



WADEM Oceania Newsletter. March 2017

Guest Editorial

Natural disasters are familiar for the populations of Oceania, particularly the Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian populations of the Western Pacific. Un-natural disasters are another matter but these island societies are in the front row in terms of the social and health impacts of global warming.

Having attended several of the Creating Futures conferences that have been held in Cairns since 2003, James Asugeni from Ato'ifi in the Solomons, was motivated to undertake research among local communities. His focus was to document the mental health effects of sea level rise among coastal and island communities on Malaita. James subsequently attended the first Creating Futures meeting held offshore, in Port Moresby in 2012[1], and was a participant in a Leadership in Mental Health course run in conjunction with the sixth Creating Futures conference in Cairns in 2015. His research was published in an open access special supplement of Australasian Psychiatry devoted to Island Nations.[2]

The first Creating Futures Conference was first held in 2003, and in September 18-21 this year the seventh meeting (and second offshore), will be held in Suva, Fiji. Creating Futures has had as its focus the intersections of mental health, public health, community development and creativity. As was the case in PNG, the Fiji meeting will provide an appropriate and high quality meeting for around 200 delegates from Fiji and the Western Pacific. Some 40 experts from Australia, India and South Africa will join with colleagues from Fiji to deliver 11 plenaries and 32 workshops across topics identified locally.

Within the conference, one stream of workshops constitutes core material for the second Leadership in Mental Health course (with around 25 participants), which will continue for a further three days after the conclusion of the Creating Futures conference. This is based on, and the course developed and run through Sangath in Goa and, as was the case in Cairns in 2015, two of the founders of the course will be present.

Responding to needs expressed by Fijian colleagues, addressing the consequences of natural disasters – from systems level to personal interventions – is an important theme. On the last day there will be a public health plenary from a Fijian colleague which will consider the impact of climate change. Following this, two other plenaries (Professors Alan Dale and Brett McDermott, James Cook University) will consider disaster preparedness, leading into two workshops (Disaster planning: *Thinking fast (extreme events) and slow (climate change)* – and – *Trauma informed care*). Creating Futures continues to be innovative, responsive and relevant, and is possible only because the presenters and facilitators have volunteered their time and paid their own way. It will continue to respond to the needs of our Pacific neighbours. Website -

<http://www.cairnsinstitute.jcu.edu.au/dialogue/conferences/cf17/>

1. Hunter, E., *Creating Futures 2012: PNG - Just the beginning*. Australasian Psychiatry, 2012. **20**(6): p. 22-26.
2. Asugeni, J., et al., *Mental health issues from rising sea level in a remote coastal region of the Solomon Islands: current and future*. Australasian Psychiatry, 2015. **23**(6 (Supplement)): p. 22-25.

Ernest Hunter, Convener Creating Futures 17: Fiji

Adjunct Professor, James Cook University and The University of Queensland

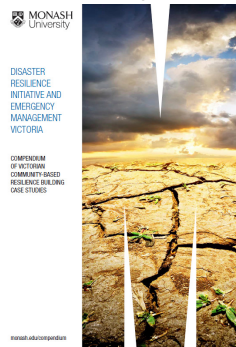
For details of the September 2017 conference in Fiji on Creating Futures use the following link and scroll down for the conference details.

<http://www.cairnsinstitute.jcu.edu.au/dialogue/conferences/cf17/>

Research/ Evidence Corner

MUDRI OFFERINGS

The MUDRI/EMV Compendium of Victorian Community-Based Resilience Building Case Studies



The Monash University Disaster Resilience Initiative (MUDRI) and Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) share a strong interest in helping communities develop their resilience, particularly in the setting of disasters / emergencies / unexpected events. As a result, they have jointly created a *Compendium* of case studies that reflects Victorian Community-based Resilience Building Case Studies, which represents an Australian first.

The Compendium provides a resource of community strengthening activities. People interested in strengthening the resilience of their communities can draw on the examples and expertise embedded within each project. Project creators share their ideas, how they overcame challenges, discovered new directions or found that unexpected piece of wisdom.

For further information go to: <https://www.monash.edu/muarc/research/research-areas/home-and-community/disaster-resilience>

Review of response to the thunderstorm asthma event of 21–22 November 2016 – Preliminary Report



Victoria’s thunderstorm asthma event of 21–22 November 2016 affected the health of thousands of Victorians and sadly, is thought to have contributed to the death of nine people.

The Victorian Government requested the Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) to identify opportunities to learn from this event in order to improve future preparedness and response arrangements and performance.

While thunderstorm asthma is known to have occurred in Victoria in the past, the events of 21 November were unprecedented in scale. The rapid onset of this emergency and the scale of its consequences were unprecedented. The event tested the ability of Victoria’s emergency management system to consider and respond to Class 2 emergency health consequences arising from a Class 1 emergency – in this case, a storm.

Government released IGEM’s **Review of response to the thunderstorm asthma event of 21–22 November 2016 – Preliminary Report** on 1 February 2017.

www.igem.vic.gov.au/home/reports+and+publications/reports/review+of+response+to+the+thunderstorm+asthma+event+of++november+2016+preliminary+report

The following is in response to a recent **PDM editorial** by **Sam Stratton** (PDM Volume 31 Number 6 December 2016) on ‘Access to Essential Medications During Disaster Events’. Pharmacists in New Zealand have reported consideration needs to be given to;

Opioid substitution treatment planning in a disaster context: Perspectives from emergency management and health professionals in Aotearoa/ New Zealand

Authors: Blake D et al.

Summary: Providing access to opioid substitution treatment (OST) can be problematic in an immediate post-disaster context, at a time when service disruptions and infrastructure damage affect OST services, including problems with accessibility, dosing, and scripts. Scant information is known about OST provision within specific disaster contexts in New Zealand. These researchers conducted in-depth, semi-structured, individual interviews with 17 service workers, health professionals, and emergency managers in OST and disaster planning fields. A thematic analysis identified three key themes: ‘health and wellbeing’; ‘developing an emergency management plan’; and ‘stock, dose verification, and scripts’. These were conceptualised as being part of an overarching theme of ‘service continuity in OST preparedness planning’. Participants emphasised service continuity as a priority for reducing physical and psychological distress for OST clients, their families, and wider communities. Alcohol and drug practitioners and OST health professionals were more

knowledgeable about the specific needs of clients, while the emergency managers talked about preparedness planning, continuity of care and minimisation of harm.

Comment: Disaster planning is not an abstract concept in New Zealand at present and there is a feeling of increased vulnerability even without the additional burden of mental and physical health conditions. There was a range of participants in this qualitative study including 3 pharmacists. Themes were very relevant to pharmacy practice, especially 'stock, dose verification, and scripts'. The PSNZ have a 'Step by Step Workbook to Prepare your Pharmacy for a Disaster or other Emergency', which includes a section on methadone and other daily dispensing services, but this paper provides additional food for thought.

Reference: Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2016;13(11)

Source: Pharmacy Research Review No 54 2016

Text Book Launch

New text in Disaster Health Management.

Over the last few years a group of enthusiasts have worked on compiling a text in disaster health management. This new text "Disaster Health management: A primer for students and practitioners" was the collective work of 54 authors from across the world. The text was intended to provide new players in disaster health with an overview of the core principles and practice which underpins disaster health management throughout the continuum of getting ready, responding and recovering. We believe the text would be helpful for disaster health education programs and for new participants in the field.

The text is being launched at QUT in Brisbane on 20 March by the Acting Director General of Emergency Management Australia, Mr Rob Cameron. Any proceeds from the text will be donated to Médecins Sans Frontières.

Professor Gerry FitzGerald MD, FACEM, FRACMA, FCHSM
School of Public Health and Social Work,
Queensland University of Technology

For more information, visit: www.routledge.com/9781138911185

Lessons Learnt

'TIPS' Experts provide advice based on their experiences or reported news.

Gun confiscated as Marlborough farmers battle quake trauma

SCOTT HAMMOND/FAIRFAX NZ

Farmers are battling with the emotional fallout from November's earthquake and rural support workers suggest they open up to one another in times of hardship. Emotionally fragile farmers still trying to rebuild their lives after the earthquake are at breaking point, with police having to confiscate guns for fear of self-harm.

Three months on from the Kaikoura earthquake and the psychological effects of the disaster are beginning to show in south Marlborough, with farmers exhausted and overwhelmed. The earthquake comes on the back of more than two years of drought, and support workers say the event feels like the last straw for some. Most are living in houses with cracked ceilings and collapsed chimneys, while others can't get water to their livestock.

The emotional fallout is being monitored by police, with patrols focusing equally on law enforcement and mental welfare. Officers make a point to stop and chat with people cut off by the landslides blocking State Highway 1. Marlborough sheep and beef farmer Doug Avery encourages farmers to keep a close eye on each other over the coming months. Farmer and mental health advocate Doug Avery said the quake was beginning to take its toll after he fielded six distress calls in the past fortnight.

The gravity of the situation was highlighted when police confiscated a farmer's firearm for his own personal safety, Avery said. "In the last 10 days it has become obvious to me that a whole lot of people are starting to struggle again," he said.

WADEM CONGRESS

From **Joe Cuthbertson**

In Toronto, the EMR section will be hosting a pre hospital spinal care round table.

Gerry FitzGerald

Would like to meet with WADEM Oceania members re the Brisbane WADEM Conference in 2019. In fact a general meetings of Oceania members would be a great idea.

Known Toronto attendees along with Joe and Gerry

Frank Archer

Caroline Spencer

Ally Hutton

Penny Burns.

Lidia Mayner

WADEM OCEANIA NEWS

WANTED

An Oceania member to become WADEM's WHO Oceania Chapter rep?

Contact

Alison Hutton RN BN MN PhD, FACN

Associate Professor

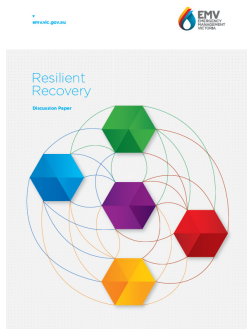
WADEM Vice President (Elect) Communities of Practice.

alison.hutton@flinders.edu.au

Ally is moving away from Flinders after 21 years to take up a Professorial role at the University of Newcastle.

Useful Resources

Emergency Management Victoria: *Relief and Recovery Reform Strategy*



The Victorian Government is committed to reform the State's emergency management arrangements to create safer and more resilient communities. This includes the review and redesign of Victoria's relief and recovery system, as identified through numerous reviews, inquiries and reports.

The *Green Paper: Towards a More Disaster Resilient and Safer Victoria* was released in September 2011, to stimulate discussion as part of an end-to-end examination of the State's emergency management system. In December 2012, the *White Paper: Victorian Emergency Management Reform* set out comprehensive change to the State's emergency management arrangements. A range of improvements were recommended to relief and recovery arrangements in order to enable communities to participate in their recovery.

In order to achieve this reform and safer and more resilient communities in Victoria, we need to work together to create a relief and recovery system which empowers communities, government, agencies and business to plan for and achieve recovery outcomes.

The *Discussion Paper: Resilient Recovery* has been drafted to introduce a new way of thinking through the concept of resilient recovery. This is an important step forward in our thinking on relief and recovery.

Resilient recovery connects community systems and networks to plan for and support:

- Wellbeing – the safety, security, physical and mental health of individuals, families, and their community, including the most vulnerable.
- Liveability – the continuity, restoration and reconstruction of essential services, critical infrastructure and community infrastructure, to enable the functioning of a community.
- Sustainability – the reconnection, re-establishment and integration of local social and economic systems and networks.
- Viability – social and economic systems provide opportunities for growth, renewal and innovation.
- Community connection – Community systems and networks are understood, informed and work together to participate in planning and leading recovery through to long-term community resilience.

Following the release and consultation on the *Discussion Paper: Resilient Recovery*, outcomes and feedback will inform the development of the Relief and Recovery Reform Strategy that will describe the relief and recovery arrangements needed to promote wellbeing, liveability, sustainability, viability, and community connection before, during and after an emergency.

The Relief and Recovery Reform Strategy will articulate the activities, projects and timelines for the implementation of the reform over the next three-to-five years.

The opportunity now is for individuals, communities, agencies, government, academia, and business to engage and discuss the model and think creatively. We encourage you and your networks to share your ideas and views by making a **submission required by 13 April**

<http://files.em.vic.gov.au/EMV-web/Resilient-Recovery-Discussion-Paper.pdf>

WADEM Climate Change Position

WADEM is interested in considering a statement on climate change as it is so relevant to our concerns about preparedness and resilience in the face of a growing number of climate-related disasters.

There has been a request for the Oceania Chapter to contribute to this or to actually write the document. It is suggested that, either way, the best approach might be to have a workshop session in Toronto to fine-tune any product that also then has a larger, more representative list of people as contributors.

The other approach is to have a series of rough statements that can be put to discussion and endorsed in Toronto.

If interested in contributing, please contact Penny Burns penny@sandyburns.com.au

Or

Peter Aitken Peter.Aitken2@health.qld.gov.au

A FINAL THOUGHT

We here in Christchurch are now post another disaster, this time a wild fire matching some of the Australian ones in intensity but not acreage destroyed. Still, 9 were houses destroyed along with a pine forest and an adventure mountain bike park that had only been open a few months. Sadly, a helicopter pilot fighting the blaze was killed when his helicopter crashed.

Like the November Kaikoura/North Canterbury earthquake, we are now in the period, for want of a better name, could be called "the enquiry phase", even the 'blame game'. Again, what is apparent is that the most complaints are about lack of communication and inaccuracies. 'Why weren't we told that', is the frequent catch cry followed closely by, 'the information you gave wasn't accurate'.

This highlights yet again the need for accurate timely information, and communications vital components of a response too often overlooked or not given proper attention. The best response possible in the circumstances is really only as good as the public perception. I have always considered communication during large events to be marketing, promoting your service and staff.

So, when assigning roles for a response, ensure that important communications position is one of the first filled.

Graeme

Finally, ever wondered about earthquake zones and how many shakes the world gets, check this out:

<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/animated-map-shows-all-earthquakes-over-the-past-15-years-2016-12?r=US&IR=T>

REQUEST 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 to improve this Newsletter, are welcome.

Please forward contributions to Graeme McColl at ilsogno@snap.net.nz
Or (I'm pleased to announce) Sarah Weber at sarahweber175@gmail.com

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.