

IGEM *Connect*

Inspector-General Emergency Management

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Welcome to the latest edition of *IGEM Connect*.

Certainly, this summer proved to be both different and challenging for the disaster management sphere.

In many parts of the South East, we had an unseasonal lack of rain and few of the threatening thunderstorms which normally roll through mid-afternoon.

In the northern part of the State however we had uncharacteristically large volumes of rain which caused widespread flooding and consequent damage and losses to property and livestock.

And this was all preceded by heatwave conditions across large parts of the state and a multitude of devastating bushfires throughout Queensland.

These extreme weather events led to Fire and Emergency Services Minister Craig Crawford tasking me to undertake separate reviews into elements and arrangements surrounding both the bushfires and the monsoon trough in the north of the State.

With the 2019 Monsoon Trough Rainfall and Flood Review, I have been asked to look at preparation and planning by State, local governments and the community and response to the event including measures taken to inform the community, protect life and public property and the management and provision of essential services.

I have also been asked to look at dam operations - in particular the Ross River Dam - and associated emergency procedures; the resourcing, overall coordination and deployment of personnel and equipment; and other matters which may be considered relevant such as planning and building codes.

As part of this review, we have engaged a key market research company to undertake comprehensive public surveying around the event, and a leading consultancy with specialty expertise in engineering and hydrology to provide expert analysis and advice to inform the review.

Meanwhile, work on the 2018 Queensland Bushfires Review has been progressing strongly.



Iain MacKenzie at the Ross River Dam

As many of you already know, this particular review is looking at the effectiveness of preparedness activity and response to the devastating bushfires late last year.

Broadly, the review is focussing on key aspects of preparedness and response such as the functioning of disaster management groups, public information and warnings, and the extent to which bushfire risk is understood within government and the wider community.

To ensure my Office captures a broad range of public and stakeholder comment on the fires, members of the IGEM team have already attended as many public meetings and group and local debriefs as possible.

And in the same vein as the 2019 Monsoon Trough Rainfall and Flood Review, we have engaged a leading market research company to undertake a comprehensive survey of people from three of the key bushfire-affected areas of the State.

I was also particularly pleased to see 75 public and stakeholder submissions lodged with my Office on various aspects of the bushfires.

We are in the process of analysing the significant volume of evidence and data collected and will finalise the review in coming months.

As the Premier noted in Parliament, such reviews will now become standard business for my Office in the wake of future major disaster and hazard events.

Mount Isa District Capability Review Update

Recent significant rain and flooding events in the Mount Isa District will provide a strong platform for my Office to continue the review of disaster management capability in the Mount Isa District.

By way of background to newer readers of *IGEM Connect*, my Office over recent years has initiated a program of capability reviews across selected disaster districts in Queensland to assess the ability of groups within districts to deliver effective disaster management outcomes, measured against the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland. Previous reviews have focussed on Townsville and Mackay and a pilot in Warwick.



Flooding at Julia Creek, in the shire of McKinlay. Photo courtesy of the Salvation Army.

My Office began the Mount Isa District Review last year, focussing on the Mount Isa District Disaster Management Group and local disaster management groups in Boulia, Burke, Carpentaria, Cloncurry, Diamantina, Doomadgee, McKinlay, Mount Isa, and Mornington Island.

The Mount Isa review is particularly challenging as the district makes up more than 21% of Queensland's geographic size. Consequently, this involves issues such as remoteness and a slightly different resilience context than some other districts in Queensland.

The review has included a deliberately scheduled suspension over summer and will recommence after the Wet Season.

Consistent with previous reviews, the capability review will not make an assessment on past performance but rather focus on strengths and development areas in the context of the anticipated future risk environment, specifically within the Mount Isa Disaster District.

An integrated improvement strategy will be developed as part of the capability review.

EMAF Refresh Update

The refreshed Emergency Management Assurance Framework (EMAF) and Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland have been put out for a final round of consultation.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with this project, my Office is seeking to refresh the Framework to ensure it remains contemporary; it enhances supporting tools such as the Prioritisation Tool; highlights gaps and amendments from lessons identified; and refreshes the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland.

To achieve this, we established a number of technical working groups to provide advice on specific elements of the Framework, with each technical working group comprising a broad range of representatives and content experts from State agencies, local government, government owned corporations, not-for-profit and non-government organisations.

Workshops involving all technical working groups were undertaken, along with further consultation involving content experts from across the State and all tiers of government and the NGO sector. Involving approximately 100 stakeholders, this consultation provided invaluable input and technical expertise to ensure the Standard and the Framework remain relevant and accessible for the sector.

To give you some idea of the overall scope of stakeholder involvement and input, the process has involved more than 1000 hours of participation while in excess of 9000 line items of feedback have been incorporated into the refreshed Standard and EMAF.

This extraordinary amount of stakeholder input really does ensure this sector-driven piece of policy will be relevant and of value to the sector going forward.

In the near future, we will be seeking its full endorsement and progress to publication to provide the sector time to become familiar in its application.

We will then develop an accompanying suite of tools and resources to support those working in the sector to apply the Standard in their daily work.

Again, my thanks to all of those who have worked so hard to bring the project to this point.

Disaster Management Officer's Network Forum

The Gold Coast will host the 2019 Disaster Management Officer's Network Forum.

After previous successful forums at Cairns, Mackay and Townsville, the forum will this year move south to Surfers Paradise between May 1-3.

We are expecting more than 50 disaster management officers and local disaster coordinators from across the State along with a number of contributing State, media and agency representatives.

Focussing on an overall theme of "Beyond the Horizon", a dedicated working group is currently finalising this year's program which will centre around session themes including risk management in local government, resilience at a local level, spontaneous volunteerism, and technology in disaster management.

We hope to have the program finalised very shortly but in the interim I have written to Local Disaster Management Group chairs encouraging participation in the event by relevant staff. In the meantime, information is available from Phil Nickerson on 0431 500 909 or at phil.nickerson@igem.qld.gov.au

I'd like to take this opportunity of thanking the working group of Klynt Oberto (Brisbane), Chris Barnes (Moreton), Alicia Palmer (Whitsunday), Sarah Cannon (Gold Coast), Ian Fell and Sioux Campbell (Cairns), Matt Pinder (Ipswich), and Mike Lollback (LGAQ) for their assistance in working with staff from my Office to develop and deliver this year's program.

Disaster Management Plan Assessments

The consultation process for the Disaster Management Plan Assessments discussion paper has now been completed.

Thank you to all of you who provided my Office with feedback. We are in the process of carefully considering this feedback and are now progressing towards finalisation of the paper.

And for any new readers of *IGEM Connect*, can I encourage you to have a look at my Office's new perspective on disaster management plan assessments this year through the Analysis Dashboard.

The Analysis Dashboard combines the last three years of disaster management plan self-assessment results with a number of other variables such as population, local government revenue, and disaster activation data.

You can access the Analysis Dashboard online 9am to 5pm every day, via the [IGEM Collaboration Zone](#).

IGEM International Women's Day Award recognises Champions of Change

It was my honour recently to present Champion of Change awards to two outstanding women within the disaster management sphere.

As part of International Women's Day, Australian Red Cross-National Projects Officer Elyshia Ray won the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management Champion of Change Award for her work in ensuring community members and those who assist during times of disaster are well equipped to face the challenges of domestic and family violence.

This work has included a joint project with my Office implementing the Gender and Emergency Management Guidelines in Queensland. A large part of this work has been undertaken in an unpaid, voluntary capacity.

This year we also gave a Highly Commended Award to recognise the exemplary work of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Emergency Management Coordinator for Mackay, Carla Adams.

Carla has a lengthy history of encouraging and supporting women in the sector, particularly through mentoring and leading by example.

Bestowing these awards has always been one of the highlights of the year for me, particularly, when the winners are such worthy recipients such as Elyshia and Carla. My congratulations to you both.



Carla Adams, Iain MacKenzie & Elyshia Ray

Lessons Management Program Update

Can I say how encouraging it is to see lessons management increasingly being adopted as a central standard facet of reviews in Queensland.

As you are aware, my Office has been tasked by Fire and Emergency Services Minister Craig Crawford to undertake reviews into the devastating bushfires in Queensland in late 2018 and the monsoon trough rainfall and flooding event in North Queensland earlier this year.

Key in the tasking of both reviews was a request by Minister Crawford that each review identify lessons from each event which will form continuous improvement in Queensland's disaster management arrangements into the future.

In attending numerous debriefs surrounding these events, it has become apparent to me that lessons management is increasingly also being proactively enshrined at the local and agency levels as a necessary step in the debrief and learning process for each event. A note of caution here though. Not all lessons are good practice that should be shared. If we are to really learn from our experience, then we must grow in maturity in our approach to learning from mistakes. Disaster management is a high profile, high-risk complex system. We must adopt the honesty, transparency and culture of other such systems, such as aviation and health, and their approaches to ensure the best possible outcomes for the communities they serve. That will take time, and moral courage from leaders to embrace that cultural change. I firmly believe, though, that it is a journey we must take.

For both the bushfire and monsoon reviews, lessons identified will be documented, analysed and shared as part of the review process. During each review we will look for opportunities to test and validate contemporary lessons management processes which will inform the further development of a system-wide lessons management program.

We look forward to your continued involvement and contribution to the lessons management Program in the future. Meanwhile, my Office attended the most recent meeting of the IGEM Assurance Collaborative in Sydney where we shared Queensland's innovative and agile approach to lessons management, which has developed significantly over the past eight months.

The collaborative is made up of agencies from Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and New Zealand and is designed to promote and shares best practice in emergency management assurance capability.

My Office will continue to play a pivotal in the development of lessons management at a national level.

Research Framework Progress

The Research Advisory Panel (RAP) continues to go from strength to strength with the third meeting held in late February.

The latest meeting was attended by representatives from the seven Queensland-based universities, State agencies and local disaster management officers.

With the Terms of Reference previously endorsed, the focus for this meeting was the research mapping and gap analysis work my Office is undertaking on behalf of the RAP.

We are using the Sendai Framework to map research already underway, gaps and priorities from the sector, and capture of picture of the extensive DM research skills and expertise right here in Queensland. The RAP endorsed the use of Sendai to guide this work and the mapping completed so far.

The range and depth of researchers in Queensland is tremendous and the Disaster Management Research Framework is allowing us to start conversations, build relationships and linkages between the sectors and across universities.

The Research and Engagement Team within IGEM will work with the RAP members, and broader DM sector, over the next few months and present a more detailed gap analysis in June. If you have any questions or would like to talk about DM research, please contact Dr Allison Rifai on 3029 8812.

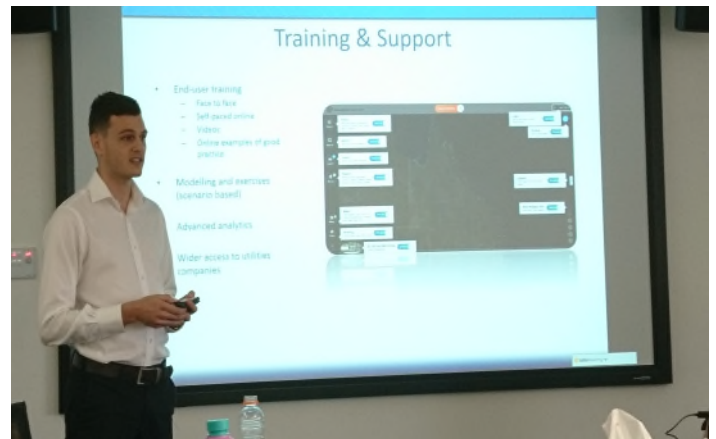
IGEM/QUT Intern Project Update

Current and potential uses of GIS by local governments across Preparation Prevention Response and Recovery (PPRR) formed the basis of the project for the 2018-19 IGEM/QUT intern project.

Driven by intern Mitchell Oxley under the guidance of IGEM’s research lead Dr Allison Rifai, the project arose out of a desire by disaster management officers to explore the topic further across the PPRR spectrum. The EMAF and recent reviews conducted by IGEM also highlighted the important role data plays before during and after an event.

Mitch’s project focused on three key questions:

- How extensively GIS is being used by local disaster managers in Queensland?
- What GIS platforms are being used?
- How GIS is being used across PPRR?



Mitch Oxley at the presentation

Through desktop reviews, phone interviews and a local government survey, Mitch found:

- The majority of local governments in Queensland have some GIS capabilities
- GIS is being used across PPRR, with more use during planning and operations, less for community engagement
- There is a broad range of spatial platforms available to and used by local government
- Data context and custodianship are important, and
- More resources to support training are required

His findings were presented in a seminar in February “Mapping the Landscape, GIS in Local Disaster Management”, attended by local and state agencies and representatives from QUT.

Moving forward, the Office of the IGEM will continue to help link local governments with the QFES teams working on the Data Sharing Initiative and the QERMF Platform and incorporate GIS into the Disaster Management Research Framework.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Many of you will have received an email with a link inviting you to participate in my Office’s annual customer satisfaction survey.

The survey is seeking the views of State and Local Government disaster and emergency management stakeholders about our services and activities and the results will help us drive service improvements, stay customer focussed and build a strong service culture.

As a valued stakeholder, your views are important to us and we would greatly appreciate receiving your feedback.

I know that this has been, and continues to be, an extremely busy time for many of you and in response we have shortened our survey this year. For most of you it should only take 5-10 minutes to complete.

We have again commissioned Kantar Public, an independent market research company, to conduct the survey, so please look out for an email from Kantar this month with a link to the survey.

Moving on from the Inspector-General Role

And finally, I need to advise that I have told Fire and Emergency Services Minister Craig Crawford that I will be going on leave on June 30 and not returning to the Inspector-General role.

This has been a very difficult decision for me to make, particularly when I reflect on some of the significant achievements over the past five years, including:

- The collaborative development of the Emergency Management Assurance Framework including the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland – the first such standard in Australia.
- The establishment of the Disaster Management Officer's Network which now involves 98 officers from 55 councils
- The establishment of the Lessons Management Program
- Completion or commencement of key reviews on events including Tropical Cyclone Debbie, the Callide Creek flood, North Queensland floods, Queensland bushfires, Seqwater and Sunwater's warning and public information, and program of capability reviews across Queensland districts
- The development of the Queensland Disaster Management Lexicon
- The establishment of the Queensland Research Framework and associated Research Advisory Panel.
- The development of the Emergency Management Prioritisation Tool.

I have loved every minute of my time in the role and I am proud at how we have been able to work so closely with stakeholders across all sectors and levels of government.

It is this close collaboration with stakeholders that has allowed us to collectively achieve so much and ensure disaster management arrangements are much stronger and more effective than they were five years ago.

In the interim I will be working strongly to ensure our two current bushfire and flood reviews are successfully delivered and that the new Inspector-General has the best possible foundation on which to take the work of my office to the next level.

Until next time.

Iain MacKenzie

Inspector-General Emergency Management

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