction to key council staff and LDMG chairs and deputy-chairs regarding disaster management arrangements in Queensland. The workshops, which incorporated a practical seasonal discussion scenario, also included participation by supporting agencies including my Office.

Apart from providing the ability to brief on the work of my Office, a wide range of issues affecting council and LDMG disaster management operations were raised including cyclone shelter staffing, challenges in running coordination centres, warnings issues and duplications, spontaneous volunteer management, and state agency integration. My Office has captured a number of the issues raised, for further consideration.

### Facebook Messenger Bot wins Disaster Management category in GovHack 2016

For the second successive year, my Office has supported the highly competitive GovHack competition in a bid to drive innovation within disaster management in Queensland. GovHack is an annual event which brings application developers and data providers together in competition to find innovative ways to use and promote government data.

This year's event was held at 10 locations across Queensland over a weekend in July and attracted more than 400 participants who looked at ways to collaboratively use publicly-released government data to create, build and invent open source solutions for a range of challenges.

This year, my Office put forward a challenge for participants to consider the topic of evacuations and questions such as which communities may require help, who needs to be evacuated first and how they should get out. The IGEM challenge drew 11 outstanding entries, including the winning submission "EvacuMate", which utilises a Facebook bot that collates and provides users with vital evacuation information.



EvacuMate is a friendly Facebook messenger bot, built on a platform that changes how we think about managing natural disasters

Drawing information from community centres, Bureau of Meteorology warnings, WiFi hotspots, and SES bases, "EvacuMate" collates and converts the data into a usable format allowing individuals to make evacuation decisions and to improve planning for disaster managers.

Runner up in the "Evacuation – help us get away" challenge was an emergency response app called "Crikey" - an entry by University of Queensland students and alumni. Using publicly available data, the app deduces how much danger an individual is in and provides maps, useful resources and critical information for decision making. Further information on these or other 2016 GovHack entries is available from [Mike Shapland](#) in my Office.

### 2016 IGEM Annual Report, a point in time reflection

I always look forward to the annual report process. Not only does it allow organisations an avenue to report publicly, it also provides an opportunity to reflect on work and activities undertaken over the previous 12 months. And so it has been with the [2015-16 IGEM Annual Report](#). Tracked against the strategic plan, this year's report showcases significant progress made against our key objectives including the adoption of the EMAF; the development of the Prioritisation Tool; and the completion of major reviews. While I was highly encouraged with the progress made by my Office over the period, I am committed to building on these achievements over the current financial year to ensure all Queenslanders enjoy the best possible disaster management arrangements

### Developing a DM Research framework for Queensland

Translating research into action can often be a key hurdle in the DM space. Most often because of a disconnect between the tertiary research and operational disaster management spaces. In an effort to build linkages, my office is working with Queensland researchers and DM practitioners to develop a research framework that will strengthen connections.

So far the project has consulted with DMOs, LDMGs, councils and agencies across the State as well as seven Queensland universities involving a range of disciplines. We have found both the tertiary and DM sectors experience a loss in translation and feelings of being disconnected, yet share a keen interest in exploring ways to change this.

DMOs identified that while they wanted research to better inform their work, limited resources and time impacted on their ability to seek out and connect with researchers. Conversely researchers expressed a strong desire for better connection to the field to ensure that their research is targeting the right issues, is useful and can be applied. A community of practice involving both researchers and practitioners is growing from the project.

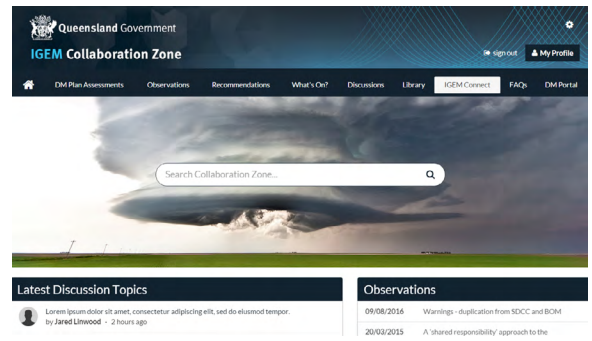
Once the initial consultation process has been finalised, an advisory group will be established to prioritise key themes as well as identify future mechanisms for collaboration. For further information on how to be involved in the project contact [Allison Rifai](#)

## IGEM Collaboration Zone- the IGEM stakeholder portal comes of age

Mid-November will see a brand new look to the IGEM portal. As outlined in the last edition of IGEM Connect the development of the portal has been a critical step in providing IGEM with greater visibility of the issues and good practice occurring across the sector.

Alongside an impressive facelift the IGEM Collaboration Zone has increased functionality allowing users to contribute to emerging assurance activities, see outcomes for DM plan assessments and reviews as well as enable greater connection across the QLD DM sector. The platform will also allow for the secure distribution of documentation enhancing collaboration and opportunity for input from the sector. These functions build on the portals existing capabilities in particular the capacity of the sector to log Observations that inform the focus of IGEM assurance and development programs.

A guide outlining how the IGEM Collaboration Zone intersects with the DM portal is also being finalised. This information details the specific focus of each portal and how in combination they can create a stronger DM sector.



The Collaboration Zone is coming soon

## Mackay Review Update

My Office is in the final stages of completing a review of the Mackay Disaster District. The review follows the capability review of the Warwick Disaster District in 2015-16, and is designed to provide an in-depth assessment of local government and district level capability to deliver effective disaster management outcomes, measured against the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland.

The review is focusing on the Mackay District Disaster Management Group, and the Local Disaster Management groups of Isaac, Mackay and Whitsunday. Building on self- assessments undertaken by the four disaster management groups, a validation process undertaken as part of the review identified a number of good practice attributes within the district's approach. The last stages of the review process include - the development of an improvement strategy that will identify ways to further build on the good practice occurring in the district. Although still in progress and I am yet to report the findings, I am greatly encouraged by the feedback I have received from the review team.

## Embedding the Standard – Program of upcoming workshops

By now many disaster districts will have been contacted about hosting an IGEM workshop. Building on the previous highly-successful series, the upcoming workshops focus on the practical application of the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland, in particular the use of the Prioritisation Tool.

A number of workshops will occur across the state this financial year. While the focus of the workshop series is on embedding the Standard into operational work, liaison is currently occurring with districts to identify key areas most relevant to that specific district. The workshops will also provide an opportunity for us to seek feedback on applying the Standard and identify any barriers to implementation. I look forward to hearing the outcomes of these workshops as well as any feedback on ways we can improve the Standard and its application.

## Finally the Year in Review

This is the last edition of IGEM Connect for 2016. Next month we will release our year in review edition that captures the key achievements and activities of my office over the last 12 months.

Until next time

**Iain MacKenzie**  
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[www.igem.qld.gov.au](http://www.igem.qld.gov.au)