



WADEM OCEANIA NEWSLETTER MARCH 2018

WADEM CHAPTER

Hello and welcome to the 1st WADEM Oceania Chapter Newsletter for 2018. 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
Rowena Christiansen
Peter Aitken
Sandra Richardson

Caroline Spencer
Viv Tippett
Graeme McColl
Sonia Morshead

Co-opted members:

Lidia Mayner
Skip Burkle

Thompson Telepo
Hendro Wartatmo

OCEANIA UPDATES

Six natural disasters were recorded on the CRED international disaster database for the year of 2017, predominantly affecting Australia and Vanuatu.

Disasters in Oceania: 2017

Year	Country Name	Disaster Type	Occurrence	Total Deaths	Injured	Affected	Homeless	Total Affected	Total Damage (\$USD)
2017	Australia	Storm	1	12		20000		20000	2700000
2017	Australia	Wildfire	1		2	27	114	143	20000
2017	French Polynesia	Flood	1			4500	500	5000	2000
2017	New Zealand	Flood	1			2200		2200	
2017	Vanuatu	Storm	1			2564		2564	
2017	Vanuatu	Volcanic activity	1			11000		11000	

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 Oceania region has already experienced the effects of disasters in 2018. Cyclone Gita has caused flooding and storm damage to Tonga, Niue and Samoa. Volcano eruptions in Papua New Guinea and Bali are displacing people from their homes. Reports on these events can be accessed via the links below:

<https://reliefweb.int/report/tonga/flash-update-1-tropical-cyclone-gita-12-february-2018>

<https://www.voanews.com/a/surprise-eruption-papua-new-guinea-volcano/4196771.html>

<https://reliefweb.int/report/papua-new-guinea/papua-new-guinea-volcanic-activity-png-disaster-management-team-situation-6>

Case Report

Rural health

Remember rural health providers throughout Oceania and their importance to their Communities (and tourists in this case)

Haast is a small settlement on the southern West Coast of New Zealand's South Island. An area that often has more tourists in residence than locals. At the time of writing this area is bracing for ex tropical cyclone Gita.

Sourced from NZ Doctor on 20/2/2018. <https://www.nzdoctor.co.nz/article/news/haast-nurse-specialist-battles-elements-care-stranded-tourists>

Rural nurse specialist Liz Komen knew last Wednesday would be no ordinary day when she hit the road bound for her clinic in Hannahs Clearing 20km south of Haast. But she didn't expect to end up caring for hundreds of stranded tourists after battling her way through flood waters and high winds.

After receiving a Civil Defence alert warning of heavy rain from ex-Tropical Cyclone Fehi, Mrs Komen drove from her Mackenzie Country home in Omarama, over the Haast Pass to the clinic to relieve the nurse on duty so he could get home before the storm hit, she says.

But before she could reach the clinic, she came across a car accident and called emergency services, meeting up with her colleague at the crash site instead.

That was just an indication of how the next few days would play out. All day Thursday, the storm lashed the coast, causing slips, sea surges, high winds, flash flooding, and power outages. Slips closed State Highway 6, from Whataroa (north of Franz Josef) to Makarora (south of Haast), stranding 600 tourists in Haast from Thursday until Saturday morning.

As Mrs Komen and the St John Ambulance team were the only medical personnel in the area, she was relieved there were no major medical emergencies, she says. However, she had to hightail it out of the clinic as the king tide and storm surges pushed the water towards the clinic.

“The flooding was a concern especially because of my car. I would have had to borrow a truck with a snorkel or a tractor to get back down the Haast road if need be, it was a very hairy trip back up the road.”

Routine calls plus tourists

Over the next two days she tended to her usual patients and assisted the hundreds of stranded tourists.

“Luckily, we had only one emergency callout, and we managed that in Haast, so we didn’t have to fly them out, especially on Thursday as we were absolutely stuck and couldn’t move in any direction.”

Another family had run out of necessary medication for one of their children, she says, “but I carry a lot of medication in the car because the area is spread out so fortunately I had some to hand.”

She then helped feed the stranded tourists, many of whom had no money as the ATMs had stopped working, she says.

“We were lucky they got cracking and got the road opened. I think the tourists were happy to leave.”

Her main concern was the lack of communications during the event, she says. The area has no cell-phone coverage and many of the landline phones weren’t working so she had to borrow a satellite phone from the St John station to contact a patient’s relative who was concerned for his welfare. She is now hoping the DHB will supply her with a satellite phone for her clinic.

By today, Mrs Komen says she was looking forward to a quiet Waitangi Day, although significant damage to the area had occurred, with houses and buildings washed away and trees blown down. “But within 24 hours, it was all back to normal – that’s the coast for you, though it’s tricky and stressful while it is raining.”

OCEANIA CONFERENCES AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Diversity in Disaster conference

Every year people and communities across Australia are impacted by emergencies and natural disasters. The [Gender and Disaster POD](#) (Women’s Health In the North, Women’s Health Goulburn North East, and Monash University Disaster Resilience Initiative), the [Victorian Council of Social Services](#) and [Resilient Melbourne](#) invite you to the Diversity in Disaster Conference, **17-18 April, 2018**. The Conference will be located at the iconic MCG.

This innovative National Conference brings together Australian and international community leaders, emergency services professionals and researchers to help build understanding around the unique risks and vulnerabilities that many people face during a natural disaster.

Hear from people who have experienced first-hand the impacts of natural disaster, and learn about how people from diverse, marginalised and underrepresented communities experience disasters, and the unique challenges that impact their ability to respond and recover.

At the heart of *Diversity in Disaster* is the opportunity to explore the strengths and needs of people from a range of backgrounds. By participating, you can explore preparedness, response, relief and recovery for diverse communities with other individuals committed to inclusive and effective emergency management.

If you work in the emergency management, community, resilience or diversity fields, we encourage you to [check out the conference program](#), and save the date for **17-18 April 2018**. Registration is open to emergency services organisations, professionals and volunteers, community, health and social services organisations, researchers, students and representatives from all levels of government.

A unique feature of the Diversity in Disasters National Conference is the [Diversity in Disaster Issues Paper](#) which is now available! The **Issues Paper** provides an overview of the topics that will be presented at the Conference. It offers a snapshot of the current research, policy and practice around the strengths and needs of diverse communities. How can the needs of diverse groups be most effectively considered and incorporated into disaster planning, response, relief and recovery? How can the skills and knowledge of diverse groups be harnessed to build disaster resilient communities?

[Find out more about the conference.](#)

This conference is funded by the Australian Government in partnership with the Victorian Government under the National Partnership Agreement for National Disaster Resilience.

Early bird registrations close on 16th February, 2018. Further information, contact details and registration is available through the above links.

Australian & New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management Conference

21 - 22 May 2018 The Star Gold Coast

LEARN MORE

Australian Disaster Resilience Conference 2018

6-7 September 2018

Perth, Western Australia

The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience will host the inaugural Australian Disaster Resilience Conference (ADRC) in Perth, Western Australia from 6-7 September 2018.

The ADRC will bring together local government, communities, NGOs, not-for-profits, research organisations, education partners and the private sector to share thinking and practice around disaster resilience.

The ADRC will run as a single stream conference concurrently with [AFAC18 powered by INTERSCHUTZ](#). ADRC Delegates will have access to the AFAC18 trade exhibition, and will benefit from joint keynote speaker sessions, and opportunities to meet speakers and attend poster presentations at the AIDR-hosted Knowledge Centre.

Sponsored places

The conference will offer a number of sponsored places for volunteers, students and community organisations, to attend the Conference, targeted to individuals actively engaged in building community disaster resilience. If you would like present at the Conference, submit your abstract through the portal.

[Submit an expression of interest for a sponsored place](#)

Theme:

The rise of resilience: From the individual to the global Enhancing recovery by supporting community resilience

Resilience is about how we can understand, live with, manage and adapt to a world of increasing change, uncertainty and surprise. Risks and hazards are a part of our world but building disaster resilience in the face of these events requires a shared responsibility among individuals, communities and nations, and enables them to quickly and effectively recover with coordinated support. This conference will explore the importance of individual and community effort at the grassroots level of disaster resilience, through to the enabling conditions of governance, investment and strong public policy that are required to support and foster disaster resilience, and effective recovery for those affected by disaster. The conference will provide a premier opportunity to achieve effective and meaningful partnerships, and further strengthen cooperation by engaging with disaster resilience thinking and practice across multiple activities and scales.

Abstracts submitted for this conference may consider:

- Activities and case studies on disaster resilience
- Disaster risk reduction strategies
- Measuring and assessing disaster resilience
- Enhancing recovery through greater community resilience
- Disaster resilience strategy and policy
- New directions in resilience thinking
- The economics of disaster resilience
- Building resilience for catastrophic disasters of the future

<https://aidr.org.au/programs/australian-disaster-resilience-conference/>

21ST WORLD CONGRESS ON DISASTER AND EMERGENCY MEDICINE 7 -10 MAY 2019 – BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

At each WCDEM 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.

2019 is an important year in Disaster Health practice for our region as we are hosting the conference. We encourage as many chapter members to attend and participate as possible. We would also encourage members to submit abstracts to the conference and hope to see research in Oceania well represented within the program.

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 Podcast - 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. We will be keeping in contact with you to engage you with our progress. If you have any suggestions or questions please contact us as below.

Feedback to: JCuthbertson@wadem.org.

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 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.