

# IGEM *Connect*

Inspector-General Emergency Management

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Welcome to the latest and my last edition of *IGEM Connect*.

After the challenges of the 2018 severe heatwave and bushfires and record flooding at the start of 2019 it is pleasing that things have now quietened down on the disaster front. However, as we all know this is not a time to be complacent. This is a time to prepare for the next challenge that lies ahead, look to making improvements where needed and sharing those things that worked particularly well.

In the last edition I mentioned the two large bodies of work the Office was undertaking. This being the 2018 Queensland Bushfires Review and the 2019 Monsoon Trough Rainfall and Flood Review.

I am pleased to advise that the Bushfires Review has been delivered to the Fire and Emergency Services Minister Craig Crawford and is waiting on a whole-of-government response to be provided. The Monsoon Review is not far behind having just recently been delivered to the Minister.

These two emergent reviews have certainly been a very challenging time for the Office. To our stakeholders that contributed to these reports and who made their time available to the review teams I want to say a big thank you.



Iain MacKenzie - 2019 DMO Network forum

Although at this stage I can't say much about the detail of these reviews. They reveal the strength and capability of Queensland's disaster management arrangements to meet the challenges of events of this nature. Importantly, these reviews also identified where lessons learnt through earlier events had been successfully applied. The reports reflect the great work the sector has been doing and positions the sector well for the future.

Talking of the future, I'm sure that many of you know that I am soon to move on from the role of IGEM to pursue some new challenges.

So, this will be the last *IGEM Connect* from me as the IGEM. Therefore, I would like to briefly reflect on my time as IGEM and how the sector has grown.

Some of my highlights include:

- Implementation of the Standard for Disaster Management and Emergency Management Assurance Framework which was developed by the sector for the sector.
- Establishment of the DMO Network and seeing the collaboration between local governments and changes that have resulted.
- The many reviews my Office has undertaken and more importantly how many of the adopted recommendations have made significant improvements to the community, such as the 2015 Callide Creek Flood Review.
- Travelling the breadth of the State many times over and getting the chance to meet and listen to many of you and sharing your passion.

I'm also very excited about some of the new initiatives underway that I think will have significant benefits in shaping the sector in the future, including:

- the Lessons Management Program
- the Research Framework, and the
- updated Standard for Disaster Management.

On that note the Office has just released our [Strategic Plan 2019-23](#) refining our strategic objectives over the coming years.

### Disaster Management Officer's Network Forum

Early in May, the fourth annual Disaster Management Officer's Network Forum was co-hosted with the City of Gold Coast at Surfers Paradise.

This year's event drew 75 participants, including 60 Disaster Management Officers and Local Disaster Coordinators from 36 councils across Queensland (including John Wharton, Mayor of Richmond Shire, Eileen Deemal-Hall, CEO of Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council and Stretch Noonan, Deputy Chair of Weipa Town Authority).

This annual forum is a critical component of the broader Disaster Management Officer's Network which seeks to enhance capability at the local level through better collaboration, resource, idea and knowledge exchange and the sharing of good practice.

As with past forums, this year's program was mainly delivered by the DMOs themselves around the theme of 'Beyond the Horizon'.



*Participants at this year's DMO Network Forum at Surfers Paradise*

Some of this year's highlights included:

- a heartfelt keynote address from Mayor John Wharton (Richmond Shire Council) on supporting his community during the recent monsoon trough flood event,

- drawing on the resilience at the heart of the Wujal Wujal community through their recent innovation connecting everyone to a wireless communication system enabling everyone to play a part in disaster management, and
- Aboriginal Traditional Owners from North Stradbroke Island sharing their approach to traditional cultural burning practices for effective fire and land management.

I'd like to congratulate this year's DMO Forum working group on delivering such an outstanding event this year.

### Mount Isa Capability Review Update

I wrote last time about the importance of the Mount Isa District review, and the challenges of covering such a large part of the State. As our current review activity winds up, the team is assessing the best way to blend the knowledge gained from recent events with the aims of the capability review process.

For new readers, these capability reviews do not make an assessment on past performance, but rather focus on strengths and development areas in the context of the anticipated future risk environment for Queensland communities. The outcome is an integrated improvement strategy for the district, developed as part of the review process.

### EMAF Refresh Update

I am now confident that, following extensive consultation, we have arrived at a final version of the refreshed Emergency Management Assurance Framework and the now separate Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland. Both are in the process of receiving Government endorsement.

The Framework now makes provision for other Standards, such as the Queensland Disaster Management Lexicon – a Standard for common language within the sector. The Office is planning a phased approach to transition to the refreshed Standard for Disaster Management.

As an important part of the transition, the Office will consult with end users in the sector about the transition process. The Office will consider your experience in applying the Framework and Standard, and what tools will help you apply the Standard best. Refreshed tools and resources will follow.

I have written separately to Directors-General, informing them of progress and the proposed process for transition. I encourage future engagement with the Office as the sector makes this important transition.

### Disaster Management Plan Assessments

The Disaster Management Plan Assessments discussion paper has now been finalised and is on the Collaboration Zone. It concluded that the method for assessing plans over the past four years has probably run its course. Last year over 50% took the option to use previous years results and the overall average plateaued at a high 'well-placed' level.

This year we looked at how a sample of plans had changed since 2014. All plans had changed over time. All but one had increased in size, some significantly, others only marginally. The plans that appeared to the Office as most improved had increased only marginally or been cut back – an indication that quantity does not always equal quality or effectiveness.

This year we are in the process of canvassing how council and districts legislative responsibilities are best

discharged. If you have any ideas, please get in touch. The new EMAF and Standard once fully in place, will guide further thoughts on this important aspect of assurance.

For more information please go to the [IGEM Collaboration Zone](#).

### Lessons Management Program Update

Lessons continue to be an important part of the Office's work, as it moves from a review-focused period to the next phase in its contribution to disaster management.

Recent reviews have again shown the importance of retaining past experience, whilst ensuring that this does not prevent us from adopting new techniques and approaches as they emerge. All are examples of lessons that we need to learn and pass on.

In the next months the Office is progressing our part in this, participating nationally in forums that focus on what we have collectively learned. We will be well represented at the AFAC Lessons Forum and annual workshop in Sydney in July, and at the Australian Evaluation Society's Annual Conference in September.

This second event gives me the opportunity to highlight an emerging and important aspect of the Office's work. Over the past five years we have made a number of recommendations. It is important for us to evaluate the effectiveness of such interventions. Have they made the difference we heard was important? Have they had any unintended consequences? Could they be better framed to achieve intended outcome?

In addition to the Lessons Management Framework, the lessons team have been charged this year with developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. This will help the sector look back at what we have delivered and learned. This space continues to be at the forefront of our thinking and activities. As always, the Office looks forward to your continued involvement and contribution in this area.

### White Ribbon

The last months have seen the Office reinforce its commitment to White Ribbon - Australia's campaign to prevent men's violence against women. For me, this is a doubly important issue, not only due to the increasing number of women playing a valuable role in the disaster management sector but also, as research has shown, relationship violence increases in the wake of disasters.

For the third year running, staff from the Office took part in the Darkness to Daylight vigil and challenge. The Darkness to Daylight challenge was created as a 110km run with each kilometre symbolising the 110 lives lost to domestic and family violence. The challenge is held annually at South Bank Parklands during May which is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month.

Participants can run the full 110km individually or take on the challenge as a team. Personally, I was glad of the alternatives; a 10km or 3km run in the morning. The shorter distances this year enabled over 2,000 people to take part - a growing number for this important cause.

In addition to the Darkness to Daylight Challenge, the Office has also supported the RizeUp 'At Home' Program. RizeUp Australia is a community-driven organisation of passionate men and women, dedicated to supporting families affected by domestic and family violence.

The RizeUp 'At Home' Program provides practical support by creating a new fully furnished home for victims who are fleeing a violent household, sometimes with no more than the clothes they're wearing, raising much needed

funds for families and by supporting children in their healing process.

The Office first contributed the kind of things we take for granted in our homes, and then helped put them there. Over the course of a morning, IGEM staff helped 'move in' a truck load of furniture and goods, to a barren property, transforming it into a purposefully-created home specific to a particular families' need.

This Office is very committed to our White Ribbon accreditation and to ensuring our place of work continues to uphold the highest standards of a safe environment for women.



An inviting home for a family in crisis

## Research Framework Progress

It is full steam ahead for the Disaster Management Research Framework following the fourth meeting of the Research Advisory Panel (RAP) on 11 June. Representatives from the seven Queensland-based universities,

State agencies and local disaster management officers were joined by representatives from James Cook University and the University of the Sunshine Coast, who have joined both the RAP and Research Community of Practice.



The Research Advisory Panel (RAP) from left to right (back row): Stacey McInnes (HPW), Dr Bishna Bajracharya (Bond Uni), Nancy Spencer (Griffith), Daniel Porsbro-Pederson (DCDSS), Dr Helen Keen-Dyer (CQU), Victoria Dodds (BoM), Matt Dyer (QFES), Mike Lollback (LGAQ), Associate Professor Cheryl Desha (Griffith), Nicola Moore (IGEM), Mike Shapland (IGEM), (front row): Professor Cordia Chu (Griffith), Dr Allison Rifai (IGEM), Iain MacKenzie (IGEM), Major General Richard Wilson (QRA), Associate Professor Amisha Mehta (QUT), Phil Nickerson (IGEM). (Members not pictured include: Alicia Palmer (Whitsunday Regional Council), Luke Connery (City of Gold Coast), Emma Da Silva (DTMR) and Georgia Voustis (DPC), Steve Jacoby (DNRM), Dr Peter Aitken and Jo Dyson (QHealth) Professor Peter Leggat (JCU), Dr Alan Dale (JCU), DR David Henderson (JCU); Dr Jo Durham (QUT), Dr Alastair Stark (UQ) and Dr Luke Van Der Laan (USQ)).

existing knowledge and develop collaborative projects addressing needs of coal-face practitioners.

The four groups will look at: understanding disaster risk; strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk; investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience; and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

This meeting focussed on results from the research mapping and gap analysis work my Office has been undertaking on behalf of the RAP. We are using the Sendai Framework to map research already underway, identify gaps and priorities from the sector and policy environments. The depth and breadth of disaster and emergency management researchers in Queensland is extensive. We have over 150 researchers in our Register, with many more being engaged through the mapping exercise.

The Research and Engagement Team within IGEM will continue to build the Research Community of Practice and work with the RAP members, and broader DM sector, over the next few months to progress four Working Groups to share

We continue to welcome and seek your participation in the DMRF. You can provide your thoughts, ideas and perspectives on research in disaster management via the following online form:



- Using this [link](#), or
- Using this QR code

If you have any questions, would like to join a working group or talk about DM research, please contact Dr Allison Rifai on (07 3029 8812 or [Allison.Rifai@igem.qld.gov.au](mailto:Allison.Rifai@igem.qld.gov.au))

[Click here to read more about research in action.](#)

### 2019 Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

During March and April this year, we invited our disaster management partners and stakeholders to participate in our annual customer satisfaction survey.

The Office values this feedback and appreciates the time taken by you to complete the survey each year.

Overall, the Office achieved a customer satisfaction rating of 83%. This is higher than that achieved in 2018 of 81% and exceeds the Office's performance target of 80%. The Office's ability to be helpful, supportive and display a cooperative approach was a key reason for customer satisfaction.

Satisfaction with staff of the Office also continues to be extremely high, with nine in ten respondents satisfied that staff were professional (94%), approachable (91%) and knowledgeable (84%) in 2019.

My Office is committed to continuous improvement and the results have been shared with staff. Actions to be taken in response to survey findings will be aligned to our Operational Plan 2019–20 and Workforce Strategy 2019–23.

Staff confirmed the value of ongoing stakeholder engagement in all aspects of our work in supporting excellence in emergency management. They have acknowledged that more work can be done to ensure that information and advice provided helps improve our customers' business. This metric decreased from 75% in 2018 to 67% in 2019.

Consistent with 2018 results, 68% of respondents agreed that they are keen to understand the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland (the Standard) more and apply it to their work.

Thank you once again to all who took the time to complete the survey.

## Final Comments

And wrapping up I'm very pleased to welcome Alistair Dawson from the Queensland Police Service into the temporary role as IGEM until the position is permanently filled. Alistair has a wealth of disaster management experience and I am sure many of you will know him from his extensive work across the sector.

Alistair won't be alone. He will be supported by 21 staff, with over 130 years' of accumulated experience in disaster management. This experience extends over many other state government and commonwealth departments, NGO's, the private sector and local government.

I'm proud to be leaving the sector in a strong position and the Office in good hands.

Wishing you all the best.

I'm sure we will cross paths in the future.

**Iain MacKenzie**

**Inspector-General Emergency Management**

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

## Research Continued

### RESEARCH IN ACTION: LINKING LOCAL FOOD NETWORKS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN TIMES OF NEED (GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY)

Extreme weather is intensifying, and food supply chains have been interrupted in past events and at times challenged our collective food security. We know that communities that share responsibility for their own resilience are known to bounce back better from adversity.

Dr Kim Reis and Associate Professor Cheryl Desha, Griffith University, in collaboration with the disaster management sector will contribute to the creation of a connected network of local food champions, which has been identified as a critical need to support existing emergency service roles. The central question is: “How do we use smart technology to enable community spirit to effectively form the backbone of food-related disaster resilience?”

The project is developing an online platform for contingency-based local food procurement and distribution during and following severe weather events that affect normal supply. IGEM is supporting the facilitation of the network through Basecamp.

Dr Reis recently presented the project at the Australia and New Zealand Disaster Management Conference on the Gold Coast and will shortly travel to the Norway to present at an international working group on *Imagining Better Food Futures*. Keep an eye out for an upcoming article in the Australian Journal of Emergency Management as well. If you would like to join the network or learn more about the project, please contact Dr Allison Rifai (Allison.Rifai@igem.qld.gov.au) or Dr Kim Reis (k.reis@griffith.edu.au)

### RESEARCH IN ACTION: IGEM PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS – IMPLEMENTING THE GENDER AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES IN QUEENSLAND

In 2016, The Gender and Disaster Pod developed the Gender and Emergency Management (GEM) Guidelines as a national best practice standard on the planning for and delivery of disaster relief and recovery with respect to sexual and gender-based violence. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is an umbrella term for any harmful act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to a man, woman, girl or boy on the basis of their gender.

Gender-based violence is a result of gender inequality and abuse of power, and it is known to increase significantly during times of disaster. Despite the prevalence and impact of SGBV, very little research has been conducted and little to no work has been done to prepare the Emergency Management sector. Active and immediate organisational change to increase awareness, promote effective identification and build clear referral pathways is imperative.

Acknowledging the significant and real-world impact SGBV has on community members, volunteers and staff, IGEM is collaborating with the Australian Red Cross, Emergency Services. The project will implement the GEM Guidelines within Queensland, embed the GEM principles and training resources into existing Red Cross curriculum, governance and operating procedures to help volunteers and frontline responders to identify and support victims of disaster-related domestic and family violence and inform further conversation and projects, to build an EM culture that is compassionate, inclusive and equipped with gender-sensitive evidence-based practice.



Work so far has focused on educating the Emergency Management Sector on disaster-related violence with presentations to the Australian Army, Harvard University, the World Association of Emergency and Disaster Medicine conference, the Australian and New Zealand Disaster Management Conference and the Humanitarian Advisory Board.

Phase one of the project is due for completion in November 2019. We are very lucky to have the team behind the development of the GEM Guidelines as part of the project working group. For further information on the project, please contact Dr Allison Rifai on (07) 3029 8812 or [Allison.Rifai@igem.qld.gov.au](mailto:Allison.Rifai@igem.qld.gov.au), or Ms Elyshia Ray on (07) 3367 4778 or [eray@redcross.org.au](mailto:eray@redcross.org.au).



The GEM Project Team about to facilitate the Gender and Disasters Workshop at the recent WADEM Congress on Disaster and Emergency Medicine, Brisbane, 2019. Left to right: Ms Jaspreet Kaur and Dr Debra Parkinson from Gender and Disaster POD; Ms Elyshia Ray and Mr Collin Sivalingum from Australian Red Cross; Inspector-General Iain MacKenzie; Ms Helen Riseborough from Gender and Disaster POD; and Dr Allison Rifai from IGEM.0