

Foreword

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In Australia and our region recently, there has been an acknowledgment of the need to broaden the 'traditional' national security agenda to include a nation's response to natural disasters, or what we have always known as 'emergency management'... This has resulted in the better alignment of nation-wide security issues such

as counter-terrorism with the response to national disasters. This acknowledgement is welcome and brings with it the opportunity to better plan and implement a nation-wide strategy for the development of national security capability at the Commonwealth and State and Territory level.

To reflect this broader push towards a more disaster resilient Australia, the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department has recently undergone an organisational restructure, effective 2 March 2009. The new structure aims to ensure a Department that is better aligned to meet the Government's current and emerging priorities. The new structure takes into account the priorities outlined by the Prime Minister in his inaugural *National Security Statement 2008* and the outcomes of the *Review of Homeland and Border Security* ('the Smith Review'), which take an all-hazards approach to national security. Those reviews were outlined in the February edition of AJEM and can be sourced at www.ema.gov.au.

The former Emergency Management Australia has changed significantly within the restructure. It is now responsible for a broader range of national security crisis coordination, including operational responses to natural hazards, terrorism and other crises of national significance. It also incorporates the National Security Hotline, disaster relief, dignitary protection and protective security. My colleague, Tony Pearce, is the Director General of this new division of the Department.

The policy and capability development areas of the 'old' EMA have now been moved into different divisions within the Attorney-General's Department. Emergency management professional and public education and information management now sits within the National Security Capability Development Division, under my direction.

This restructure gives us the opportunity to look five years hence and scope the future capability requirements for Australian communities. Without information, research and knowledge-sharing it will be difficult to accurately determine what is really required. This is where products such as the Australian Journal of Emergency Management and networks like Australasian Libraries in the Emergency Sector (ALIES) play a key role.

The government places great importance on whole-of-government coordination and cooperation, including with regional partners. ALIES very much reflects this priority and has an important role to play in the continuous improvement of the national security environment, by enhancing access to, and facilitating, the rapid and high quality exchange and sharing of information within the sector. The important role that information and knowledge-sharing plays in influencing cultural change within agencies and sectors cannot be overstated and it is in this environment that ALIES has an important responsibility to its clients as well as its parent agencies.

The annual ALIES conference recently held at the Emergency Management Institute at Mt Macedon provided an opportunity for library professionals representing member libraries from national security, such as the Australian Federal Police, Australian Customs Service and others including New Zealand Police, to interact with members from the traditional emergency management and emergency service libraries.

In this broader national security environment it will be very important to ensure that the future ALIES library membership and user base are reflective of this new direction in government policy.

I hope you enjoy this edition of AJEM which provides an update on the Victorian bushfires and floods in Queensland and New South Wales, as well as a new section titled *National Security News* incorporating the latest government briefs in relation to emergency management.

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