

Global Disaster Information Network

The Global Disaster Information Network (GDIN) is a United States initiative which aims 'to get the right information to the right people in the right form at the right time.' To gain international support and commitment to GDIN, a number of meetings have been held with the latest in Mexico City in May 1999.

Jonathan Abrahams, Assistant Director Policy at EMA, attended the Mexico meeting which canvassed a number of information and disaster management issues ranging from sustainable development to recovery, and satellite-generated remote sensing products to more conventional technologies. Meeting proceedings can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.state.gov/www/issues/relief/mexicorpt.html>. Australia has agreed to host a GDIN meeting in 2001.

For further information contact Jonathan Abrahams, phone: (02) 6266 5219 or e-mail: jabrahams@ema.gov.au

Disaster Assessment Guide

The need for timely and accurate information immediately following a disaster on the extent of damage and disruption to the community is fundamental to effective response. To meet a perceived void in Australian guidance on this topic, EMA is developing a Disaster Assessment Guide as part of the Australian Emergency Manual series. The guide will provide details on the process and procedures used in planning, conducting, post disaster assessment. EMA would welcome input to the publication from interested disaster managers.

For further information contact Don Patterson, phone: (02) 6266 5165 or e-mail: dpatterson@ema.gov.au

PNG developments

Disaster management in PNG is moving ahead with re-structuring and re-focussing of the National Disaster and Emergency Services (NDES) and the conduct of a number of other training and awareness activities.

The most significant activity is re-activation of the disaster management development project.

EMA's Overseas Emergency Management Officer, Phil Stenchion, is playing a significant role, on behalf of AusAID, in most of these activities ranging from assisting with adapting regional course materials to PNG contexts to facilitating the review of the National Disaster Management Plan.

For further information contact Phil Stenchion, phone: (02) 6266 5441 or e-mail: pstenchion@ema.gov.au

Year 2000

EMA continues to play an active role in ensuring emergency managers are prepared to deal with the

consequences of Year 2000 service failures on public safety. Recent activities include:

- Release of the EMA Year 2000 Strategy which outlines EMA's objectives leading up to and during the critical period and how they will be achieved.
- Conduct, in consultation with States and Territories, of a review of emergency management preparedness.
- Hosting, in June 1999, of a second national meeting of emergency managers to share information. Commonwealth, State and Territory Year 2000 policy coordinators and representatives from key utilities also attended the meeting which concluded that, based on available information, the threat to public safety of major disruptions was minimal but there was a need for vigilance and a risk management approach to treating possible threats was appropriate.

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Kosovo displaced persons

EMA played a key coordination role in implementing the Federal Government's decision to bring 4000 Kosovars to Australia in May and June this year. Due to EMA's previous work in developing plans for the reception of personnel evacuated into Australia following disasters, the organisation was approached by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) early in the planning process to assist with developing the process to be used in receiving the new arrivals in Australia.

Reception processing included health and dental screening, essential medical treatment, clothing issue, registration on the National Registration and Inquiry System and issue of Identification Cards. Processing of each batch of arrivals took three days. These activities were efficiently undertaken by a number of Commonwealth and NSW Government agencies, and some Non-government organisations. EMA has produced a video to record the reception process.

EMA deployed a staff member to East Hills during the initial stage of each group of arrivals to act as an independent intermediary between the various organisations involved in reception processing.

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Recent NSW disasters

Sydney Hailstorm. A devastating hailstorm in mid April caused extensive property damage in the inner suburbs with insurance losses estimated in the order of A\$1.5 billion. Some 34,000 homes were affected and over 50,000 vehicles damaged.

During the response, the NSW Government sought Commonwealth assistance to carry out temporary repairs to damaged properties. EMA coordinated the deployment of 400 Australian Defence Force personnel who assisted large deployments from the NSW emergency services in weather proofing properties over a 2-week period. In addition to processing a number of other minor requests for Commonwealth assistance, EMA provided 2500 tarpaulins from its Disaster Earmark Store to the NSW SES.

Newcastle Disease. In April–May 1999, an outbreak of Newcastle Disease in the Mangrove Mountain area north of Sydney threatened the poultry industry and resulted in around two million chickens being destroyed. During the height of the crisis, the NSW Government sought Commonwealth assistance with culling the chickens. EMA coordinated the deployment of ninety Australian Defence Force personnel who worked under the direction of the NSW Department of Agriculture over a two-week period. For further information contact Rod McKinnon, phone: (02) 6266 5328 or e-mail: rmckinnon@ema.gov.au or Don Patterson, phone: (02) 6266 5165 or e-mail: dpatterson@ema.gov.au

Australian Disaster Conference 1999: Disaster Prevention for the 21st Century (1–3 November 1999)

The conference program and registration form are now available and early bird registrations are due by 3 September 1999. The conference program is filled with three days of interesting and challenging papers on risk assessment, raising awareness, reducing economic losses and social disruption, preparing for response and recovering from disaster. Local and international speakers will lead plenary sessions on the international perspective, active community involvement, national mitigation strategies and future directions and priorities for disaster management. For further information, contact: Conference Logistics, PO Box 505, Curtin ACT 2605, Australia, on phone: +61 (0)2 6281 6624, fax: +61 (0)2 6285 1336 or e-mail: conference@conlog.com.au or visit the Conference site on the EMA Homepage.

IDNDR Programme Forum Geneva 5–9 July 1999

This forms part of the concluding phase of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). It provides a unique opportunity for countries, IDNDR national committees and representatives of civil society to share information and agree on a framework for future action. The final aim of the Programme Forum is to set up an action plan in order to build a culture of prevention for the 21st century. United Nations Secretary General, Mr Kofi Annan, will open this important event. Australia is being well represented and Mr Alan Hodges has been asked to lead a daily half hour session on success stories.

Final Report of Australia's Coordination Committee for the IDNDR 1990–2000

A Final Report of Australia's IDNDR Coordination Committee was produced and will be tabled at the IDNDR Programme Forum in Geneva. The report will

soon be available via Internet. It provides a factual account of many of Australia's activities in support of the International Decade and records the significant contributions to the Decade made by Committee members, Australia's IDNDR Secretariat, project managers and many others. Only a limited number of the full report were printed, however copies of a 15 page Executive Summary are available from the Secretariat upon request. Contact details: idndr@ema.gov.au

Changes to 1998–99 IDNDR projects since the last issue

EMA provided \$16,000 to the UNDP/SOPAC South Pacific Office to compile a report on Pacific IDNDR activities, similar to the Final Report of Australia's Coordination Committee for the IDNDR 1990–2000.

An illustrated brochure has been developed by Bush Fire Service, Fire and Emergency Service Authority of Western Australia (FESA) (IDNDR Ref 3/98). The brochure is a key part of a campaign aimed at warning the increasing number of independent travellers exploring northern Australia, encompassing the Kimberley Region, the Northern Territory and Queensland, of the prevalence of bushfires in 'the top end'; educating them about the Fire Danger Ratings, Restricted and Prohibited Burning Times, and providing bushfire and camping safety and survival advice. Many travellers hire four-wheel-drive vehicles or camper vans in a bid to explore northern Australia on their own without a full understanding of bushfires or the use of fire as a management tool in northern Australia. Brochures appropriate to northern Australia were produced and may be used as a basis for brochures in southern Australia. The free brochures will be distributed at festivals in the north, in airports, car and camper hire outlets, the Tourism Commission's Tourist Centres, National Parks, Royal Automobile Club (RAC), petrol stations and local tourist bureaux.

The Western Australia Department of Transport have produced a marine safety training video giving practical instruction on tropical cyclones and severe weather for mariners (IDNDR Ref 4/98). Copies of *Storm Alert – A Guide to Severe Weather at Sea* will be distributed to relevant departments in all States and Territories via Department of Transport networks. The video was produced with funding assistance from IDNDR and relevant industry groups. The main use of the video will be as a training aid for the new Tropical Cyclone Short Course for Uniform Shipping Laws Certificates of Competency and as a stand-alone pre-cyclone season refresher for vessels operating north of Geraldton. However, the content has been pitched at a level suitable for use by both recreational and commercial mariners for severe weather generally.

The *Brochure on Storm Tide Threat* in Queensland has been printed (Ref IDNDR 13/98). It is an abridged version of a technical report and is targeted at local government and private land use planners, engineers and other professional in Queensland. Since they began distributing the brochure, Queensland has already noticed a significant rise in the number of people requesting the more detailed report.

EMA/IDNDR provided \$8,000 for a survey of severe storm awareness in NSW to evaluate the effectiveness of different types of materials (Ref IDNDR 25/98). The

results have encouraged NSW to embark upon an awareness campaign along the lines of Victoria's Bushfire Blitz and to produce brochures for some high flood-risk areas which focus on a particular town, suburb or even street where reliable recent local flood information is available.

DGEMA provided funding of \$2,000 for a new project (Ref IDNDR 27/98): Translation and printing of action guides for refugees and survivors of torture and trauma to reduce the retraumatising effects of Natural Disasters. This project complements a recent initiative of NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services who produced action guides in six community languages (Chinese, Portuguese, Indonesian, Greek, Thai and Vietnamese).

IDNDR Education 2000

A new education brochure, *Disaster Education Resources for Schools*, has been produced. It describes free and low-cost disaster awareness and education resources that have been developed in cooperation with EMA Disaster Awareness Program or IDNDR. The brochure will be sent by direct mail to teachers and primary and secondary school librarians as a means of promoting these resources. The brochure will also be available to place in Disaster Education and Awareness Resource Kits, distributed by State and Territory Emergency Services, and as satchel inserts for teacher association conferences and journals.

The *Are You Ready* 40-page booklet for Geography Action Week has been printed and distributed to geography teachers around the country. All response has been positive. Topics covered include emergency risk management, PNG tsunami, Wollongong landslide and bushfire. It also includes three pages on EMA and IDNDR disaster education resources.

The *Global Issues Natural Hazards* issue (March 1998) was produced by the Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria (with AusAID funding). It is aimed at geography teachers and contains background information and suggested activities on El Nino, the PNG Drought, the Indonesian fires and the Katherine flood. Once all back copies have been sold, it will be placed on the Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria web site.

IDNDR has agreed to sponsor a primary school disaster awareness competition being run by the State Emergency Service in western NSW. We will provide six copies of the Get Ready Pack as supplementary prizes. This is the third year it has been run.

The IDNDR program has offered NSW \$10,000 as a contribution towards a new primary school age children's story book on natural hazard safety. It will probably cover severe storm, flood and bush safety, but later books may cover other hazards relevant to this age group, such as road safety and house fire. It has been written by Lawrence SES volunteers (who are also teachers) and won a National Bank Community Link Award earlier this year.

Projects approved for funding in FY 1999-2000

Although the International Decade ends on 30 December 1999, Australia's Coordination Committee has committed itself to continuing the program until

at least the middle of the Year 2000 by funding one final round of projects under the IDNDR banner.

A list of projects which have been approved for funding in FY 1999/2000 can be found on the EMA Homepage.

What's on at AEMI

National Studies Program

5-7 October 1999

Community Development in Disaster Recovery Workshop

The aim of this workshop is to define and further develop the community development role in disaster recovery management. A comprehensive guide will be developed that will be a supplement to the AEM Recovery Manual.

19-21 October 1999

Disaster Victim Identification for Mass Casualties resulting from Chemical and Biological Hazards Workshop

The aim of this workshop is to initiate the development of an agreed national disaster victim identification response plan for chemical and biological hazard agents in the context of mass casualties. In addition the Disaster Victim Identification National Guidelines will be reviewed in order to accommodate the inclusion of chemical and biological hazard agents.

15-19 November 1999

Building Relationships between the Emergency Services and Animal Health District Officers Workshop

The aim of this workshop is to provide an opportunity for field officers from emergency services and animal health services to explore their respective roles and build collaborative relationships. A set of guidelines will be developed as a result of this workshop.

Courses

AEMI staff are currently developing and delivering a new suite of training and education products based on the emergency management competency standards within the Public Safety Training Package. A one-day Introduction to Emergency Risk Management (IERM) course will be offered in the States/Territories as part of the extension program in the first half of the financial year 1999-2000. Three new accredited 3-4 day residential courses will be also conducted over the next two financial years, 1999-2000 and 2000-01. Their working titles are:

- Identify, Analyse and Evaluate Risks
- Determine Treatment Strategies
- Manage Treatment Strategies.

In addition the following courses will be offered in 1999-2000:

- Consequence Management to Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Incendiary and Explosive Emergencies
- Emergency Coordination Management
- Exercise Management

- Evacuation Management
- Management of Civil Defence Operations
- Recovery Management.

More information is available on the courses in the AEMI handbook which can be found on EMA's website: www.ema.gov.au

Applications Manual for Community Emergency Risk Management

An applications manual for community emergency risk management is in the process of development. A theory model will follow. For further information contact Michael Tarrant, tel: (03) 5421 5292 or e-mail: mtarrant@ema.gov.au

Farewell Rob Fleming

After more than 11 years, Rob Fleming departs AEMI on 7 July 1999 to undertake the role of journal editor on behalf of EMA. During this time he was the Assistant Director at AEMI and was responsible for the Australian Emergency Management Information Centre.

From its beginnings as a small, one-person library, Rob expanded, defined and marketed the role of AEMIC and of information services in emergency management to the position it now enjoys as a unique information resource nationally and internationally.

Rob transformed the library from one offering traditional services, to an 'information centre' with a wide range of electronic services, a clearing-house and a publishing role. It became a facilitator of national networks and became actively involved in promoting emergency management research. He also developed and managed the EMA Research Grants Program.

He implemented a full review of the AEMIC services in 1995, initiating a comprehensive range of recommended changes to services, products, staff roles, and work practices. Not least of these changes was the purchase and implementation of the new Sirsi database software which allowed EMA clients global access to the AEMIC resource database

In the course of his service at AEMI, Rob supervised the creation of a range of unique, detailed databases of emergency management information resources and a substantial collection to support those databases. He played a key role in the development of the Australian Emergency Management Thesaurus (involving considerable consultation with the States and Territories) and in initiating the development of the Australian Emergency Management Glossary.

Rob worked diligently to establish a strong link between information services and the Education and Training arm of AEMI. He undertook a number of workshops and seminars and he initiated and took a leadership role in the ALIES (Australian Libraries in Emergency Services) network on a national level and more locally, in Victoria.

His was a key role in the development and management of the 'current look' EMA website, liaising with EMA staff and the service provider. Rob gave a web interface to existing services such as AJEM and to new ones such as the Research Grants. Before this, he established the ADMIX bulletin board service.

Most notably, in the context of this publication, Rob developed AJEM from a small organisational newsletter into a fully-refereed, hard copy and electronic journal of international level of quality and distribution. For that, together with his other significant achievements, Rob will be remembered and missed by a host of his colleagues and others in the emergency management community across the nation and around the world.

EMA Publication news

New and revised publications now available (as noted below in each category):

Australian Emergency Manual Series

Part III – Emergency Management Practice

Volume 1

- Manual 2 – *Disaster Medicine (2nd Edition)*

Volume 2

- Manual 2 – *Safe and Healthy Mass Gatherings*
(Copies available through your State/Territory emergency management organisation secretariats.)

Part IV – Skills for Emergency Services Personnel

- Manual 10 – *Flood Rescue Boat Operation (2nd Edition)*

(Copies distributed to relevant emergency agencies through State/Territory Emergency Services -Training Sections maintain distribution/amendment registers).

Mt Macedon Papers Series

- *Mt. Macedon Paper No 6/1997 – Record of the Safe Crowd Management Workshop* (Report delayed due to required alignment and coordination with 'AEM - Safe and Healthy Mass Gatherings' listed above).

(Mt Macedon Papers are available from EMA Canberra and Mt Macedon offices)

Final Report of Australia's Coordination Committee for IDNDR (1990-2000) – Helping Communities in Australia and the South Pacific Reduce Natural Disasters

Copies are available from the IDNDR Secretariat at EMA, Canberra Office.

Orders

EMA addresses for publications orders are as follows (first check above for appropriate EMA Office or State/Territory authority):

- Emergency Management Australia; PO Box 1020, Dickson ACT 2602, Australia.
- Australian Institute of Emergency Management, Main Rd, Mt Macedon Vic 3441, Australia.