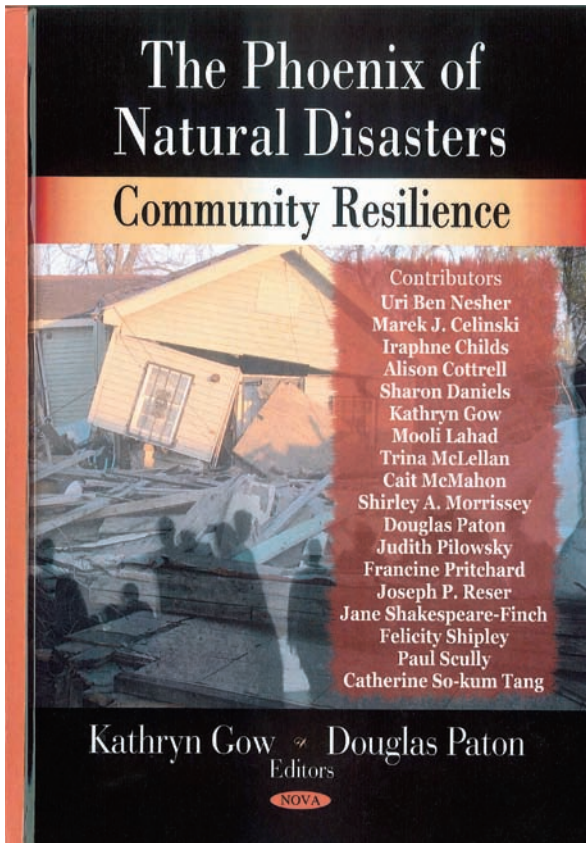


# BOOK REVIEW

By George Seymour



**The Phoenix of Natural Disasters:  
Community Resilience.**

Kathryn Gow and Douglas Paton (eds.)  
(2008) Nova Publishers.

Spanning 15 chapters from 18 contributors, *The Phoenix of Natural Disasters: Community Resilience* is an academic resource which examines and interprets the nature of resilience in communities and individuals. The contributors come from academia, the emergency services sector, support agencies and the media. It is edited by Kathryn Gow and Douglas Paton, both of whom are psychologists who have studied stress, burnout, trauma and resilience on an individual and community level in times of natural disaster.

Resilient societies recognise that they need to put in place procedures and capabilities for their benefit when disaster strikes. The distinct chapters, which can be read in isolation, address a number of aspects of resilience, coping and recovery at the individual and community levels, the broad aim is to canvass topics that provide an overview of the issues that societies must address to develop and maintain resilience.

The text is organised into three parts. Part 1 outlines the overarching frameworks that provide insights into the scope and applicability of the resilience concept as a device that can facilitate planning and policy making in societies for whom the risk of experiencing disaster is high. Part 2 focuses on the individuals and organisations, such as the State Emergency Service and the Royal Australian Navy, that are responsible for enacting plans and policies when disaster strikes. Part 3 examines the implications for the citizens and communities that comprise contemporary societies.

The contributors stress the importance of engaging and supporting communities to prepare for, and manage, natural disasters. As is noted by several of the contributors, disaster readiness and preparation initiatives can make a longer term contribution to social capital.

The style of the book reflects the background of the majority of its contributors; academia. Like the development of resilience itself, the text is not suitable for quick access or consultation during the heat and drama of an emergency. It is a useful, welcome and somewhat rare contribution on the role and importance of resilience in coping with, and moving on, from natural disasters.

## Preparing for the unexpected – third edition

When emergencies strike, maintaining food and grocery supplies is among the top priorities. To assist communities prepare for an emergency event, the Australian Food Sector has recently released a pantry build-up list. This list assists households to identify basic food and grocery essentials that may be pre-stored to live on for up to 14 days during an emergency event.

The Australian Government seeks various ways to assist in building the resilience of the Australian people. Since 2003, Emergency Management Australia has published the booklet, *Preparing for the Unexpected*. This booklet is a ready reference for Australian households and provides clear advice and practical actions to prepare for and deal with a range of emergencies.

Emergency Management Australia has recently revised this publication to incorporate the pantry list in support of the Australian Food Sector's initiative and to provide a comprehensive information source to assist communities and households prepare for the unexpected. The new edition of *Preparing for the Unexpected* was presented by the Attorney-General at the launch of the pantry build-up list in February 2008.

The booklet *Preparing for the Unexpected – Third edition* is available from Emergency Management Australia or via the website [www.ema.gov.au](http://www.ema.gov.au). The Australian Food Sector pantry list is available at [www.pantrylist.com.au](http://www.pantrylist.com.au).

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## USEFUL INFORMATION

### Australian Journal of Emergency Management

The Journal is published quarterly and disseminated throughout the emergency management community and related disciplines, in Australia and overseas. Articles identifying and discussing issues, policies, planning or procedural concerns, research reports and any other information relevant to the emergency/disaster management community are welcome.

Refer to the EMA website ([www.ema.gov.au/ajem](http://www.ema.gov.au/ajem)) for current and past issues and information on how to subscribe and contribute.

### Letters to the editor

The Journal welcomes Letters to the Editor. Please note that letters should be no more than 300 words. Letters exceeding this limit may be edited or refused. Letters must be in good taste and focus on issues of emergency management or past AJEM content.

Letters must contain a name, address and daytime phone number of the author. Unsigned letters or those submitted without a phone number will not be considered.

Regular contributors should submit letters on varied subjects. Letters by the same author that reiterate opinions previously expressed may not be published. The editor reserves the right to reject or edit any Letter to the Editor.

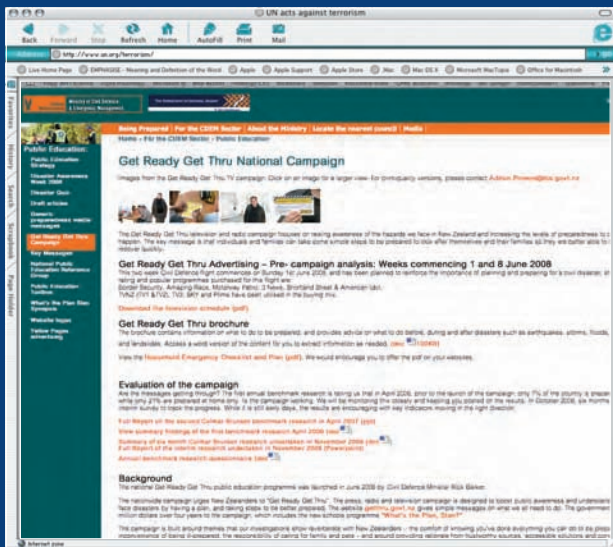
### Advertising in AJEM

Display and classified advertising may be accepted for publication with the agreement of the Editor-in-Chief. The editor reserves the right to insert the word "Advertisement" above or below any copy.

### Conference diary

Full details of local and international conferences relating to emergency management are available from the EMA website. For information, please visit [www.ema.gov.au](http://www.ema.gov.au).

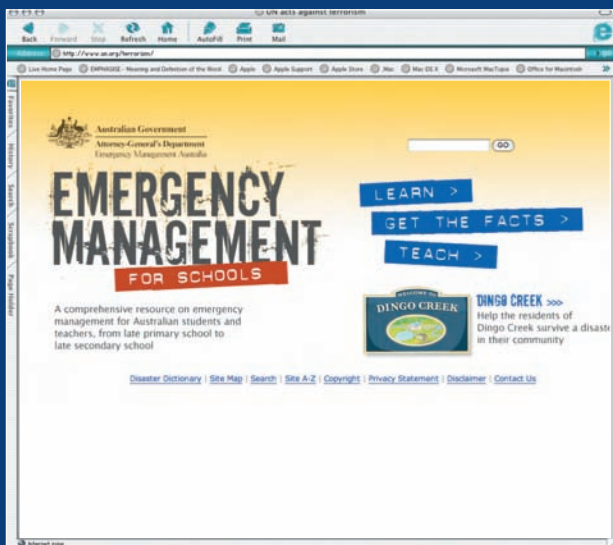
# interesting websites



## New Zealand's 'Get Ready, Get Thru' National Emergency Management awareness Campaign

[http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/memwebsite.nsf/wpg\\_URL/For-the-CDEM-Sector-Public-Education-Get-Ready-Get-Thru-campaign?OpenDocument](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/memwebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/For-the-CDEM-Sector-Public-Education-Get-Ready-Get-Thru-campaign?OpenDocument)

This website details the recent New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management's advertising campaign focused on raising awareness of the hazards New Zealand faces and increasing the levels of preparedness to cope with disasters when they happen. The key message is that individuals and families can take some simple steps to be prepared to look after themselves and their families so they are better able to deal with the impact and recover quickly.



## Emergency Management Australia – school education

[www.ema.gov.au/schools](http://www.ema.gov.au/schools)

Emergency Management Australia has relaunched its school education website.

The contemporary look website is a comprehensive resource on emergency management and natural disaster education for Australian students and their teachers from primary through to secondary school. Navigation of the website has been improved and three distinct sections are now featured: **LEARN** - Explore and learn all about preparing for disasters and what disasters could have an impact on the Australian environment. You can also find links to State and Territory Emergency Services **GET THE FACTS** - Get the facts on natural disasters and how they impact on the Australian environment. You can also find some project ideas that you can share with your class, teacher and family. **TEACH** - Teachers and educators can use these disaster lesson plans, resources and interactive teaching tools to help young Australians understand what to do if a disaster or emergency arises.



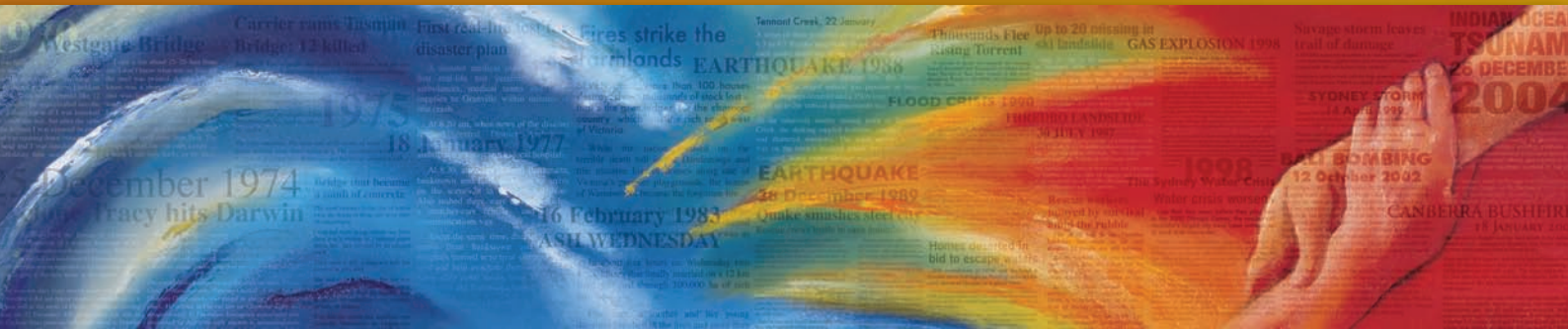
Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department  
Emergency Management Australia

AUSTRALIAN DISASTERS CONFERENCE 2009

# Surviving Future Risks

National Convention Centre, Canberra | 10-13 February 2009



**EMA invites you to help shape the future of Australian emergency management.**

The traditional emergencies for which we have planned in the past may not adequately cover the real risks that Australia may face in the future.

The Australian Disasters Conference 2009 – *Surviving Future Risks* – is a major national conference, endorsed by Government, to explore the future disaster risk environment for Australia. The conference outcome is to recommend future ways to enhance mitigation and preparedness measures and build community resilience to meet these new challenges.

Expert speakers have been invited to address the four key conference sub-themes:

- **the changing face of crisis management** – a convergence of consequence management and crisis management
- **global warming** – potential impact and consequences
- **the catastrophic event** – identifying risk and mitigation strategies, and
- **recovery** – surviving the impact and consequences of a major disaster event.

This conference is designed for key stakeholders at the local, state and national level who have a role in emergency management, including government agencies, volunteers, business and industry, non-government organisations, research and professional bodies, and community organisations.

**For further information or to register on-line, visit the EMA website at: [www.ema.gov.au](http://www.ema.gov.au)**



**'safer sustainable communities'**