

EMA'S GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

In November 2008, EMA held its last graduation for the currently accredited Graduate Certificate in Emergency Management. The Graduate Certificate was first offered in May 2004 and 68 students have graduated to date.

This qualification was specifically designed to provide training for people working in the emergency management sector who required professional development at postgraduate level. Students examined their management skills especially managing relationships within the multi-agency context; were engaged in debate in relation to emergency management theory and practice; contributed to and analysed innovation and change in emergency management; and contributed to the national emergency management research agenda from a practice base.

The Certificate comprised of four modules: Current issues and trends in emergency management, Relationships management in an emergency management context, Research methods and a Research project.

Equitability in the provision by States and Territories of personal hardship and distress assistance

Bronwyn Watson

**Senior Caseworker
NSW Department of Community Services**

All the States/Territories of Australia have arrangements that provide financial support to individuals and families, who have been impacted by disasters and critical events. These funds are known as Disaster Relief Assistance Schemes. While each State and Territory has its own criteria for assessing which individual or family is eligible for assistance, the financial arrangements for the distribution of Personal Hardship and Distress Assistance (within the Disaster Relief Assistance Scheme), vary between each State/Territory. These variations in assistance measures can impact on the ability of individuals and families to recover from a disaster event, dependant on the amount of assistance provided by each State/Territory.

A proportion of the Disaster Relief Assistance Scheme Funds, come directly from the States/Territories, but can, in significant natural disaster events, be supplemented by Commonwealth Funds, supplied under the National Disaster Relief Arrangements. This work shows that there does exist differing levels of assistance between States/Territories in the provision of Personal Hardship and Distress (PH&D) Assistance despite recommendations by COAG in 2001 to:

Ensure equitable assistance and support to individuals and communities affected by comparable natural disasters across Australia.

(COAG, 2004 p. viii)

Up to date information was obtained from each State/Territory on the current assistance rates, and any issues relating to the distribution of PH&D funds for 2008. Using the case study of a disaster impacted family, whose circumstances were transposed to each State/Territory, outcomes were obtained that clarified the assistance given to the family, as well as the consequences of residing in differing States/Territories in Australia. Only one State was able to meet the needs of the family enabling them to return to their home, following the disaster event described. The findings of this work show that there does not exist equitable assistance and support to individuals and families affected by comparable natural disaster in the States/Territories of Australia. While assistance remains available for assessed families in all of the States/Territories of Australia, the only consistent application of funds being provided to victims of a disaster event, are those provided by the Federal Government under the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP). In all, the assistance measures provided by the States/Territories remain "ad hoc and disparate" (COAG, 2004 p. viii).

To obtain a copy of the full report please contact:

Bronwyn Watson

Telephone: (02) 4424 5100

Email: Bronwyn.Watson@community.nsw.gov.au