



IGEM *Connect*

Inspector-General Emergency Management

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Welcome to the latest edition of IGEM Connect.

It's been a busy recent period for many across the State in the disaster management sphere through Tropical Cyclone Debbie and its associated affects. I witnessed the impact of this particular event through flooding on my own property and observed the impact and devastation caused to neighbours and those in my surrounding community.

Again in this event, I observed first-hand the outstanding work of those in the disaster management sector, and the brave, committed and often selfless efforts of so many to make a difference and serve and protect their communities.

And while Queensland is proudly at the forefront of disaster management in Australia in terms of policy, practice and personnel, it is imperative that we keep testing, reviewing and assessing our plans, activities and interactions to ensure we are providing the best possible arrangements for all Queenslanders.

Minister Ryan has tasked me to ensure that we have a robust approach to continuous improvement across all aspects of Queensland's disaster management system.

Through the review, I have been asked to ensure we have identified and shared disaster management good practice arising out of Tropical Cyclone Debbie; that lessons learnt were captured; and that common themes for improvement were adopted.

To achieve this, Minister Ryan has directed me to work closely with a wide range of agencies including Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, police, local and district disaster management groups, councils and the Local Government Association of Queensland.

And to most effectively approach the task, the review will focus on three key impacts of Tropical Cyclone Debbie namely direct cyclone impact; rapid on-set weather conditions after the cyclone's coastal crossing; and slow on-set flooding experience in the Rockhampton area.

Both I and my team have already begun to attend debriefs and meetings in areas captured under these impact areas.

Minister Ryan also tasked me to ensure public views on the effectiveness and coordination of our arrangements arising from Tropical Cyclone Debbie were included and considered as part of the review. To that end, I have commissioned a market research firm to work with my office and undertake a major and statistically valid survey to collect public opinion in each of the key impact regions.

I would like to stress that this review is focused on the effectiveness of the "system" and is not an assessment of performance by any particular entity involved. Clearly there will be opportunities for improvement identified and I am keen that these are indeed considered as views of a critical friend rather than criticisms.

We intend to ensure that the findings from the review are considered prior to the 2017/18 severe weather season.

Evacuation Review Update

The review of the effectiveness of disaster management arrangements arising from Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie means some of our other current work needs to be temporarily suspended.

One of these activities is the review of evacuation management arrangements.

Some aspects of the evacuation review are directly relevant to the emergent work while other aspects may form the basis of a separate paper later in the year. The Office appreciates assistance given in the collection of information and time spent attending our workshops or participating in interviews.

The long term aim is to ensure that information collected about evacuation arrangements will be used in the future

Disaster Management Officer's Forum

More than 40 local disaster management officers and local disaster coordinators from across the State have registered for this year's Disaster Management Officers' Network Forum in Mackay.

Scheduled to run between May 8-10 immediately prior to the Local Government Association of Queensland's Disaster Management Conference, this year's Disaster Management Officer's Network Forum will feature an array of speakers and key representatives from agencies across the sector.

Importantly, the framework of the forum will be delivered by key local government disaster management representatives. Topics for this year's forum include lessons management, future thinking approaches, stakeholder engagement, mobilising community and resourcing, planning and compliance, case studies and panel sessions.



The 2016 DMO Network Forum

My thanks to the working group of Nicola Moore, Linda Manning, Matt Dyer, Sarah Dean, Anthony Lee, Gina Trasy, Michael Dickinson, Dave Mazzaferri, Klynt Oberto, Mal Churchill, Teresa Pflugst and Jeff Hawthorne for organising and delivering this excellent program.

The Disaster Management Officer's Network is only 18 months old and yet boasts more than 70 members from a majority of councils throughout Queensland.

State Plan Review Update

In the last edition of IGEM Connect, I advised that my office was reviewing the State Disaster Management Plan's alignment with legislated provisions under the Disaster Management Act (2003), through the lens of the Standard and disaster management guidelines.

As part of the review, we also looked at good practice in disaster management planning from other jurisdictions.

A key component of our approach has been a thorough engagement of State and local stakeholders along with representatives from the non-government sphere and utilities. My office is currently in the process of finalising the review.

Immersive Technologies Project

You may recall from past editions of IGEM Connect an excellent volume of work from a QUT undergraduate subject in the Earth Sciences discipline regarding natural hazards and disasters. And in fact so excellent, Associate Professor Scott Bryan, Dr David Savage and Associate Professor Amisha Mehta won last year's Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence in the Academic Team Category.

As part of my Office's involvement with the subject, we have, for the past two years, hosted an intern for 10 weeks from December to February under the QUT/IGEM Work Integrated Learning program. Our intern this year, Ms Caitlyn Ward, looked at current and potential applications of virtual and augmented reality (immersive technologies) in emergency management.

So what are immersive technologies? As Caitlyn's research found, many of us use immersive technologies as part of the day-to-day environment. When we shop, use social media, QR codes or study, the apps on our smart phones and tablets translate and transform what we see.

Internationally, Caitlyn found that immersive technologies are being used by disaster managers to engage with communities and help build resilience, provide assistance during evacuations and personalise risk.

Within Queensland, our emergency and disaster managers are already using immersive technologies to help with training frontline staff; and showing householders the potential fire hazards around their yards. The State Library of Queensland used immersive technologies to commemorate flooding in Brisbane and tell the stories of communities impacted.

Caitlyn identified a number of applications and immersive technologies in the current market place that could be adapted to help us better engage with our communities about risk. For example virtual reality simulations that help with household preparedness or the communication of flood risk; apps that assist crowds to move to safer locations; and emergency signage that includes multi-media content accessible via an app on a smart phone.

There are still some challenges to overcome, such as the speed of technology development and access to networks and data.

My Office is continuing to explore these challenges and opportunities through collaborations with QUT and state agencies. If you would like further information, please contact [my Office](#).

International Women's Day

It was the great honour of both myself and my Office to be involved with International Women's Day again this year.

For 2017, we initiated the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management Champion of Change International Women's Day Award to recognise and encourage outstanding women who are making a positive difference in the workplace.

This year's worthy winner was Cheryl-Lee Fitzgerald, Executive Manager – Emergency Management for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services based in Cairns, Far Northern Region. Cheryl-Lee was recognised for her leadership abilities; support for staff; and support for remote communities. Cheryl-Lee's nominator noted that her "presence is a clear motivational beacon that a competent, engaged and productive leadership role is indeed an achievable goal for a female."

Our congratulations to Cheryl-Lee on winning the award.



Cheryl-Lee Fitzgerald and Iain MacKenzie

Lexicon Project Update

I have previously flagged with you a volume of work being undertaken in Queensland to establish a common language in the disaster management sector to promote a shared situational awareness during an event and encourage collaboration. To address this gap, my Office facilitated the establishment of the Queensland Disaster Management (DM) Lexicon project.

Under the guidance of the IGEM Advisory Panel, a working group of industry stakeholders was established in April 2016 to begin the process of developing a lexicon specifically catering to Queensland's disaster management arrangements.

Using findings from IGEM reviews and input from our working group members, a list of terms which are currently causing confusion across all phases of disaster management was determined. This initial priority list included: activation, declaration, damage assessment, impact assessment, mitigation, recovery and relief. Once definitions were agreed by the working group the terms were sent for consultation across the broader Queensland disaster management sector. A report on the feedback is to be presented at the next IGEM Advisory Panel for endorsement.

The Queensland work has attracted keen interest from the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience (AIDR) which has recently begun the review of the Emergency Management Australia Glossary. Our DM Lexicon Working Group has been feeding into AIDR's work and helping to shape the national disaster management vocabulary.

I would like to thank all those who have already provided feedback throughout this project and I am encouraged by the emails we are currently receiving from all stakeholders. There is positive interest in the project and some great suggestions on future terms to be universally defined. This work is ongoing so there will be plenty of opportunities to provide further feedback in future consultation phases.

Research framework

There has been significant progress undertaken this year to develop and implement a Research Framework through consultation and collaboration across the tertiary and government sectors.

The purpose of the Research Framework is to collaboratively develop and promote research, for the Queensland context, for coal-face disaster management practitioners, nurturing enhanced partnerships, cooperation and understanding between academic institutions and government agencies.

The development of people, processes, technology and content under the Framework will support the transition between research and practice in Queensland's disaster management sector.

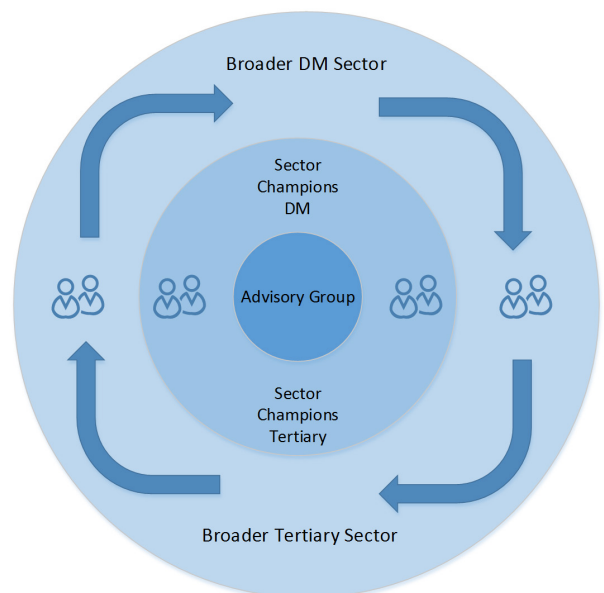
Our first round of consultation identified a range of issues that both the disaster management and tertiary sectors would like to pursue. These include resilience; community messaging and warnings; risk assessment; defining best practice; and disaster management governance, doctrine and policy.

To further this collaboration, we have drafted a set of guiding principles for disaster management research as well as a role statement for IGEM as a 'knowledge/research broker' between the tertiary and disaster management sectors. These are currently under consideration by the members of the Research Advisory Group and will be circulated more broadly for comment during our second round of consultation mid-year.

Our database of university researchers specialising in disaster and emergency is growing. There are currently 70 researchers on the database. My Office has been using this information to build a profile of disaster management research in Queensland. This work will continue as we capture what's being done at the state and local government levels.

Our overall approach has been validated by the recently published [Queensland Disaster Management 2016 Strategic Policy Statement](#) promoting collaboration and knowledge building activities as strategies that will drive an 'effective disaster management system', as well as recognition by the Queensland Disaster Management Committee as one of their priorities for the State.

My Office will continue to work with the disaster management and tertiary sectors to implement and cultivate the Framework. If you would like further information or to join our Community of Practice, please contact [my Office](#).



The Framework is being built by the feedback you are providing us about your research experiences and needs.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

In February this year, we invited a wide range of just under 500 stakeholders to complete a customer satisfaction survey to identify what my office was doing well and where we needed to improve and focus greater attention.

We received 135 completed returns (27% response rate) and some valuable comment on our strengths and areas for improvement. Overall my office received a customer satisfaction rating of 87% - slightly higher than that achieved for 2015 (83%).

Key reasons for customer satisfaction included providing accurate and clear information, adopting a collaborative approach, and efficient and timely service. Ratings of staff continued to be extremely high, with two in three customers very satisfied that staff are polite, respectful and professional. There was also a significant improvement in satisfaction that review processes are clear with 90% of respondents satisfied or very satisfied (71% in 2015). The results show almost universal awareness (98%) of the Standard for Disaster Management, with 80% of customers keen to understand the Standard more and apply it to their work.

Importantly, the results identified key areas of focus for service improvement. These include ensuring that the Office has the capability it needs; continued engagement with disaster management practitioners; and further regional visits.

Thank you to all of you who took time to complete the survey. Apart from being a key performance indicator which is published in the Office of the IGEM Service Delivery Statement and Annual Report, my Office is committed to continuous improvement and will use the survey findings as a basis for this.

Until next time.

Iain MacKenzie
Inspector-General Emergency Management

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