



# IGEM *Connect*

Inspector-General Emergency Management

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Welcome to the latest edition of IGEM Connect.

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to attend and present at the World Conference on Disaster Management in Toronto. This conference has been held every year for the past 26 years and attracts an audience from more than 40 countries and speakers from across the globe.

Apart from presenting on Queensland's approach to disaster management standards, I was privileged to be asked to spend an afternoon, along with various other speakers, talking with a group of local university students studying degree and master's level disaster management courses. The enthusiasm of this group was remarkable. Perhaps not surprisingly the issues raised by them around changing hazard considerations, the impact that true collaboration and sound planning can have on reducing risk to communities and the need for greater focus on recovery planning were very similar to conversations we have here.

A very interesting observation for me was the joining up of conversations around resilience, crisis management and business continuity and the blurring of our traditional view of what is an emergency or disaster. What was absolutely clear from across the globe was the need for us to never forget why we are passionate about this topic - the need to ensure that the community is always at the centre of our thinking across the full spectrum of emergency management responsibilities.

## Forward Program of Reviews

The forward program of IGEM reviews for 2016-17 was recently approved by the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services, The Honourable Bill Byrne.

The forward program for this financial year includes:

- **A review of capability at a district and local level: Mackay Disaster District.** The purpose of this review is to provide 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. This review will focus on the Mackay Disaster District including the Mackay District Disaster Management Group and the Local Disaster Management Groups of Isaac, Mackay and Whitsunday. Review outcomes will include an integrated improvement strategy developed with and for the Mackay disaster district. (You can read more on this review later in the newsletter)
- **The review and assessment of the State Disaster Management Plan and its implementation.** This comprehensive review is scheduled to commence in November 2016.
- **A review of evacuation management to ensure community preparedness.** The focus of this review is informed by previous local and district assessment of disaster management plans as well as post-event analysis from events in 2012 and 2014 that highlighted evacuation planning and exercising as a potential area for improvement. This review is scheduled to commence in January 2017.

In addition to these activities, my office will also continue with the annual disaster management plan assessment and an evaluation of the Far North Qld combined District Disaster Management Groups trial.

## New IGEM Portal

To provide a platform for better stakeholder engagement, my Office has just launched the first phase of a new stakeholder portal. The [Inspector-General Emergency Management Stakeholder Portal](#) gives those within the sector a window into our work. Most importantly it allows them to log observations – to tell us about those things that need attention. This, in turn, provides IGEM with greater visibility about issues and good practice at the coalface. In addition, it allows stakeholders to review all current published recommendations, as well as to update their organisation and contact details. The portal also provides access to current and previous disaster management plan assessment results.

The Office is currently working to make the portal better. As this is a tool for stakeholders, I strongly encourage you to let us know your opinions to make it as effective and useful as possible. As part of Phase 2 development, my Office will provide more functions; securely enabling the distribution of documentation, providing an interactive forum, chat functionality and calendar information. The Office aims to deliver this by the end of September. Phase 1 is live on the website now at [www.igem.qld.gov.au](http://www.igem.qld.gov.au).

## Standard for Disaster Management in Qld Workshops

To continue to embed the Standard among practitioners across Queensland, my office will host a further series of workshops over the course of the financial year. These workshops are a shared responsibility and we would encourage participation from local, district, state agencies and the NGOs. We are proposing to target disaster districts as a base to host these forums, having successfully trialled that approach with the Gold Coast Disaster District recently. I am also keen to target the State Disaster Coordination Group here in Brisbane with a dedicated workshop and the Standards' application to state agencies and their functions under the State Plan. These workshops will provide an opportunity to practically apply the Standard using the Prioritisation Tool as well as a forum to seek feedback on your perceptions of the Standard; barriers to applying it; and opportunities to improve its utility.

My office will shortly begin consultation with stakeholders, including the Disaster Management Officers Network and the IGEM Advisory Panel, to determine locations and dates for the workshops. We have built on the learnings of last year's highly successful workshops, which raised awareness of the Standard with almost 300 participants. This year's series will focus more strongly on application of the Standard using the Prioritisation Tool.

## Mackay Disaster District Review

Following the capability review of the Warwick Disaster District in 2015-16, I commissioned an evaluation regarding methodology and products to enable my office to build on this success and to highlight learnings. In the wake of this, and as noted earlier in this newsletter, my staff have commenced a review of the Mackay Disaster District, including the three local governments of Whitsunday, Mackay and Isaac. The reviews assess the combined local and district capability to deliver their obligations under the Disaster Management Act, through the lens of the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland. At this stage, it is expected the Mackay Disaster District review will take four months to complete.

Currently, the four disaster management groups are completing their self-assessments and providing the necessary supporting evidence. My team will then validate these self-assessments and provide the four disaster management groups with a summary of observations report in early September. Apart from the summary of observations report, the review will also deliver an improvement strategy for the district and a final review report. We expect this review will produce findings of relevance for many districts across Queensland.

## New Strategic Plan

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of our stakeholders who contributed comments and feedback and assisted us in refreshing our strategic plan for the next four years. Our [Strategic Plan 2016-2020](#) now better reflects the role of the Office in promoting a coordinated strategic direction for emergency management in Queensland; how the Office is embedding its strategies; and its commitment to delivering the Queensland Government's objectives for the community. The themes of collaborative partnerships, shared responsibility balanced by clear accountability, outcome based standards and a continuous improvement approach to emergency management in Queensland, still remain core to the 2016-20 Strategic Plan.

The Office of the IGEM will deliver on the strategic objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 through the Office's Operational Plan 2016-17 and the Workforce Strategy 2016-20. Both these documents will also soon be available on the Office of the IGEM website. The IGEM Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is available from the Office of the IGEM website: [www.igem.qld.gov.au](http://www.igem.qld.gov.au).

## Collaborative work on the Wide Bay Study

As I have previously noted in IGEM Connect, my office has been working with Queensland Police and the councils of Bundaberg, Fraser Coast and North Burnett in looking at disaster management arrangements regarding independent



living seniors living in the Wide Bay region. We had the opportunity recently of road-testing the draft of the study through a presentation at the International Federation of the Ageing 13th Global Conference at the Brisbane Convention Centre. I am hopeful this volume of work will prove beneficial in better identifying and assisting seniors living in their own homes in the disaster management sphere.

*Pictured left to right at the conference presentation are Robin Keller, Vice President Volunteers of America; John Stalker,*

*Council of the Aging; Alex Marsh, IGEM; Matt Dyer, Bundaberg Regional Council; and Snr Sgt Grant Marcus, Bundaberg Disaster District.*

## Congratulations to QUT

And finally, I would like to extend my congratulations to Associate Professor Scott Bryan, Dr David Savage and Associate Professor Amisha Mehta from QUT in winning the 2016 Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence in the Academic Team Category for their outstanding work in the ERB201 subject on natural hazards and disasters. My office has been involved with this Earth Sciences subject for a couple of years now and I have been encouraged by the work of the QUT team in generating student interest, thought, discussion and statistical analysis in pertinent issues and topics involving disaster management. Data set findings and suggestions arising from the work of the students have already been passed on to State Government agencies for consideration and have proven useful.

In addition, my office has agreed take on an intern each year for three years to provide greater insight and involvement as part of this collaboration. Not surprisingly then, the prestigious Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence is "conferred to individuals or teams in recognition of sustained exceptional performance leading to outstanding achievement in work and activities that align with the University's vision, strategic goals and Real World Capabilities." I am thoroughly delighted the work of Drs Bryan, Savage and Mehta have been duly recognised and again extend my congratulations.

Until next time.

**Iain MacKenzie**

**Inspector-General Emergency Management**

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