



WADEM Oceania Newsletter - March 2019

Hello and welcome to the 1st WADEM Oceania Chapter Newsletter for 2019!

The aims of the Chapter are to implement the objectives of WADEM within the Oceania Region as applicable to the resources and needs of the Region. Members of the Chapter possess a region specific knowledge base of disasters and their prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery requirements. The Chapter provides a means to advocate for ensuring that region specific disaster requirements are being properly understood and addressed.

Objectives

The objectives of the Chapter are to promote:

- Education and training opportunities to advance the professionalism of the humanitarian workforce;
- Interpretation and exchange of information through a network of members and publications;
- Development and maintenance of evidence-based standards of emergency and disaster health care and provision of leadership for integration into practice;
- Coordination of data collection and provision of direction in the development of standardized disaster assessment and research/evaluation methodologies;
- Encouragement of publications and presentation of evidence-based research findings in scientific publications, national, regional, and international conferences and congresses;
- Increased credibility for the members of the organization on a global, national, and local level;
- Increased membership and promotion of WADEM; and
- Ongoing development and improvement of emergency and disaster health management in the community.

Our committee members are:

Joe Cuthbertson (Chair)	Erin Smith (Deputy Chair)
Penny Burns	Caroline Spencer
Rowena Christiansen	Vivienne Tippet
Peter Aitken	Graeme McColl
Sandra Richardson	Sonia Morshead

Co-opted members:

Thompson Telepo	Alison Hutton
Skip Burkle	Hendro Wartatmo

If you'd like to recommend colleagues to join the Chapter, please invite them to contact the Chair at - jcuthbertson@wadem.org.

More information can be found on our Chapter website, in previous newsletters, and our blog. You can also follow and contribute to our posts and conversations on [Twitter](#) (@WADEM_PDM), on [LinkedIn](#), and on [Facebook](#) via the WADEM page.

Oceania Disaster Updates

One disaster has been recorded on the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) EM-DAT international disaster database for the year of 2019 thus far, affecting the Marshall Islands.

Disasters in Oceania: 2019 YTD

Disaster Type	Country Name	Occurrence	Total deaths	Injured	Affected
Storm	Marshall Islands	1			

Created on: March 6, 2019

D. Guha-Sapir, R. Below, Ph. Hoyois - EM-DAT: The CRED/OFDA International Disaster Database – www.emdat.be – Université Catholique de Louvain – Brussels – Belgium.

The Marshall islands and other low lying coral atoll nations face significant disaster risk challenges associated with climate change and sea level rise. A national plan for climate change adaptation has been developed by the government of The Marshall Islands who recognise the challenges they face to ensure the survival of their nation.

The review of 2018 Disaster events by CRED can be accessed here: [2018 Disaster events](#). In 2018, there were 281 climate-related and geophysical events resulting in 10,733 deaths and greater than 60 million people affected. Of note the Oceania region and our close neighbours continue to experience significant impacts from disaster events with Indonesia recording nearly half the total global deaths from disasters in 2018. Some of our Indonesian colleagues are currently deployed to Palu in response to 2018 disasters. This

highlights the ongoing need to maintain responses and support to affected populations to major disasters long after the actual event.

**21st WADEM Congress on Disaster and Emergency Medicine
7 -10 May 2019 - Brisbane, Australia**

2019 is an important year in Disaster Health practice for our region as we are hosting the 21st WADEM Congress on Disaster and Emergency Medicine. The excellent work of the organising committee has already achieved confirmation of all keynote speakers, over 500 registrations and over 400 papers accepted across oral presentations and posters.

As a chapter we hope to see research and members in Oceania well represented within the program, and we encourage as many Chapter members to attend and participate as possible. Members of the Oceania Chapter will be involved in chairing sessions. We will also be asking members of the Chapter to help with the Legacy statements by co-chairing those working groups.

The [Congress program](#) will be available on the congress website as soon as it is finalised.

**Listen, don't tell. Hear, don't presume. Respond, only if locally relevant.
Link response to the local effort to make it sustainable.**

These statements are the guiding principles for the Oceania Chapter session at the Brisbane Congress.

To facilitate this we are running a dedicated 90 minute Oceania Chapter session at the Congress on **Thursday, 9 May 2019** from **13:30-15:00** exploring Volcano Impact in Oceania. The aim of the session is to explore how Volcano disaster risk and impact affects populations in Oceania; the objective of the session is to promote an improved attitude in engaging communities in disaster risk reduction and response. This will involve presenters from across the Oceania region and conclude with a panel session titled "The Voices of Oceania." We encourage as many chapter members as possible to attend, support and participate in this session

At each Congress our Chapter takes the opportunity for attending members to meet face to face and provide information of upcoming activities and future planning. In the lead up to this, a communication will be circulated to members of where and when this meeting will occur.

Current Issues and Opportunities

The New Zealand Government is currently developing a new National Disaster Resilience Strategy, which was released for consultation. The document is available at:

https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/PAP_84937/5f64afb39838f03b43f943b88cb5d397e199b422.

Long-Term Disaster Resilience Report (Australia)

Launched in Wangaratta on 22 February 2019 by Senator Linda Reynolds, then Assistant Minister for Home Affairs, on behalf of Women's Health Goulburn North East, Women's Health in the North, and Monash University Disaster Resilience Initiative, the Long-term Disaster Resilience Report identifies what helps and hinders individual and community resilience in disasters. It documents the experiences and wisdom of 56 disaster survivors nine years after the 2009 Black Saturday fires and up to 50 years after earlier fires and floods in Victoria, including the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires. The purpose of the research was to identify how individuals and communities understand the risk to long-term health and wellbeing that disaster experience brings, and how to promote resilience over decades.

Resilience may be a mix of individual characteristics, intersections of privilege, and the legacy of a lifetime's experience. It is equally a twist of fate, and the difference between surviving with resilience, and not, appears to lie outside the survivors themselves. In acknowledging that long-term resilience is premised on effective disaster prevention and management, it sits with government to provide expert advice on areas of safe human habitation, and after disaster to promptly re-establish essential services. It sits with Australian women, men and children – led by those involved in emergency management– to engage in explicit discussions of gendered expectations, realistic expectations of government services, and human rights in the disaster context.

Underpinning resilience is the central importance of empathy and kindness. To view this report and the Literature Review that underpins the report and the Executive Summary, please visit -

<https://www.genderanddisaster.com.au/info-hub/long-term-disaster-recovery/>.

Congratulating Oceania Member Diana Wong

Diana Wong has successfully completed her PhD journey with MUDRI. Congratulations to Diana whose thesis called "Development and Validation of a Comprehensive Framework for Disaster Evaluation Typologies", was accepted for the award of PhD at the end of February. A job well done!

How You Can Get involved

We have a number of objectives that we wish to achieve in our section and underpin this with an operational plan. We would like to gain your support and input in achievement of these, and furthermore, would like to know how we can assist you in your endeavours.

[WADEM Podcasts](#): We have a 'call out' for anyone interested in talking to me about their work for a WADEM Podcast, with a particular focus on practical aspects of work in disaster emergency nursing - such as lessons learnt.

Feedback to - alison.hutton@newcastle.edu.au.

Feedback

Thank you for your interest in our Chapter, if you have any suggestions or questions please contact us as below.

Material is welcome for any of the sections listed in the Newsletter, or under a new category, if that is appropriate. Personal experiences, case and research reports are especially welcome; material is welcome from WADEM members and even nonmembers internationally.

Feedback to - jcuthbertson@wadem.org.

Disclaimer

The comments, opinions, and material in this Newsletter are those of the respective authors and not necessarily those of WADEM or the WADEM Oceania Chapter.