

2017 Lessons Management Workshop

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In November 2017, 45 lessons practitioners from across the country spent the day analysing observations from their agencies to identify consistent and recurring issues across the sector.

Participants came from the state emergency services, police, fire, land management, health, defence as well as local, state and the Australian Government.

The Lessons Management Workshop identified insights across sectors and jurisdictions from exercises and operations and allowed experienced lessons practitioners to collaborate and new lessons practitioners to learn. The lessons methodology used for the workshop drew on the Observations-Insights-Lessons Model (OIL) as documented in the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook 8: Lessons Management (2013)¹, which was developed from the OIL model used by the Australian Centre for Army Lessons.

The workshop was divided into three parts. The first part involved groups coding a data set (in excess of 1500 observations) from multiple jurisdictions to identify themes specific to a focus area. The focus areas were:

- multi-agency interoperability
- decision-making during crisis
- command, control and coordination
- getting from lessons identified to lessons learnt and learning culture
- new and emerging themes.

The second part of the workshop involved groups drafting, presenting and validating the insights to reflect the themes identified in the relevant focus area. The third part involved a debrief of the activity and lessons management generally.

The debrief identified that:

- the OIL process did work
- small groups of experienced lesson analysts with diverse experience can add value by taking an agency neutral approach to collaborative analysis
- there were minor variances in approaches and definitions of lessons terminology between agencies and jurisdictions that resulted in different applications of the process and therefore outcomes when producing insights
- there were inconsistencies in the data including quality of observations and the format in which they were presented.

The report on the insights developed for each of the focus areas is available on the AFAC website.²

Noting that this activity was a workshop, the available data were incomplete and neither the inputs nor the insights were approved on any level. The group tasked with looking at new and emerging themes identified as issues:

- Responder health - despite the existence of policy, doctrine and training associated with providing responder health management, there remains significant inconsistency in the application.
- Fatigue management - is not consistently managed throughout all phases of an incident. Planning deployments and work cycles must be sensitive to the conditions and context of operations.
- Immediate medical response - multiple incidents have identified the importance of embedding a medical response capability into initial response. Observations related to both fire and flood incidents.

None of these insights are suggested to be conclusive due to the data available and the environment in which they were developed but they are offered as an example of how lessons can be used proactively to inform learning.

The one-day lessons analysis workshop followed the second national Lessons Management Forum hosted by the AFAC Knowledge Innovation and Research Utilisation Network in August 2017.

¹ Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook 8: Lessons Management 2013. At: <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-8-lessons-management/>

² National Lessons Management Forum 2017. At: <https://www.afac.com.au/initiative/research/free-article/national-lessons-management-forum-2017>