

# Foreword

John Bates, Director, Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience



Welcome to the January edition of the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*. This is the first edition to go to press after the launch on 17 November 2015 of the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience. The Institute is a partnership between the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council, the Australian Red Cross and the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre; working closely with the Commonwealth Government to deliver professional development products and services on behalf of Emergency Management Australia.

This is a unique point in time for Australia to advance its approach to disaster resilience and to collectively respond to the many ongoing and emerging issues in this sector. The partnership brings together a wide range of emergency management expertise from operational, humanitarian and research backgrounds. It will share and build on the extensive knowledge and experience in emergency management from Australia and internationally to deliver improved practices and outcomes.

Disasters are an inevitable part of life in Australia. It is not possible to prevent or avoid them completely but it is possible for us to better mitigate against, prepare for, respond to and recover from them. We can reduce the impact they have on individuals, communities, the natural environment and the economy by working together to pool our expertise and knowledge. To do this, we need to be better prepared to learn from each event and from other sectors and to have the courage

to implement new ways of approaching the challenges and disasters that will inevitably confront us.

Improving national resilience through education and training will require our energy to be directed to mitigation, our preparations, our response efforts and the way we recover from disasters. The Institute will lead that charge and will build on the experience of the former Australian Emergency Management Institute to deliver education and training, publications, events, and other products and services that meet the goal of improving resilience across Australia.

To be truly resilient as a sector and, importantly, in our communities, now is the time to think differently. We need to identify further ways to develop our capability and enhance our competency to be able to deal with the unpredictable and unimagined. Understanding how we think in dealing with disasters and emergencies is a key part of better equipping the nation's resilience. This notion has been a driving principle behind the establishment of the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience.

I am looking forward to engaging with many of you in coming months as the Institute establishes itself as your partner in building national resilience across all hazards, all agencies, and all communities.

This edition of the journal provides an opportunity for you to learn more about some of the initiatives already in place to improve our disaster resilience. I hope the information will help you as you make your significant local contributions to our national resilience capabilities.

**Dr John Bates**  
**Director, Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience**