



WADEM Oceania Communique - December 2018

Hello and welcome to the third WADEM Oceania Chapter Communique for 2018!

This year has seen a number of natural disaster events throughout the Oceania region. Papua New Guinea experienced an earthquake, New Zealand had storm and flood events, with cyclones in Tonga.

The Oceania Chapter has continued to provide input into the broader WADEM organisational goal, and the development and publishing of the latest position statement regarding accurate reporting of public health data was led by several Oceania Chapter members.

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.

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:

Lidia Mayner

Thompson Telepo

Skip Burkle

Hendro Wartatmo

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.

Oceania Updates

11 disasters have been recorded on the CRED international disaster database for the year of 2018 thus far, predominantly affecting Australia and Vanuatu.

Disasters in Oceania: 2018

Disaster type	Country name	Occurrence	Total deaths	Injured	Affected
Drought	Australia	1			
Earthquake	Papua New Guinea	3	181	300	544,000
Flood	Australia	1			600
Storm	Fiji	1	5		89,950
Storm	Northern Mariana Islands (the)	1	2		
Storm	Samoa	1			
Storm	Tonga	1			87,000
Transport accident	Kiribati	1	80		7
Volcanic activity	Papua New Guinea	1			736

Created on: 13 December 2018

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 and our neighbours has already experienced significant 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 have displaced many people from their homes.

Conference Report

Asia Pacific Conference on Disaster Medicine

The ‘1995 Great Hanshin earthquake’ still provides so much inspiration for APCDM2018 and beyond. The magnitude, subsequent devastation and diverse experiences of Kobe people surviving the Great Hanshin earthquake inspired many presentations at this Asia Pacific Conference some 23 years after the event!

Frank and Caroline attended the 2018 Asia Pacific Disaster Medicine Conference in Kobe within the Hyōgo Prefecture. This location held particular appeal for us. Ongoing strategies for disaster risk reduction emanate from this part of the world. The location of Japan sits within an active seismic area, which makes it one of the world's most earthquake-prone countries that experiences thousands of minor tremors each year, with two major earthquakes in June and September of this year.

Indeed, Kobe was the location of the Great Hanshin earthquake that occurred in the southern part of the Hyōgo Prefecture in January 1995. As Black Saturday was to Australia, this was Japan’s second worst earthquake in the 20th century, following that of the Great Kantō earthquake in 1923. In Kobe, the earthquake accounted for about 6,433 deaths, and nearly 27,000 injuries, with more than 45,000 homes destroyed. The estimated more than \$100 billion repair bill illustrates the enormity of this earthquake. The epicentre was located 20 km from the centre of Kobe city, and in sight of our hotel. Measuring 7.2 magnitude on the Richter scale, the tremors lasted for approximately 20 seconds. The close proximity of the epicentre to an urban area, and the severe ground motion and large ground displacement explains the large loss of life and infrastructure damage.

The earthquake caused an 18-span viaduct section of the Hanshin Expressway to collapse.

The Great Hanshin earthquake occurred midway through the International Decade for Disaster Risk Reduction. Beginning on 1 January 1990, the intention of the United Nations was to devote a decade to reducing loss of life, property damage, and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters, through concerted international action. In 1994, prior to the Great Hanshin earthquake, informed by the first World Conference on Natural Disasters held in Yokohama, the United Nations adopted the ‘Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action’ to provide pioneering guidance to reduce disaster risk and the impacts of disasters.

Following the devastation of the 1995 Great Hanshin earthquake, impetus grew to strengthen global efforts under the ‘International Framework for Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction’, the ‘Yokohama Strategy’, and the ‘International Strategy for Disaster Reduction’ of 1999. In 2005, informed by the second World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, the United Nations ratified The Hyogo

Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster. The Framework prompted greater international acknowledgement of the efforts needed to integrate systematic strategies to improve disaster risk reduction and incorporate them into policies, plans and programmes for sustainable development. No such motivation was needed for the successor document following the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The Sendai Framework builds on elements that ensure continuity with the work done by States and other stakeholders under the Hyogo Framework.

A moment of emotion as our train travels through the Hyogo Station.

Within this larger context, we felt enormously privileged to visit our Japanese colleagues at the APCDM 2018 in this particular part of the world. The Great Hanshin earthquake experience persists and featured in many sessions. As for our sessions, we presented four oral papers, one of which was a well-received Special Lecture, chaired two sessions, contributed to the APCDM Board Meeting, attended the Presidential dinner as special guests, joined in the Conference Buffet, enjoyed a delicious sashimi dinner at a traditional Japanese restaurant, visited the Kobe earthquake museum, and the Hiroshima Peace Park. We were fortunate to exchange mutual interests with the WHO Kobe Centre and have explored an ongoing relationship as per the conference theme 'Building Bridges: from Kobe to the World'.

Caroline and Frank

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

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.

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 Congress 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. Please send 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.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members, colleagues, and their friends and families a festive and safe Christmas and New Year.

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.