



## **OCEANIA NEWSLETTER**

### **August 2014**

#### **WELCOME!!!**

Since the last newsletter the provision of humanitarian aid has been of concern world-wide, sadly mainly required because of warfare or violence. The difficulties in providing such aid in middle east conflicts, body recovery operations in the Ukraine following the downing of Malaysians Airlines MH17, the Iraq/Syria internal conflicts, and now the Ebola outbreak in various African states, are immense.

The body recovery in the Ukraine was brought home to me by a family member being involved as part of an Australian team sent to the area to carry out this unpleasant task. While thoughts are frequently with those affected by loss of relatives on the flight or coping with the horrific cleanup, those likely to be forgotten are those living in the affected area. People in that area of the Ukraine are subsistence farmers and their biggest concerns are producing enough food from year to year, they want no part of the warfare. Just think of the affect on them of bodies falling from the sky, into the school grounds, through the roofs of houses, into paddocks of crops. Support and counselling is being provided to relatives of victims and response teams, but I seriously doubt anything is being done for the residents of the area. In the meantime the war rages around them.

The Ebola outbreak establishes different problems in that many of those volunteers who are providing aid are now becoming infected and dying as a result. Could this deadly disease reach Oceania; never say never given the ease and frequency of travel. I'm sure most of us would know of someone visiting or recently visited Africa, what would/could we do if they returned infected. Hopefully health authorities have discussed how to organise a response.

An interesting take on 'recovery' has been published in a newsletter from the Lyttelton Port Company (Christchurch's Port). They describe the process as one of 'repair', initially temporary and then permanent, 'rebuild', that which can't be repaired with the aim of enhancing what existed before. That is all very well for facilities and infrastructure, but how does it apply to people? In health we can certainly 'repair' physical injuries and maintain health services to do this. By rebuilding and restoring housing, facilities and infrastructure, providing support and care that rebuilds lives. Like the port company, there should be an overall aim of enhancing health services in the long term which would also enhance people's lives. Any thoughts or opinions on this would be appreciated.

Finally, Newsletter material, reports, news items, opinion/views and Coffee With contributions are required; requests for assistance with planning, study or projects will also be published. So please contribute.

Cheers  
**Graeme**

### **WADEM Oceania Chapter Newsletter Aims**

*The aims of the WADEM Oceania Chapter news letter are to:*

- *provide communication for regional members*
- *encourage a collegiate relationship amongst regional members*
- *update members on news and events such as health issues in the region*
- *provide a forum for discussion on emergency medicine/health issues*
- *give encouragement and support for research papers*
- *allow publication of basic case studies*
- *support exchange of information and work programmes*
- *publicise coming events*
- *support the aims and activities of WADEM within the region*

### **WADEM Oceania Chapter Newsletter Editorial Committee**

Graeme McColl	<a href="mailto:gmccoll@wadem.org">gmccoll@wadem.org</a>
Peter Aitken	<a href="mailto:Peter.aitken2@health.qld.gov.au">Peter.aitken2@health.qld.gov.au</a>
John Coleman	<a href="mailto:John.Coleman@siapo.health.nz">John.Coleman@siapo.health.nz</a>
Paul Arbon	<a href="mailto:Paul.arbon@flinders.edu.au">Paul.arbon@flinders.edu.au</a>
Thompson Telepo	<a href="mailto:ttelepo@ymail.com">ttelepo@ymail.com</a>
Joe Cuthbertson	<a href="mailto:joecuthbertson@hotmail.com">joecuthbertson@hotmail.com</a>
Caroline Spencer	<a href="mailto:caroline.spencer@monash.edu">caroline.spencer@monash.edu</a>
Sarah Weber	<a href="mailto:sarahweber@iinet.net.au">sarahweber@iinet.net.au</a>
Penny Burns	<a href="mailto:penny@sandyburns.com.au">penny@sandyburns.com.au</a>

### **OPINION PIECE**

In his editorial for the June 2014 Issue of *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*, Sam Stratton offered some informed comments on the 'Scientific Basis for Disaster Health and Medicine'.<sup>1</sup> (We will leave it for you to read the editorial in full, and recommend that you do so. The article provides food for thought!)

It is probably no coincidence, that when offering to prepare this opinion piece for the WADEM Oceania Newsletter, I (John) was thinking along related lines. However, I was looking at the issue from the perspective of an emergency management practitioner and, with valuable input from Caroline Spencer, address my comments to this group. Our clinical colleagues are way ahead of us on the issue of strengthening research evidence.

Stratton's opening statements describe what many of us seem to perpetuate, especially if we substitute "emergency management" for medicine.

*“It seems that there is an accepted disaster health and emergency management knowledge base that is based largely on opinions of those who have deemed themselves expert in disaster health, or based on descriptive experiences of some during disaster deployments.”*

For many emergency managers, research simply consists of finding something written elsewhere and uncritically copying it into our own documents. Attribution of the source is patchy at least and if it wasn't for the cooperative spirit in which this material is shared, plagiarism could be a major issue. Without the attribution of these sources, readers will find it impossible to assess the validity of the documents.

At the very least, we need to become more aware of our biases, as Stratton notes, and become more attentive to our approach to assessing or critiquing the emergency management material we use. By using a set of criteria to determine the strength of the evidence on which documents are based and, especially, attributing sources in a bibliography will strengthen our work. Similarly, taking heed of the most common problems that lead to the Journal rejecting papers enables emergency managers to strengthen and develop their capacity to make informed judgements about what they deem useful or not.

Once we start thinking about evidence and our approach to assessing the evidence, the next step becomes a lot easier. Emergency managers can start accumulating research-driven quality evidence which sets a benchmark for future work.

As Stratton's editorial makes clear, sharing evidence in formal publications ought not be difficult.

### **John Coleman and Caroline Spencer**

1. Stratton S (2014) Is There a Scientific Basis for Disaster Health and Medicine? Prehospital and Disaster Medicine, Volume 29, No 3.

## **EVENTS / PROJECTS / PROGRAMMES / RESEARCH / COURSES REPORTS**

### **Organisational Resilience website**

A new Australian Government website designed to strengthen organisational resilience in Australian Business and Industries has been launched. Organisational resilience is critical for business to be able to respond to short term shocks – such as natural disasters or significant changes in market dynamics – and take advantage of long-term trends and challenges. This new website is an important source of information for Australian businesses and individuals, and features the **Organisational Resilience HealthCheck** – a free tool to help respondents identify their organisation's resilience potential. The HealthCheck can assist you and your team develop a shared understanding of your organisation's progress towards resilience, and identify possible treatment actions. For more information and to undertake a HealthCheck, please visit

[www.organisationalresilience.gov.au](http://www.organisationalresilience.gov.au)

## OCEANIA REGION

The first online conference call of the Chapter Committee was held on 26 August. Organised by Joe Cuthbertson and facilitated by Caroline Spencer of Monash University.

Key points from this meeting.

### **Review of Oceania strategies and achievements**

Areas

- Research
- Education
- Communication

Develop an Operational Plan for the Strategic Initiatives – simple, achievable;  
Form small groups for each of the strategic areas to flesh these out.

Research Group:

Peter will facilitate a research group; members interested in being part of this should contact him.

Liaison for WADEM Oceania Chapter for WADEM Mentoring Program:

Graeme will act as single point of contact for those wanting assistance with planning research or study help. There will also be a newsletter segment to advertise for help wanted.

Mentorship locally: opportunity to link various education program students as well, which could be considered as part of research group discussions.

Communications Group:

How to: Means of best communicating with members will be explored.

Graeme will continue to facilitate Newsletter,

Add a section with links for students

Promotion of regional conferences

Opportunities for collaboration and awareness of research opportunities

### **Planning for 2015 (WCDEM)**

Aim for meeting at WCDEM

Watch on Ebola and potential impact on conference

### **Future WCDEM Oceania bid**

Discussion about possible sites and consensus WADEM Oceania bid.

Support for concept and prefer 2021 with preference for Sydney, Brisbane or GC.

Peter, Joe and Sarah will coordinate an application to host this conference.

***Members please let them know your preferences.***

**Next Meeting: Late October:**

Thank you to Caroline and Monash for hosting through Zoom.

Thanks to Joe for herding the cats and driving the meeting.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES & PROJECTS

### Online Research Repository

WADEM has developed an online Research Repository for members to access information about current disaster health research projects. Members are able to provide information about projects they are presently working on, as well as connect with other researchers around the world who are conducting similar types of research.

The Research Repository can be accessed by clicking on the following link –  
<http://research.wadem.org>

\*\*\*\*\*

Monash Disaster Resilience Forum  
Thursday 2 October 2014, 9am to 5pm

### **Risk, Reform, Resilience** **New thinking, new challenges**

Venue: Monash University Council Chambers  
Building 3A, Monash University, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton

#### **Forum Overview**

The passing of the *Emergency Management Act*, following significant reform and change within Victorian emergency management over the past five years, sees the appointment of the first Emergency Management Commissioner, and the first Inspector General of Emergency Management, and the establishment of Emergency Management Victoria (EMV).

This central risk-based system that extends to *resilience* and *consequence management* for managing all emergencies, operates before, during and after emergencies, giving reassurance to all Victorians.

The new scope shifts traditional thinking from risk and crisis contexts to the new *consequences* of an emergency. Victorian disasters of recent time demonstrates the harsh reality that people are dealing with 'consequences' long after the event. Many commonalities to the consequences of quite different kinds of emergencies exist, such as: widespread flooding; substantial fires; devastating earthquakes; people displaced from their homes; community services' breakdown; or the destruction of critical infrastructure, preventing communities from functioning.

'New' thinking, reflected in the *Interim Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan*, reinforces the perspective that the highest risks are not only those that are highly likely to happen but those that have the highest impact if they do. High impact represents long-term consequences for all affected.

The last MUDRI Forum in 2014 sets the scene with '**Cascading Crises**', and follows

with ***‘Risk Management or Consequence Management - are we all talking the same language?’*** ***‘Neighbourhoodness: community risk management’*** and ***‘Building a more resilient nation – policy and practical challenges’*** follow lunch. These sessions will address the interaction between the traditional and well-proven reliance on a risk and crisis management approach and the ‘new’ concepts of resilience and consequence management. Speakers will consider how the Victorian EM reform agenda incorporates these new principles and will identify challenges for Victoria’s new emergency management pathway.

**Contact** [caroline.spencer@monash.edu.au](mailto:caroline.spencer@monash.edu.au) for programme details and registration.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Visiting Scholar Presentation**

Tuesday 16 September,  
9.00am -- - 11.00am

Venue: Sturt Campus, Flinders University, Adelaide  
North Building Room: N001 (Staff and Function Room)

*“Experience with Disaster and Mass Gathering Research in Southern Brazil”*

By: **Dr Regina Rigatto Witt**

**Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul**

Dr. Regina Rigatto Witt is a nurse with a masters degree in Public Health and a PhD in Public Health Nursing. She is an Associate Professor at the School of Nursing – Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul. Her experience with teaching and research are on the following subjects: public health nursing, primary health care, professional competencies, nursing in disasters and mass gatherings.

Contact; [information@torrensresilience.org](mailto:information@torrensresilience.org)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **PEOPLE IN DISASTERS CONFERENCE**

Now endorsed by WADEM. A keynote speaker will be Sir John Holmes on the Politics of Humanity, the difficulties on providing humanitarian aid.

### **RESEARCH/PLANNING ASSISTANCE REQUIRED**

This section is for members requiring assistance with research, education or planning projects to advertise for help.

## WADEM COMMUNITIES of INTEREST

The following WADEM Sections provide contacts and information for members interested in the specific area/skills. More such areas of interest are likely to be established in the future.

### **Nursing Section**

Contact: [alison.hutton@flinders.edu.au](mailto:alison.hutton@flinders.edu.au)

### **Osteopathic Physician Section**

Contact: William Bograkos [irisbo@comcast.net](mailto:irisbo@comcast.net)

### **Psychosocial Section**

Contact: Tracey O'Sullivan [tosulliv@uottawa.ca](mailto:tosulliv@uottawa.ca)

### **Mass Gathering Section**

Chair is Paul Arbon.

Contact [paul.arbon@flinders.edu.au](mailto:paul.arbon@flinders.edu.au)

### **Emergency Medical Response Section**

Contact; [joecuthbertson@hotmail.com](mailto:joecuthbertson@hotmail.com)

### **Proposed Section: Disaster Metrics**

Contact [frank.archer@monash.edu](mailto:frank.archer@monash.edu)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**2014**

17-19 September

### **Asia Pacific Conference on Disaster Medicine**

Tokyo Japan

<http://www2.convention.co.jp/apcdm12/registration/index.html>

**2015**

21-14 April

**Save the Date.** WCDEM Cape Town, South Africa

10-14 May

### **Aero Space Medical Association**

Conference in Orlando, Florida USA

<http://www.asma.org/annual-meetings/future-annual-meetings>

**2016**

24-26 February

People in Disasters, Response, Resilience and Recovery.

Christchurch, New Zealand.

For expressions of interest and further information.

[www.peopleindisasters.org.nz](http://www.peopleindisasters.org.nz) (Web site recently updated.)

## A COFFEE WITH

In this section members are invited to introduce themselves to other members in an informal manner. (To speed up this getting-to-know members section, it is now intended to include two members each newsletter)

### **This issue: Dr Abdul Radjak DSOG (Indonesia)**

**Q.** Nickname?

**A.** Jack

**Q.** Where are you working?

**A.** M H Thamrin Health Care Group

**Q.** What three words best describe you?

**A.** Visionary, hardworking, open.

**Q.** What is your best disaster experience?

**A.** Central Java Earthquake.

**Q.** What is your worst disaster experience?

**A.** Indian Ocean Tsunami in Aceh.

**Q.** Which 3 people would you most like to share your ration pack, cold pizza and instant coffee with?

**A.** My wife, my secretary, and my driver.

\*\*\*\*\*

And **Diana Wong**

***Clinical Nurse Specialist, ED and PhD Candidate, Monash University***

**Q.** Nickname?

**A.** Wongy

**Q.** Where are you working?

**A.** Emergency Department, Liverpool Hospital

**Q.** What three words best describe you?

**A.** Attention To Detail

**Q.** What is your best disaster experience?

**A.** Undertaking Australian Medical Assistance Training (AusMAT) December 2013

**Q.** What is your worst disaster experience?

**A.** Being on duty in ED when a bomb blast occurred in a local church – we had absolutely no idea how to manage ‘mass casualties’ in the 1980s; ‘trauma services’ did not exist and hospital disaster plans were unheard of!



**Q.** Which 3 people would you most like to share your ration pack, cold pizza and instant coffee with?

**A.**

- A.** My NSW AusMAT colleagues and the training staff – they were brilliant and lots of fun.
- B.** Dr David Read (National Critical Care and Trauma Research Centre and Royal Darwin Hospital). David speaks on a regular basis at SWAN Trauma Conference which is held at Liverpool Hospital every July. His disaster experience, sense of humour and his ability to tell a great story are legendary. I would even share my last Tim Tam with David.
- C.** His Holiness the present Gyalwang Drupka, head of the Drupka lineage of Buddhism. We were fortunate enough to meet His Holiness this year when we were invited to Nepal to celebrate his birthday. I was touched by the Drupka philosophy which is based on providing service to others. We were able to see first-hand the care and compassion that the Drupka Monks and Nuns provided to local and international communities. In 2010, His Holiness was honoured with the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Award in New York for his humanitarian work.



**His Holiness the present Gyalwang Drupka, Patrick and Diana Wong  
March, 2014 Nepal**



**Druk Amitabha Mountain Monastery**

### **Disaster Myths**

A section for sayings, lessons and humour. **Contributions invited.**

You know you are from Christchurch when because of the spate of roading and infrastructure repairs, **you** give directions to your car satellite navigation system.

### **ASK AUNTIE**

*This section is an advice column where readers can submit their questions and 'Auntie' will draw on many years of experience to provide reasoned advice and counselling.*

Dear Auntie,

I so admire your wise advice on so many topics you are certainly experienced and much loved.

These days I am so confused with all these opinions and reports in past newsletters regarding the meaning of recovery and resilience. I almost cower inside my flat, frightened of the outside world and what is happening there; when I go shopping I don't know whether I am recovering or being resilient.

Yours sincerely

William

Dear William

May I call you Bill as that would make our correspondence more personal. Yes, all that language is so confusing even Auntie has her moments with it all. I do try to keep the boys and girls who write this stuff grounded, alas a hard task.

For your question, Aunty did have to make further enquiries and found that young Johnny Coleman, he does have a way with words, provided the best explanation that even Aunty could understand.

Johnny's explanation is:

Recovery is finally getting clean underwear 7 days after a disaster.

Resilience is hoping and finding that the elastic still holds them up.

Now don't you worry about all that when you go shopping Bill, I'm sure that your elastic will hold.

As for me being much loved, I can assure you I was always faithful to my husband Cedric, or was that Frederick, no matter anyway as he always answered to 'hey you'.

In Kindness

*Auntie*

## CALL FOR MATERIAL

Material is required for any of the sections listed, or under a new category, if that is appropriate. Personal experiences, case and research reports are especially welcome and we ask that these are limited to no more than 1,000 words. The subject matter can be aspects of a disaster or response that is unusual because of its type, location or effects. Material is welcome from WADEM members and even non-members internationally.

**Any suggestions regarding material for content, or suggestions to improve this Newsletter, are welcome.**

Please forward contributions to Graeme McColl at [gmccoll@wadem.org](mailto:gmccoll@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.