

Foreword

THE AUSTRALIAN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

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The Hon Allen Fairhall, MP, then Commonwealth Minister for the Interior and Works, opened the Australian Civil Defence School on 2 July 1956. During his speech he emphasised the need for the greatest cooperation between the Commonwealth and State Governments; the important role of local government; and for students to be drawn from all walks of life to provide a nucleus of trained civil defence workers.

These sentiments are just as valid today as they were some 54 years ago and remain a pivotal cornerstone for the now *Australian Emergency Management Institute* (AEMI). This is especially relevant in the current context - that of creating a more Disaster Resilient Australia.

As the Institute celebrated its golden jubilee in 2006, it reflected on fifty years of development and achievement as a leading educational establishment whose primary focus has been and remains, on measures to mitigate, minimise, or alleviate human suffering in the event of an emergency or disaster.

2010 marks another new beginning for the Institute as the Attorney-General's Department strives to establish AEMI as a *Centre of Excellence* in the delivery of knowledge and skills development within the emergency management sector. Its primary focus will remain the development and delivery of vocational education and training. Together with promoting best practice community awareness and education in emergency management and a strong strategic research function,

AEMI will be a key component of Government efforts to build a more disaster resilient Australia.

AEMI will continue to support the development of emergency management related capability within government and non-government sectors, with the owners and operators of critical infrastructure, and Australia's emergency management volunteers.

In striving to become a centre of excellence, AEMI is going through a period of revitalisation, which will see it become more strategically aligned and connected with national needs and priorities; more client and partnership focused; innovative and technologically astute; and focused on quality assurance and continuous improvement.

To steer AEMI towards these goals, a new governance regime has been established comprising an AEMI Board and a stakeholder based Advisory Group. Both the Board and Advisory Group will assist in the recognition of nationwide capability gaps, identification of significant emerging issues, the design of effective products, monitoring performance and quality assurance and ensuring an alignment with broader national security policy direction. It is my pleasure to Chair the Board as the Institute embarks on this new phase.

Of course, AEMI is but one piece in the national security and emergency management capability development jigsaw. I'm pleased to see AEMI is actively seeking to establish communities of interest in key areas to build a more informed, strategic and integrated approach to capability development and disaster resilience. For instance, it has started to work towards building a strong relationship with organisations such as the National Security College and the Australian Institute of Police Management. It is also actively seeking out partnerships within the tertiary and private sectors to supplement its capabilities and thereby provide a better national capability development and disaster resilience outcome.

This edition of AJEM focuses on AEMI and also features the 2010 Volunteers in Action Photographic Competition, the 2010 Queen's Birthday honours for the emergency management sector, as well as a diverse range of papers across the all-hazards and national security environment. I trust you will find this a valuable and enjoyable edition, and encourage any comments you may have. Please address any correspondence to ajem@dag.gov.au.