

# NATIONAL EMERGENCY



A.I.E.S.

## RESPONSE

Official Journal of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services

VOLUME 28 NO. 4 SPRING 2015

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Ph: (03) 9937 0200  
Fax: (03) 9937 0201  
Email: admin@cwaustral.com.au  
ACN: 30 086 202 093

#### EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor: Kristi High  
Associate Editor: Ron Jones LFAIES

Send articles for inclusion to:  
Email: editor@aies.net.au

#### WEBSITE

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Spring 2015 • National Emergency Response

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**FRONT COVER**  
Two NSW Police officers stand guard at the Lindt Café, post siege, 17 December 2014.  
Photo by Wes Eggins



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The Conference will feature multi-agency presentations covering all phases of emergency and disaster management – prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. There will be representation by fire, ambulance, emergency, rescue, volunteer, defence and health sectors.

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## to *National Emergency Response*

Submissions now open for the Summer edition of *National Emergency Response*.

We are looking for:

- Stories or articles
- Peer reviewed papers
- Photographs

Send your submission to [editor@aies.net.au](mailto:editor@aies.net.au) by Friday 13 November.

The best submission, as voted by the National Council, receives a gold pen award at each year’s Annual General Meeting.



# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Steve **Jenkins** MAIES

## National President

It is with great pleasure that I present this, my inaugural AIES National President's Report.

I am honoured that my fellow National Council members have elected me to the position for a three-year period.

I would like to thank Vice President Scott Milne for filling in as the National President recently, and I echo his kind words and gratitude to retiring General Registrar Bob Maul who has committed almost four decades to this organisation. I hope Bob and his wife now enjoy his well-earned retirement years.

As indicated by Scott in the last edition of the *National Emergency Response Journal*, there are a number of new faces on the AIES senior executive. Further information on the National Council members is available on the AIES website. This provides the organisation with an opportunity to progress with some new ideas in mind, some of which have already been implemented. I will expand on these, and in future journals.

As Scott advised, a new Constitution and associated Rules for AIES were approved at the Annual General Meeting in Sydney on 22 May 2015. These documents contain the necessary provisions to allow the senior executive to progress initiatives in a much more timely and fluent manner than was possible under the previous Articles of Association. My appreciation goes to Queensland member Mick Davis in particular, and those who assisted him, for his efforts over a number of years in drafting the new Constitution and Rules. These documents are available on the AIES website.

Specific provisions of the new Constitution require the National Council to establish a Finance Committee, and a Risk and Audit Committee, to oversee AIES activities. Progress towards establishing these committees was made during a recent meeting of the National Council. Further advice in relation to these committees will be provided once membership is finalised and the Terms of Reference for each is drafted.

The new Constitution will allow also the National Council to create other

committees for specific purposes, and requires us to develop a Strategic Plan for the organisation as a matter of priority. To achieve this, a Strategic Plan Committee has been established. Joining me on this committee are National Treasurer David Mack (SA) and President of the Victorian Division and former National President Alan Marshall. As part of the planning process, all AIES members will be invited to have input and I strongly encourage you all to have your say when the time comes.

Non-voting Directors can now be appointed to the National Council. I am pleased to advise the appointment of our first non-voting Director, Associate Professor Brett Aimers, who is the Assistant Director of the Protective Security Training College, which is part of Emergency Management Australia within the Australian Government's Attorney-General's Department. Brett has also been included as a member of the Strategic Plan Committee.

In further progressing initiatives to improve the AIES, the National Council has endorsed the inclusion of a male and female youth representative on each of the State Divisional Management Committees. Volunteers are integral to emergency management and the promotion and support of young people being involved in emergency management is considered vital to ensure volunteering continues into the future. I encourage any AIES members under the age of 25 who are interested in representing youth volunteers to approach their respective state division.

I am privileged to be nominated by the National Council as the AIES representative on the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum (AEMVF). The AEMVF is facilitated by the Australian Government through Emergency Management Australia and comprises representatives from a wide variety of volunteer organisations across Australia. I will provide more information on the AEMVF and their activities in future editions of this journal.

With the retirement of Bob Maul, the *National Emergency Response Journal* has a new sub-editor, Ron Jones, President of the Tasmania Division. This was one of the many tasks undertaken by Bob; tasks that



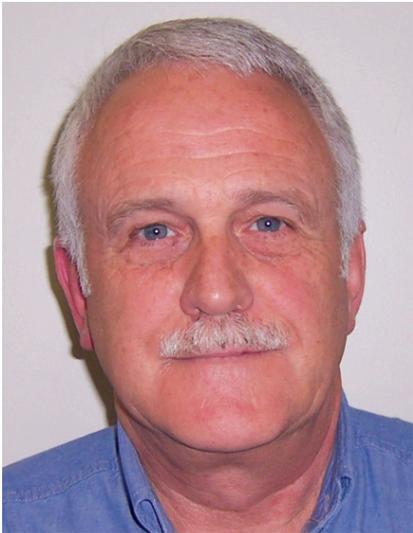
were continually expanding and requiring more and more attention individually. Accordingly, with the approval of the new Constitution, the National Council has separated the role of sub-editor from other duties previously performed solely by Bob.

Another duty that now stands alone is Company Secretary. Peter Schar, recently retired from the South Australia Police, has been appointed to this role, and he has relinquished his position as President of the South Australia Division to concentrate more fully on Company Secretary duties. Peter's replacement as President for the South Australia Division is Brian Mattner, also an officer with the South Australia Police and former President of the South Australia Division. I welcome and congratulate Brian on his re-appointment to this position.

This year's Australia and New Zealand Disaster Management Conference (ANZDMC) held at the Gold Coast was a huge success with just under 500 delegates attending. In 2016 the Australian Institute of Emergency Services will again join the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, Australia & New Zealand Mental Health Association, and the Association for Sustainability in Business to deliver the EARTH, FIRE and RAIN-themed conference, which addresses planning, response and the introduction of innovative techniques in management of disasters, emergencies and hazards. Further details are available page 2 of this journal.

I believe the future for AIES is bright, and I look forward to reporting in further *National Emergency Response Journals* on the successful implementation of additional initiatives that are in the pipeline. ●

# COUNCIL COLLABORATIONS – IS THIS THE NEW NORMAL?



By: *Emergency Management Network Solutions Principal consultant*

**Doug Caulfield, OAM, RFD, MIAEM, MIAES**



*This peer-reviewed paper was presented at the Australian and New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management Conference in Broadbeach, QLD, on 3-5 May 2015. This paper has been slightly edited to meet the style of the National Emergency Response Journal.*

The catastrophic impacts of the Victorian bushfires in February of 2009 unleashed a wave of reforms to emergency management procedures not seen since the response to The Ash Wednesday Fires more than two and a half decades before (February 1984). The outcomes of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission resulted (among other things) in the introduction of a revised Act of Parliament, The *Emergency Management Act 2013*, the purpose of which was to establish new governance arrangements for emergency management in Victoria, repeal the Fire Services Commissioner Act, 2010 and consequently amend legislation and certain other Acts<sup>1</sup>.

One of the most significant outcomes to emerge from this major review of arrangements in Victoria was the formation of Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) and the consequential appointment of an Emergency Management Commissioner.

Among the key deliverables mandated in the new Act<sup>2</sup>, the Emergency Management Commissioner's responsibilities include such functions as control of response activities (including the appointment of a State Response Controller for Class 1 emergencies in Victoria), community warnings about fires, consequence management, recovery, operational standards for

responder agencies and incident management operating procedures. The commissioner is also charged with the responsibility to coordinate data collection and impact assessment processes and, providing advice to the Minister on any matter relating to the functions of the Emergency Management Commissioner.

Whilst all of these functions present significant challenges in terms of change management across the entire emergency management sector, there are two in particular that have been the catalyst for change opportunity within local government's involvement in relation to its 'traditional' role. They are consequence management and incident management operating procedures.

Consequence management now assumes a high priority in incident control consideration. In order to fully embrace the ramifications of consequence management, the Emergency Management Commissioner (through Emergency Management Victoria) issued updated operating instructions in relation to Emergency Management Teams (EMTs)<sup>3</sup>. Simply put, the role of the EMT is to enhance decision making by 'enriching' discussion during the concept of operations stage of planning therefore leading to more informed decision making during the Incident Action Plan formulation.

By facilitating this engagement with the multi-agency EMT during the concept of operations planning phase, incident controllers have, at their disposal, representatives of agencies capable of input of vital information and observations that can lead to a consolidated assessment of the plan under consideration. No one incident controller could (or should) be expected to have such a level of in-depth comprehension of things such as community culture, geographic influences, historical precedent and a good appreciation of that particular community resilience capability as is possible when drawing on the collective knowledge and experience of representatives from local, key stakeholder agencies. This is of particular benefit when (as can be the case in most prolonged events) an incident controller can be drawn from outside the area under threat.

It is this principle that has opened the door to change in the way that local government can participate in the emergency management process. This change presented real opportunity for local government to significantly improve its ability to plan and execute relief and recovery activities based on 'real time' and (potentially) more accurate



situational awareness than has been possible in the past.

To have local government embedded in the EMT at incident level will not only be of major benefit to the incident controller, who will be seeking informed input from the EMT membership, but it will also provide the ability for local government to 'extract' information from briefings and discussions at the incident control level. This information will be vital for relief and recovery planning as well as decision making at the municipal coordination centre. The potential for improved timeliness of this process cannot be understated.

Post incident reviews of most emergency events continually highlight the need to improve inter-agency communication and cooperation. Past practice of establishing multiple control and coordination centres has presented difficulties in both communication and liaison between locations as the sharing of intelligence is both labour intensive and places excessive demands on emergency management resources. These issues are particularly prevalent within rural and regional councils where staffing levels, the ability to maintain operational readiness, and the tyranny of distance can be significant challenges.

As a result, the quality and timeliness of information provided to local government on which to plan and act in the best interests of the community has sometimes been compromised. As alluded to earlier, overshadowing these concerns is the diminishing resource base and the negative impact this has on the ability of councils to continually maintain a trained and effective emergency management work force in sufficient number to meet response agency expectations.

The work being carried out by the six councils that constitute the Gippsland Emergency Management Region in Victoria in terms of the production of a set of universal procedures during response and recovery addresses several of these significant challenges.

Firstly, having a set of agreed, documented universal practices enables councils to 'share' resources, particularly when (as is the case in most instances in the region) an event is prolonged and usually encroaches on more than one municipality at a time, or, from one to another in a linear progression.

Secondly, by being able to rely on support from adjoining municipalities, there is a reduced requirement to maintain a larger number of trained and capable staff, and while this is not ideal; it is an unfortunate reality given the current fiscal restraint that most councils are implementing.

Thirdly, this concept of interoperability and a common understanding of custom and practice will ensure maximum effectiveness when one council is re-enforced by another. Hand-over/take-over is streamlined through the mutual understanding of the task to be undertaken and service capability is improved by virtue of continuity of operation with minimal interruption.

The Municipal Association of Victoria recently convened a workshop of collaboration groups operating across Victoria and it was significant to note that there were approximately ten groups or clusters of councils throughout the State who were working on a variety of projects. Most projects were designed to reduce the demand on individual council staffs and, at the same time,



seeking to maintain capability to enable the expectations of both legislation and constituents to be met.

There is some thought being given to ensuring that these simultaneous efforts are somehow regularly monitored to ensure that cross-referral is possible during the course of the individual project life. This initiative would lead to better channels of information sharing across council developments and improve co-ordination of effort which potentially would yield benefit well beyond the collaboration or cluster group of participating councils.

Time will tell if there is an appetite for a mechanism to enable individual cluster or collaboration projects to be synchronised in the future (both at the application and implementation stage) but one thing that does remain constant is the never ending quest for increasing capability and capacity within an environment of funding or resource tension.

From the point of view of the current project being undertaken in the Gippsland Region of Victoria, (and, for the other projects underway across the State) there is no doubt about the level of commitment on the part of the councils concerned to achieve the collective goal of the group which is to assemble a set of agreed practices that will provide universal standard operating procedures in preparation for, during, and after any major emergency event.

From the Gippsland perspective, this process has already provided benefits across the region in the form of a similar set of SOPs for the establishment and operation of Emergency Relief Centres that have been successfully used on numerous occasions. Given the current number of collaboration and cluster projects underway in Victoria, one might argue that this might herald the arrival of 'The new normal'. ●

- 1 Emergency Management Act 2013
- 2 Emergency Management Act 2013, Part 4, Section 32
- 3 Emergency Management Team Arrangements for all emergencies (October 2014) EMV

# TASSIE AWARDS WRAP-UP

Highlighting and recognising the outstanding efforts of our emergency service personnel.

Ron Jones LFAIES

*Tasmanian President*



Back (L-R) P.J Parssey award nominees David Purcell, Ron Jones, Gary Linnell, Ronald Denne (RSL award photo bomber), Richard Elliott, John Duncombe.  
Front (L-R) Bruce Corbett and Katrina Chivers.



(L-R) Ron Jones and Gary Linnell.

Each year the Tasmanian Division of the AIES runs and supports a number of awards around the state.

The Emergency Service Volunteer Worker of the Year is run by the Tasmanian Broadcasters Radio Stations. This award recognises the valuable work of the emergency service volunteers in their regions. The five regional awards are promoted through the group's eight radio stations around the state.

Winners included Richard Elliott from Kentish SES Unit, John Duncombe from Burnie SES Unit and Wynyard Fire Brigade, Gary Linnell from Eaglehawk Neck Fire Brigade and Ambulance Tasmania, David Purcell from Scottsdale Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service, and Dianne Coon from Ambulance Tasmania



(L-R) RSL Emergency Service Worker award nominees Rod Warrington, Ronald Denne, Brian Randall and RSL Vice President Terry Roe.



(L-R) AIES President Tasmania Ron Jones, RSL Emergency Worker of the Year winner Rod Warrington and RSL Vice President Kerry Roe.



(L-R) RACT representative Kathy Stocks, PJ Parssey Memorial Award winner Gary Linnell, Betty Parssey and AIES President Tasmania Ron Jones.

at Strahan, who won the 20<sup>th</sup> 7XS Emergency Service Volunteer Worker of the Year Award.

Each of these winners were automatically nominated for the 25<sup>th</sup> annual PJ Parssey Memorial Award along with Katrina Chivers from the Tasmanian Police at Burnie who was nominated directly. This special award was established in 1990 and named in recognition of the late Peter Parssey, a long serving board member. It is supported by RACT and open to all emergency service personnel and groups to recognise their outstanding efforts to their service and their community.

This year's winner of the 2015 PJ Parssey Memorial Award was Gary Linnell, who was presented a trophy by

Betty Parssey, Peter's widow, and a travel voucher presented by sponsor RACT representative Kathy Stocks.

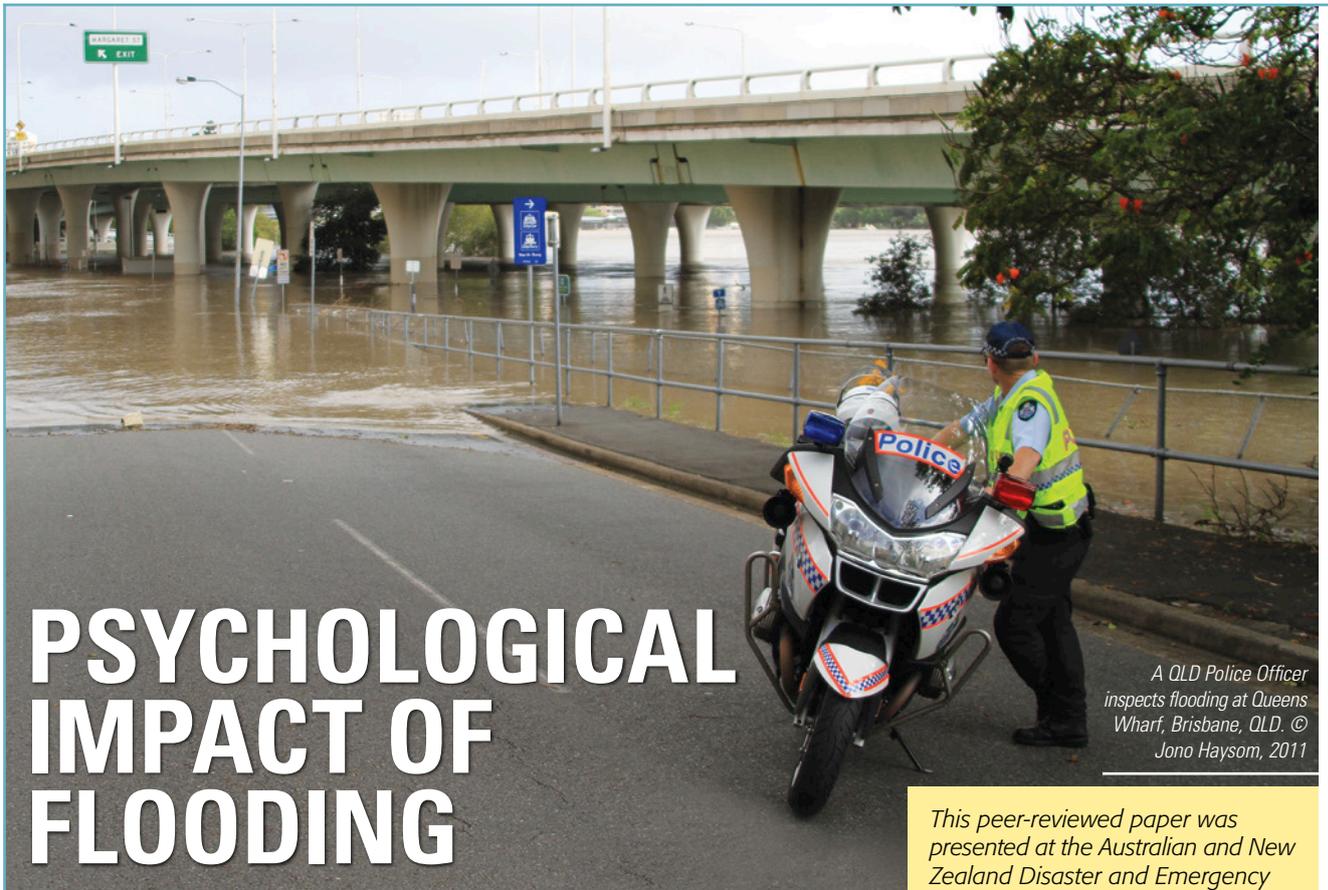
In 2013, the AIES Tasmania formed a partnership with the Tasmanian RSL to promote and support all emergency service personnel to become affiliated members of their local RSL sub branch. This partnership has now grown with the Tasmanian RSL wanting to recognise the efforts of Tasmanian emergency service personnel by having their own award – the Spirit of the Anzac Emergency Service Worker of the Year.

Nominees for this award included Rod Warrington from the Tasmanian Police, Ronald Denne from Longford Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service and Brian Randall from Wynyard Fire Brigade.

Tasmanian RSL Vice President Terry Roe presented the three nominees with an RSL plaque and announced Rod Warrington as this year's winner of the RSL Emergency Worker of the Year.

All of the volunteers in this year's awards were presented with a certificate from Volunteering Tasmania in recognition of their achievements.

A favourite award each year is the Murphy Award, which recognises a member for the 'blooper' of year. In our line of work, a little bit of humour goes a long way. This could be awarded for a silly mistake or slip of the tongue. Some great silly prizes are awarded. We don't have any nominations for this award as yet, but there is still time to dob in a mate! ●



*A QLD Police Officer inspects flooding at Queens Wharf, Brisbane, QLD. © Jono Haysom, 2011*

# PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF FLOODING

Stress during the rebuilding phase influenced mental health following two Queensland flood disasters more than the event itself.

*This peer-reviewed paper was presented at the Australian and New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management Conference in Broadbeach, QLD, on 3-5 May 2015. This paper has been slightly edited to meet the style of the National Emergency Response Journal.*

By Kelly M **Dixon**, Ian M **Shochet** and Jane **Shakespeare-Finch**

*from the Queensland University of Technology School of Psychology and Counselling*

**F**looding is the most common and deadly kind of natural disaster, accounting for 48.2 per cent of reported natural disasters and affecting 32 million people globally in 2013 (Crabtree, 2013; Guha-Sapir et al., 2014).

Floods are very common in Australia, and 2008 and 2011 saw widespread flooding across the country. In early 2008 around two-thirds of the state of Queensland was affected by floodwaters and Queensland was again severely flooded in 2011, including the state capital, Brisbane. The 2011 events were even more devastating in terms of lives lost and property damage. The 2010-2011 series of floods and cyclones have been estimated to have affected about 1.7 million Queensland adults in some way, with 24,000 adults reporting persisting distress five months later (Clemens et al., 2013).

Posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety are all commonly reported following disasters (Norris et al., 2002),

although resilience (a brief transient stress reaction followed by stable functioning) is the most common psychological outcome (Bonanno et al., 2007). A number of variables have been identified as potential risk or protective factors, including severity of disaster exposure (Neria et al., 2008), subjective trauma experience (Ozer et al., 2008), self-efficacy (Benight & Bandura, 2004; Hirschel & Schulenberg, 2009), and prior psychiatric history (McMillen et al., 2002; Ozer et al., 2008). However, it is not clear which of these factors are most important in predicting positive and negative psychological outcomes.

In addition, while it is clear that it can take many months for life to return to normal following a disaster, few studies have investigated the psychological impact of the protracted rebuilding and recovery phase in the aftermath. A qualitative study of the Carlisle, UK, 2005 flood (Carroll et al., 2010) found that

participants attributed their psychological symptoms to flood-related stress factors that continued during the long rebuilding phase, which in many cases lasted over a year. They identified primary flood-related stressors such as danger from the floodwaters, damage to property and possessions, evacuation, issues related to being displaced, and living conditions while homes were damaged. They also identified secondary stress factors such as disputes with insurance companies, builders and other agencies during this repair phase. However, few quantitative studies have investigated the impact of the length of time taken to rebuild homes, or the impact of secondary stressors during the aftermath period.

There is a well-established literature causally linking both episodic and chronic stress with depression, in particular (Hammen, 2005). While most people who are exposed to a negative life event do not become depressed,



Mackay floods, 2008. © Leanne Last

there is strong evidence that the majority of episodes of depression are preceded by a stressful life event. Further, there is evidence that there is a strong relationship between the number and severity of stressful events and depression (Kendler et al., 1998). The research regarding chronic or ongoing stress, while receiving less research attention than episodic stress and being hampered by difficulties with definitions, provides evidence that chronic stress may be a more potent predictor of depression than acute stress (Hammen, 2005; McGonagle & Kessler, 1990).

Stress (both acute and chronic) has been found to impact negatively on mental and physical health. Current neurobiological understanding of the physiological stress response suggests that very intense or prolonged stress can result in inflammatory processes in the brain that affect brain functioning and contribute to the onset or maintenance of some psychiatric illnesses such as posttraumatic stress disorder, major depression, anxiety disorders and schizophrenia (García-Bueno et al., 2008).

The current research aimed to investigate the factors predicting psychological outcomes following two Australian floods using a mixed methods design. The first study was a qualitative study that aimed to explore which aspects of the flood and its aftermath affected people found to be most stressful. The second study, using a questionnaire developed from the themes identified in the first study, investigated the role of flood-related stressors in predicting posttraumatic stress symptoms and depression, while a range of known predictive factors were held constant.



Kids play in their flooded street near Mackay, 2008.

## STUDY 1

The first study was a qualitative study of people affected by the 2008 flood that impacted the northern Australian town of Mackay. This study has been reported on in more detail in Dixon et al. (2015), and only relevant aspects will be summarised here. The aim was to explore what it was like to live through the flood, with a focus on the aspects of the flood and its aftermath that were particularly stressful or helpful for affected people.

### STUDY 1 METHOD

Semi-structured interviews were conducted 18-20 months post-flood, with 16 adults (10 females and 6 males). Participants ranged in age from 31 to 82 years, with a mean age of 50.25 years ( $SD = 15.22$ ). Participants were asked what they found to be most stressful during their flood experience; what support and services they found to be helpful or unhelpful; how the flood affected their psychological health and well-being; and what strategies they found to be helpful in coping with the stress caused by the flood.

### STUDY 1 RESULTS

The following is a summary of the results regarding flood-related stress factors. Thematic analysis identified two constituent themes concerning flood related stressors: stressors that

occurred on the day of the flood and those that occurred during the aftermath. Day of the flood stressors included three dimensions: frightening experiences, worry about others and feeling helpless. Table 1 provides illustrative quotes for each of these dimensions. All names are pseudonyms.

Table 1. Day of the flood stressors.

Frightening experiences	"I think that was the worst part, that strong current. So the worst, the most stressful thing was, yeah, I thought we may well die." (Patricia, 52)
Worry about others (including pets)	"The first thing the cat did was jump down and start swimming back into the house... It's really hard when you've got pets." (Tracey, 31)
Feeling helpless	"I suppose cause it was such a shock, because there wasn't a warning and nobody knew what was going on, it was sort of what do we do? Does anyone know, what's going on? We need someone in charge." (Melissa, 33)

Most participants described some aspect of the aftermath when asked what the most stressful aspect of the flood was. The most commonly mentioned aftermath stressors comprised eight dimensions. Table 2 provides some illustrative quotes.

Table 2. *Aftermath stressors.*

Insurance issues	"My insurance company were a bit slow to come to the rescue. And they made me get quotes for absolutely everything. I had to write down every single thing that had been destroyed from you know, like a tablecloth to a lawnmower and I had to then get that quoted on by the big stores." (Melissa, 33)
Clean up	"There was a big thick mould all over the ceiling and all on the carpets. The sewerage had also backed up... So I think the biggest problem with that was the mammoth clean-up process, and things weren't just wet." (Rachel, 32)
Problems with rebuild	"The ongoing thing of what are [the builders] going to be like when I talk to them this time? You know, they haven't done this right... I think the time it took to get back into the house was probably the thing. It just went on and on and on and on." (Rachel, 32)
Disruption to normal life	"We have a leasing business, our main source of income you could say, and I had a small [suitcase] full of documents. And that nearly drove me nuts keeping up with those and making sure they didn't get in a mess [during multiple moves]." (Doug, 82)
Failure of expected support	"They don't understand what it's like. They don't understand how much work it is and say well, at least you've got insurance. So yes, I have got insurance so that's good. However they don't understand the work that's involved in sorting it all out." (Darlene, 44)
Loss of possessions	"If you'd had the time it would have been nice to sit down and try and resurrect some of the photos... No money can return those memories." (Bill, 56)
Relocation	"We were out of the unit for about three months. We had six moves... It was stressful moving from one place to another." (Mavis, 82)
Living in inadequate conditions	"We had nowhere else to go. We had no running water, we didn't have proper toilet facilities, it was awful." (Patricia, 52)



Queensland floods, 2011. © Brad Marsellos

## STUDY 2

The aim of this study was to investigate which factors best predicted psychological outcomes 7-9 months after the Brisbane 2011 flood and 3.5 years after the Mackay 2008 flood. In particular, this study aimed to investigate the role of factors that occurred in the aftermath of the floods in predicting outcomes. In order to do this a questionnaire was developed using themes identified in the qualitative study. Principal components analysis separated the flood-related stressors into two factors: aftermath stress and insurance experience. Other independent variables were chosen because they had been shown to influence outcomes in previous research: severity of disaster exposure, perceived trauma, prior mental health, and self-efficacy.

The specific hypothesis to be tested was as follows: Symptoms of posttraumatic stress and depression will be predicted by post-flood factors such as severity of perceived stress in the aftermath of the flood and stress related to the insurance claim process when controlling for known predisposing and flood-related predictors such as flood severity, perceived trauma, age, gender, prior mental health, and self-efficacy.

## STUDY 2 METHOD

Participants: the sample comprised 158 participants: 65 from Mackay (46 female and 19 male) and 93 from Brisbane (66 female and 27 male). The mean age was 50.98 years ( $SD = 14.28$ , range 21-87). Participants were recruited through letterbox drops in Brisbane 7-9 months after the 2011 flood and doorknocking in Mackay three and a half years post-flood. An online version was distributed via email to community and university networks. There were no significant differences between the two samples on any dependent or demographic variables.

## MEASURES:

*Posttraumatic stress symptoms:* The Impact of Events Scale – Revised (IES-R, Weiss & Marmar, 1997). The IES-R assesses posttraumatic stress symptoms during the last seven days in relation to a particular traumatic event and has three subscales: Avoidance (eight items eg "I stayed away from reminders about it."); Intrusions (seven items eg "Pictures about it popped into my mind.") and Hyperarousal (seven items eg "I was jumpy and easily startled.").

It has 22 items measured on a five-point Likert scale from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*extremely*).

**Depression:** The Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (short form) (DASS-21, Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). This scale comprises 21 items (seven of which assess depression) scored on a four-point Likert-style scale from 0 (*did not apply to me at all over the last week*) to 3 (*applied to me very much or most of the time over the past week*). Example items include "I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things," and "I felt that life was meaningless".

**Aftermath stress:** Flood Experience Questionnaire (FEQ, developed by the current authors from dimensions identified in the qualitative study). This factor assessed stress during the clean-up and rebuilding phases after the floods. Item examples included "During the months following the flood I felt exhausted," and "The clean-up following the flood was stressful." Items were rated on a six-point Likert-style scale from 0 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). A "Not applicable" option was also included.

**Insurance experience:** FEQ. This factor assessed the degree to which participants found the insurance claim process to be stressful. Item examples included "My insurance company's staff were helpful"; "I was given conflicting information about what to do regarding insurance;" and "Insurance adequately covered my losses." Items were rated on the same six-point scale described for Aftermath Stress.

**Insurance coverage:** Participants were asked "What level of insurance did you have at the time of the flood?". Response options were: "Fully insured"; "Not insured at all or inadequately insured"; or "Believed you were covered but the insurance company rejected the claim".

**Water height:** Participants were asked: "At the time of the flood, how much water came into your home?" Five response options ranged from "No significant inundation to home" to "Over 50cm water through entire home".

**Repair time:** Participants were asked "The time to repair your home to satisfactory standard was: "More than six months", "One to six months", "Less than one month", "No repairs required", or "Not applicable".

**Perceived trauma:** Participants were asked to rate how traumatic they found the flood experience to be on a seven-point scale from (0) "Not at all" to (6) "Extremely".

**General perceived self-efficacy:** The General Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale (GPSE, Scholz et al., 2002). It is a 10-item scale using a four-point Likert-style scale, ranging from 0 (*Not true*) to 3 (*Exactly true*). Example items are: "I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough," and "I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities."

**Prior mental health:** "In the months prior to the flood I was suffering from depression, anxiety or mental illness (Scale of 0-5)".

## STUDY 2 RESULTS

Hierarchical multiple regressions were performed in order to test the hypothesis. The factors entered into the first step were those found to be key predictors of psychological outcomes in past research. These included age, gender, prior mental health, perceived trauma, self-efficacy

and severity of flood exposure (water height and repair time). Together these control variables entered in the first step explained 28 per cent of the posttraumatic stress variance and 27 per cent of the variance in depression scores. The addition of aftermath stress and insurance experience added 9 per cent to the posttraumatic stress explained variance (increasing the total to 37 per cent) and a non-significant per cent of the variance in the case of depression.

Aftermath stress was the strongest predictor of posttraumatic stress symptoms, as shown in the plot of semi-partial correlations in Figure 1. Prior mental health and insurance experience also significantly predicted posttraumatic stress symptoms, but perceived trauma, floodwater height and repair time did not. Aftermath stress played a lesser role in predicting depression, but it approached significance and was a stronger predictor than either floodwater height or perceived trauma. Prior mental health, repair time and self-efficacy were the strongest predictors of depression, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Semi-partial correlations for the predictors of posttraumatic stress.

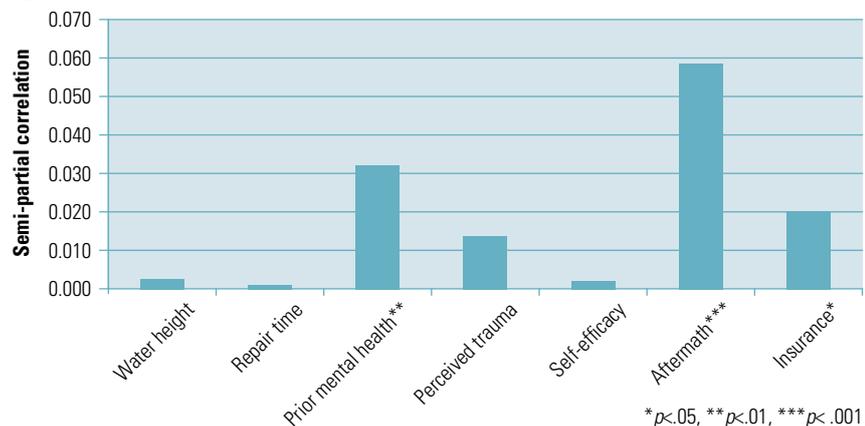
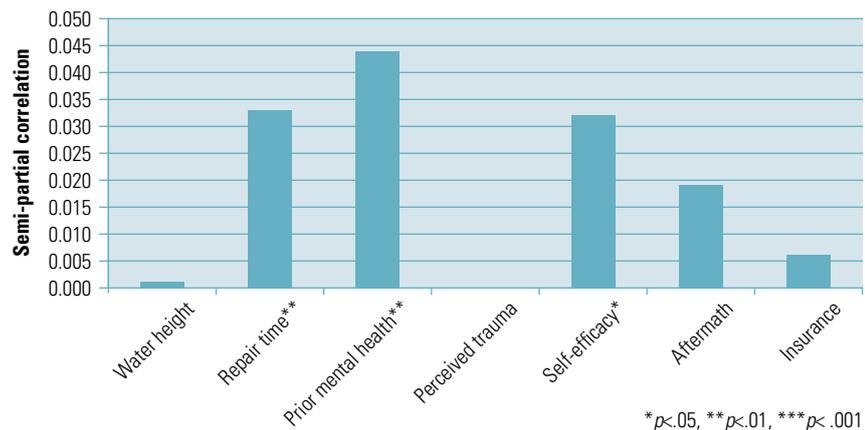


Figure 2. Semi-partial correlations for the predictors of depression.





Royal Australian Air Force personnel assisted communities in the clean up after the 2011 floods.



Playground at Colleges Crossing, Ipswich in South East Queensland, 2011.

One-way between groups analyses of variance (ANOVA) with Bonferroni posthoc tests were performed to determine if there were any differences in outcomes for the people who were fully insured, uninsured and those who had their claims rejected. Having an insurance claim rejected was associated with higher rates of depression,  $F(1,157) = 3.46, p=.028$ , and the PTSD symptom of avoidance, than being fully insured,  $F(1,157) = 3.05, p=.048$ . People who were not insured at all did not differ significantly from either group.

## DISCUSSION

The severity of stress in the protracted rebuilding phase following the floods was the strongest predictor of posttraumatic stress symptoms, even after controlling for a number of other variables including objective disaster severity and subjective trauma. The predictors of depression appear to be more complex, although aftermath stress was a stronger predictor than the events that occurred on the day of the flood. Interestingly, the length of time for homes to be repaired was a key predictor of depression, suggesting that the length of time living in disrupted circumstances was associated with the development of depression. This finding supports previous research on the links between chronic stress and depression (Hammen, 2005).

The finding that aftermath stress predicted poor psychological outcomes was corroborated by the qualitative data and some aspects have also been found in previous research. Study 1 participants typically described some element of aftermath stress when asked what they found to be the most stressful aspect of the flood, as did the majority of Study 2 participants. Post-disaster stressors have been found to impact psychological outcomes previously. For example,

(Norris & Uhl, 1993) found a mediating role for hurricane-related chronic stress on the relationship between acute stress and outcomes, and (Burnett et al., 1997) found that disruption during the rebuilding phase following a hurricane predicted poor mental health outcomes. Despite evidence that disaster aftermath stress can affect outcomes, it is not considered in the majority of disaster research to date.

This study found two ways in which insurance company practices can affect disaster victims' mental health. Firstly, people who expected that their homes were fully insured but had their claims rejected were significantly more likely to be depressed or have the PTSD symptom of avoidance than people who received an insurance payout. Secondly, a stressful experience with an insurance company predicted posttraumatic stress symptoms, even when other variables were controlled for. Both findings have significant implications for the insurance industry, and suggest that changes in policies and practices could reduce psychological distress following disasters.

The finding that the insurance claim process was a significant stressor is supported by qualitative data from Study 1. Interviewees who found their insurance company to be helpful described less stress overall, whereas those who had difficulty with the insurance process were more likely to describe the flood aftermath period as extremely stressful. Some of the difficulties Study 1 participants described included long and stressful telephone conversations, being given conflicting information by different insurance company staff members, waiting for the insurance company to make a decision, insurance companies not covering houses since the flood, or not being adequately compensated for their losses. The finding that rebuilding time predicts depression

suggests that it is important that assistance continues for as long as there is a need. Rebuilding from a natural disaster can take months or even years, and disaster victims can feel increasingly reluctant to ask for help as time goes on. Study 1 participants who still had uncompleted repairs 18 months post-flood spoke of hiding this fact from friends for fear of being seen as not coping, or complaining. This also suggests there is a role for community recovery personnel to raise community awareness about the protracted nature of disaster recovery and ongoing need for emotional and instrumental support.

In addition to co-ordinating volunteer helpers, as occurred in Brisbane, government agencies could further assist community recovery by publicising messages about effective helping, identifying vulnerable people and areas, and assisting people with finding temporary accommodation. A number of Study 1 participants described difficulties finding alternate accommodation. Co-ordination of tradespeople so that they are not attempting to work on too many jobs at one time could reduce unnecessary rebuilding delays, and advocacy or assistance, where needed, with insurance companies and tradespeople might also reduce undue stress.

Recommendations that have the potential to reduce undue stress caused by the insurance claim process include having streamlined procedures that apply in the case of declared disaster situations; training staff in these procedures; and providing claimants with clear, easy to follow instructions on how to make their claim. Study 1 participants reported that allowing photos of flooded items as evidence so contaminated items could be removed from the house quickly was allowed by some insurance companies but not others. Having to wait for an assessor to visit the

Table 3. Summary of Implications for Community Recovery and Insurance Companies

Implications for community recovery:

- assistance can be required for a year or more
- raise community awareness about ongoing need for practical help and emotional support
- co-ordinating volunteer helpers
- publicising messages about effective helping
- identifying vulnerable people and areas
- assisting people with finding temporary accommodation
- co-ordination of tradespeople
- advocacy with insurance companies and tradespeople

Implications for insurance companies:

- clearly worded policies that reduce uncertainty about eligibility
- streamlined procedures that apply in the case of declared disaster situations
- training staff in these procedures
- providing claimants with clear, easy to follow instructions on how to make their claim
- allowing photos of flooded items as evidence
- not requiring quotes for all items in cases where all household contents have been lost
- providing adequate training for staff so conflicting information is minimised

property before the clean-up was an added stress and made cleaning more difficult and risky. Similarly, requiring quotes for all items in cases where all household contents have been lost added an unnecessary burden to disaster victims. Additionally, providing adequate training for staff so conflicting information is minimised would reduce a considerable amount of unnecessary stress on victims. Table 3 summarises these recommendations for community recovery personnel and insurance companies.

A strength of this research was that it sampled people from two different sites, and despite there being some differences between the two flood events, the hypotheses were supported in both samples. This is important because the majority of disaster research focuses on single events. The generalisability of this study's findings is enhanced because of this corroboration following two separate events.

A limitation of the current research was the smaller than optimum sample size in Study 2. A larger sample size could also have strengthened the power of all the analyses that were performed. Also, as it was not a representative sample, it is difficult to know if respondents were typical of the population of flood-affected people.

In conclusion, the key findings of this research were that aftermath stress was a key predictor of mental health outcomes following the floods, and a difficult experience with an insurance company was also predictive of poor outcomes. These results open up a number of new avenues for disaster research and disaster recovery policy and practice. ●

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# ADAPTIVE APPROACHES TO DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY VIEWED THROUGH A PSYCHOSOCIAL LENS: SYDNEY SIEGE CASE STUDY



*Disaster Recovery Chaplains volunteered in Martin Place to comfort the grieving. Photo by Wes Egginis.*

This peer-reviewed paper was presented at the Australian and New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management Conference in Broadbeach, QLD, on 3-5 May 2015. This paper has been slightly edited to meet the style of the *National Emergency Response Journal*.

By Shona **Whitton** and Jessie **Huard** from the Australian Red Cross, and Rachel **Nibbs** and Lex **Drennan** from the Ministry of Police and Emergency Services



The Lindt Café, scene of the 15 December 2014 siege at Martin Place, Sydney. Photo by Kel O'Shea.

On 15-16 December 2014, a lone gunman held hostage ten customers and eight employees of the Lindt chocolate café located at Martin Place in Sydney. After a 16-hour stand-off, the siege ended with three people (including the gunman) dead, and three other hostages and a police officer injured.

The NSW State Emergency Recovery Controller (SERCON) was activated along with the NSW Recovery Plan and Arrangements. The NSW Recovery Plan, although based on an all hazards approach, is predominantly applied to recovery operations for natural disasters. The Ministry for Police and Emergency Services (MPES), as the lead recovery agency, was cognisant that the Martin Place Siege would test their adaptability. The arrangements demonstrated their flexibility and were effectively applied in this situation.

This event was a shock to the psyche of the Sydney CBD, New South Wales and Australian community. For some it hit upon unspoken fears, for others it forced them to reflect on their own traumatic experiences. Coming to terms with any emergency or disaster can be challenging for those both directly and indirectly impacted. Human-initiated events, such as this, often cause higher rates of negative outcomes for those impacted, directly and indirectly, because they shatter fundamental beliefs about vulnerability and human nature (Norris et al 2002). This may be reflected in the mass public mourning and the exponential growth of the floral tributes in Martin Place.

The community response to this event was significant with people leaving thousands of tributes (8 tonnes in total); gifts, cards, shrines and an approximated 100,000 bouquets of flowers. Managing recovery from this event required collaboration by a number of agencies, and communication amongst agencies to the families of the victims as well as survivors and to the broader community. It required the adaptation of existing recovery structures and highlighted the need for a guide to managing spontaneous public memorials.

Agencies who do not traditionally work with one another were brought together to quickly plan and implement strategies. This was against a backdrop of intense media interest and public scrutiny of political leaders from the Commonwealth, NSW State and local government. The interests and investments of large and small business, the psychosocial wellbeing of CBD-based workers and the ongoing criminal investigation all had to be managed.

Although the barriers have been taken down and flower memorial removed the recovery process has not ended. There are still many hurdles to overcome such as the development of a public memorial and the first anniversary.

The management of these milestones in a respectful way will impact on how this event is viewed by the public in coming years. In this sense the tributes were framed early on as an expression of mourning, protest and, most importantly, as a conversation between the public and the hostages and their

families, the gunman and government. The removal of tributes became a form of reply to that conversation and needed to respect the public sentiment and the wishes of hostages and victims' families both in terms of timing within that conversation and how it was conducted.

This paper firstly reviews the literature on collective trauma and public expression of grief, placing the Sydney siege in the context of the literature and recent international experiences in spontaneous expressions of grief. It then explores how existing recovery arrangements and agency competencies were adapted to new circumstances and successfully applied to manage challenging and complex issues. Lessons are drawn from the experiences and recommendations made to ensure the learnings from this experience are not lost.

## COLLECTIVE TRAUMA AND SPONTANEOUS EXPRESSION OF GRIEF

When crisis events, such as natural disasters or terror incidents, occur at the community level there is a collective experience of distress, shock and grief (Gortner & Pennebaker, 2003). These events shatter people's fundamental sense of safety, order and security leaving people feeling threatened and vulnerable (Eyre, 2007). Following the Sydney siege, a visitor to the flower tribute told the media:

"I'm feeling bloody scared. It's awful, that someone would perpetrate that, just over there" (Michael Marzano quoted in Sydney siege: Amazing scenes as Sydneysiders empty florists to fill Martin Place with flowers, *The Daily Telegraph* online, 17 December 2014).

Disruption to world view, the assumptions people have about lives and communities that make up their reality, occur most significantly following situations that are "unexpected, traumatic and horrific" (Sullender, 2010). People's psychological and faith-based assumptions about their lives can be shattered and many people experience a crisis of meaning or purpose (Sullender, 2010).

The widespread media coverage of disaster events and growth of social media, which gives viewers access to 'real' people affected, widens the reach of these distressing events (Richardson, 2010). In doing so the media allows vicarious participation in these events which can result in trauma (Sullender, 2010). Significant media attention,



*"Each item or bouquet of flowers represents an individual, or group of individuals, who experienced emotion strong enough to motivate them to share their response publicly." Photo by Kel O'Shea.*

such as the rolling 24-hour coverage on all major commercial channels during the Sydney Siege, reinforces a sense of national tragedy. By extension, high profile media coverage reinforces socially appropriate forms of communal expression of grief (Eyre, 1999).

Rituals, such as funerals, provide a way for social groups and communities to regain social balance and morale after a crisis. Post-death rituals provide a safe space for the expression of individual and communal grief and can be an important therapeutic step in the grieving process (Rosenblatt, 1997). Spontaneous expression of loss, sorrow, grief and disbelief in the form of informal, temporary memorials, such as the one in Martin Place, often begin within hours of the public having knowledge of the disaster (Eyre, 1999). People feel the need to share their sorrow and acknowledge loss, even if they are not directly impacted by the event. Another prominent example of this was the spontaneous floral tributes that occurred after the sudden death of Princess Diana in 1997. This expression can be a healthy opportunity for expressing shock, anger, disbelief, grief, and other emotions associated with disaster. A lack of, or barriers

to, collective expression can hinder recovery and successful grieving following death. Post-disaster rituals such as spontaneous expressions of grief, commemorative and memorial activities can assist to re-establish feelings of control, social solidarity and belonging after collective crisis (Eyre, 1999).

The spontaneous expression of grief after disasters is predictable post-disaster behaviour (Eyre, 1999). As such, large-scale spontaneous tributes and shrines are not uncommon after crisis events like the Sydney siege. In fact, they are seen as the rule rather than the exception following events that cause sudden and tragic death (Eyre, 2007). Following the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 approximately 50,000 mementos were left along the 'Memory Fence' surrounding the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building (Doss, 2002); over 50 million bouquets of flowers were laid outside Buckingham Palace and Princess Diana's London residence after her death in 1997 (Brennen, 2008); more than 200,000 items were collected after the 1999 Columbine High School massacre (Graham, 2013); and more recently after the 2012 Sandy Hook massacre over 60,000 teddy bears were left at, or mailed to, the town of Newton (Pruden, 2014).

The approximately 100,000 bouquets of flowers left at Martin Place following the siege were not unusual.

In the days after the siege thousands of people travelled to Martin Place to pay their respects. A spontaneous expression of grief is not always connected directly to the physical site as can be seen in the location of memorials in response to the death of Princess Diana. After the Columbine High School massacre approximately 125,000 people visited the spontaneous memorial. For many, the site of death and tragedy becomes symbolic and holy (Jorgensen-Earp & Lanzilotti, 1998). Jorgensen-Earp and Lanzilotti (1998) liken the site of public tragedy to the deathbed where traditionally people could share the last moments of a loved one's life. When death is sudden and tragic, being near, or at, the site of death can be "transformative" for survivors (Jorgensen-Earp & Lanzilotti, 1998, p160). This ritual behaviour, the giving of tributes, visiting the site and the development of memorials, serve important psychological and social functions (Eyre, 1999) and contributes to the "final story of the tragedy" (Jorgensen-Earp & Lanzilotti, 1998, p160).

Establishing the event as part of the community's narrative or psyche is an important part of the healing process (Richardson, 2010). Two weeks after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing the city had begun to think about how to preserve and archive the items from the spontaneous memorial at Copley Square (Graham, 2013). This becomes the key issue in managing spontaneous memorials, how to handle and what to do with, the mass of objects and organic matter. These items carry strong emotions. As a curator for the New England Museum Association said after the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013:

"That sneaker was a sneaker a minute ago, but when a person places that sneaker on that pole, it's infused with meaning and emotion." (Graham, 2013).

Each item or bouquet of flowers represents an individual, or group of individuals, who experienced emotion strong enough to motivate them to share their response publicly. The psychosocial implications of removing these cared for and emotion laden items are significant. Poor or disrespectful handling of the tributes can cause further distress to survivors, their families and the broader community. This was a leading consideration in the management of the tributes in Martin Place.

The general public is usually understanding of the need to remove spontaneous memorials as they can engulf public meeting spaces, thoroughfares and high traffic areas. The way in which items are removed can be controversial and needs to be well thought through and planned.

## COLLABORATION AND ADAPTATION

The NSW Recovery Plan and Arrangements are written from an all hazards perspective, and therefore are intended to apply to person-made disasters and emergencies. However, these arrangements have previously only been used to address natural disasters. The Martin Place siege required a coordinated multi-agency approach to recovery in an unprecedented context. Whilst the governance framework existed, many of the agencies who were ultimately involved in coordinating recovery had never engaged with the arrangements before.

The SERCON directed the formation of the Government Coordination Committee,

with representatives from a variety of government agencies and the City of Sydney (Council). Through key contacts on the Committee, a broader range of agencies and NGOs were engaged to support recovery activities, such as providing volunteer resources and Chaplains. The Coordination Committee provided a focal point for engaging stakeholders for critical decision-making. Its purpose was to:

- Identify needs of the victims and families, the community and small businesses
- Provide a forum for information exchange between all agencies
- Coordinate activities between agencies to address emerging needs
- Ensure public communications were consistent and coordinated.

In this context, the officers in the statutory roles of the SERCON and Deputy SERCON became boundary spanners (Kapucu, 2006). They were able to use their legislated roles to communicate authority and personal connections with peers to rapidly engage broader support. Their first activities were to identify which agencies needed to participate in recovery coordination and reach out to their executive. Through this process arrangements that had previously functioned following natural disasters were adapted to new circumstances. However, the fundamental governance and legislative structure remained constant.

For NGOs used to applying their skills and knowledge to respond to natural disasters this event challenged the applicability of their skills to a diversity of scenarios. A number of arrangements usually reserved for natural disasters were activated. While the siege was still active, Red Cross, Marine Rescue and State Emergency Service volunteers responded to enquiries from the general public at the Public Information and Inquiry Centre (PIIC) located in the Police Local Area Command building in Surry Hills. Volunteers in this Centre answered over 1,700 phone calls in less than 24 hours.

In the days after the siege, Red Cross volunteers were in Martin Place using their psychological first aid training to support members of the public visiting the spontaneous memorial and leaving their own tributes. Red Cross volunteers usually employ these skills in evacuation and recovery centres, through outreach into impacted communities and at community events in response to natural disasters, such as the Victorian or Blue

Mountains bushfires. In addition to Red Cross volunteers the Disaster Recovery Chaplains services also had volunteers in Martin Place. In each of the above, NGOs adapted their existing skills to employ them in unchartered territory.

## REMOVAL OF FLORAL TRIBUTE AND MANAGEMENT OF CARDS AND MESSAGES

Laying flowers and tributes at Martin Place served an essential part of the grieving process. Similarly, viewing the flowers allowed visitors to consider the event and the community's response. Whilst this process continued, funerals were held for the two hostages killed during the siege. The family of one hostage indicated they wanted to lay the funeral flowers at Martin Place, in recognition of and participation in the public grieving.

At the same time the tributes also drew criticism and concern. The presence of extensive memorials meant that Martin Place was evolving into a destination rather than a shrine. This had implications for issues such as crowd control as well as positive and negative impacts for businesses and the community.

Small businesses in the Martin Place area, many of which are snack bars and cafés, expressed frustration that the tributes and queues of people waiting to write in the condolence books were interfering with foot traffic to their doors. The staff of nearby businesses were also adversely affected by the sadness and emotions associated with the tributes. Small businesses reported that many of their staff needed to take leave as a result of what had happened and this was challenging for their operations.

Those businesses still closed during the immediate mourning period were also concerned that, if further protracted, the tributes shrine and visitation would interfere with "getting back to normal". These concerns were raised informally as business owners were concerned that they would be perceived as lacking in empathy by returning to usual operations too soon.

Navigating these issues, for which there were no ready solutions, was a constant challenge for agencies involved. Other questions at the time for which there were no discrete answers included: how long will the public grieving continue?; how long should it continue?; and how long before the flowers and edible tributes completely decay?

These questions were balanced against



*On duty Police Officers inspect the growing number of flower bouquets left outside Martin Place in respect of the victims of the Sydney Siege. Photo by Kel O'Shea.*

other concerns, such as the approaching Christmas holidays, the Boxing Day sales, and then New Year's Eve celebrations when tens of thousands of people would be coming to the Sydney CBD. Access to public space, safety, and whether the ongoing visual reminder of the siege would be beneficial to the grieving process were concerns. Ultimately, the unavoidable issue that arose was the weather forecasts for summer storms.

Feedback from the hostages and their families made it clear that preserving the messages and cards was more important than the duration of the display in Martin Place. They felt, along with general public sentiment, that these cards were a direct conversation between the public and themselves. With that guidance from key stakeholders, and considering the upcoming major public events in the CBD, the Government Coordination Committee commenced planning for the appropriate removal of the flowers and tributes.

The City of Sydney was a key stakeholder in planning the activity, as the agency with responsibility for managing public space in the CBD. Planning for the removal of the flowers and tributes was simultaneously an exercise in logistics and coordination and public event management. The Committee understood that the process was akin to a public ceremony and would receive extensive media attention. It was far removed from the standard process to cleaning public spaces and

was conducted under the watchful eye of the public and media.

Research and communication with authorities in London and Boston informed the planning process. This awareness of context, combined with the guiding principles, shaped how the agencies involved managed the event. The Commissioners for the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service, and Executive Director of Red Cross in NSW, were contacted by the NSW Government and requested to provide volunteers to remove the flowers and tributes.

Volunteers have a unique and significant role in emergency management in Australia. They are members of the community who give their time to support and protect their community. The high esteem in which they are held by the community also translates to trust and appreciation of their efforts. This places them in a unique position of being a workforce that can be effectively coordinated, tasked and managed by government authorities, yet belonging to and being part of the larger community. They are not disembodied government workers. This dual nature made it appropriate to engage volunteers to remove the tributes.

For Red Cross, the organisation's expertise in the psychosocial impacts of disasters and keen awareness of the need for respectful management of the floral tributes allowed them to transfer existing skills into the role of assisting

in the movement and removal of the spontaneous tributes.

The logistics of assembly, briefing, food, water and amenities were coordinated through the NSW Small Business Commission. The Commission was a member of the Government Coordination Committee and offered its offices as the staging point for the event. One hundred volunteers from Red Cross, Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service spent three hours picking up flowers and carefully placing them into boxes to be taken away. The City of Sydney provided unmarked vehicles to remove the flowers, intentionally to visually distance the activity from standard waste collection. This activity was closely watched by the public and filmed live by numerous TV stations:

"I was worried the floral tribute removal process would look like a council clean up. But it is so gentle and respectful with SES and other volunteers in full uniform slowly picking up each bunch and removing cards ... There's no ripping, no chucking, no throwing. Each bunch placed in a box, cards in separate bags. It was actually very moving to watch ..." (Larry Emdur, *The Morning Show*, Seven Network).

Press releases and public statements from the Premier were coordinated with the removal to ensure the public understood why the flowers had to be removed and what was going to be done with them after removal. It was essential to communicate that the flowers were not going to landfill and they would be treated with respect. This communication linked into longer term questions about permanent memorials. The Committee was unable to answer those questions in the immediate two weeks after the siege, and nor was it appropriate to do so as this process will require extensive consideration and consultation.

Ultimately, over 8 tonnes of flowers were clean mulched by the City of Sydney and placed in storage to compost for eventual placement at the site of a memorial. The collected cards and messages were held in storage and consultation undertaken with the State Library regarding preservation, digitisation and curation for display. The vast majority of the over 100,000 floral bunches had a card or message attached. Prior to digitising the cards, it was necessary to

sort through them and separate them into themes to enable future curation of a digital memorial. Once again, recovery agencies turned to volunteers and NGOs for assistance in this process. Red Cross and Anglicare provided over 300 hours of service to read and sort the cards. Due to the emotional nature of this process they were supported by the presence of Disaster Recovery Chaplains and Red Cross volunteers accessed debrief support from the Australian Psychological Service.

## CONCLUSION: FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The issue for Sydney in the future will be how to permanently remember this event. There is public expectation that a permanent memorial of some kind will be installed at Martin Place or at another location in the Sydney CBD. The complex and profound emotions created by disaster events means that most permanent memorial processes will be difficult and potentially controversial (Nicolls, 2006). Everyone will have different views, opinions and desires.

Successful memorial processes, in which all stakeholders are heard, must be consultative. The stakeholders will be broad and varied. The location, design and purpose of the memorial have to be agreed upon by the community affected.

Unfortunately this was not the first event of its kind and will not be the last. It is worthwhile noting that no guide exists to advise on the management of public memorials. Had it not been for the knowledge and experience of those engaged in coordinating the recovery from this event and the removal of the tributes from Martin Place its outcome could have been very different and significantly negative in its impacts on the families of the victims, the survivors and the community as a whole.

A crucial factor in the successful response to this event, as it is with any, was the partnership between government, community and non-government agencies. This partnership facilitated the development of an inclusive picture of the event and evolving community sentiment and "on the ground" issues. The rapid adaptation of existing plans, arrangements and agency competencies enabled the Government and NGOs to manage the public grieving process in a respectful and compassionate way, while maintaining the City's safety and security. ●



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# POSTCARDS FROM INDIA



*Khandala*

Bill Hoyles, MAIES

**M**y wife and I holidayed with friends earlier this year at the recently renovated Convent Retreat House in Khandala – a hill station in Maharashtra situated between Mumbai and Pune.

The Retreat House was surrounded by bushland – with wild monkeys cavorting through the trees and spectacular views of a prominent rock formation known as ‘The Duke’s Nose’.

To get a different perspective on the view, we walked down to a shallow stream near the convent alongside which a number of families in extreme poverty lived in shanties.

Kids were playing in the water while some of the adults were washing their clothes in the stream.

We were told of a tragedy that occurred in 1960 when a Catholic school group



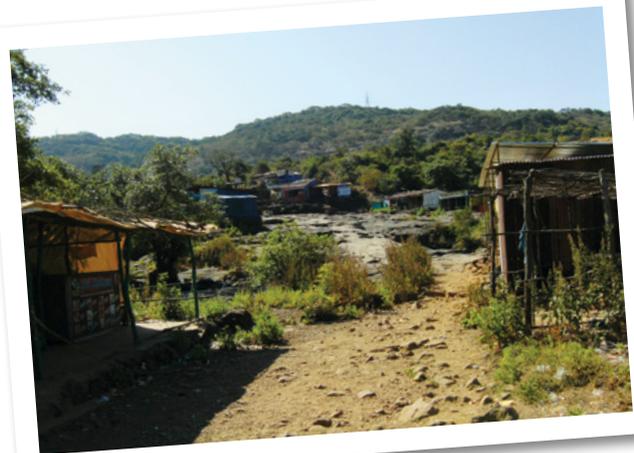
visiting the convent retreat was playing in the water during an excursion.

Without any warning the hydroelectric power plant upstream released a mass of water into the gully, turning the stream into a raging torrent, sweeping some of the school children to their deaths.

The memories of that tragedy remain with the older nuns at the convent to this day, and a sign by the stream now warns of the danger of being near the stream.

Learning of my background working with gangs and street kids in Sydney, Mother Superior Sister Prudence suggested we visit a special project in the neighbouring town of Lonavala – popular with local Indian tourists and famous for its tasty Chikki sweets.

*Lonavala*



**M**y wife, our friends and I visited the Don Bosco Home for drug affected street children in Lonavala and met the charismatic priest in charge – Father Lester.

During a conducted tour of the facility, he told us that most of the street kids come to the centre with solvent-sniffing addictions, and described his treatment and rehabilitation methodology.

We later donated boxes of Chikki and bags of savoury Chura (aka Bhujia) for the kids.

Lonavala has a number of spectacular lookouts, dams, lakes and even a Waxworks Museum.

We visited the extraordinary Tungarli dam in Lonavala with its prominent warning sign reporting the annual death toll.

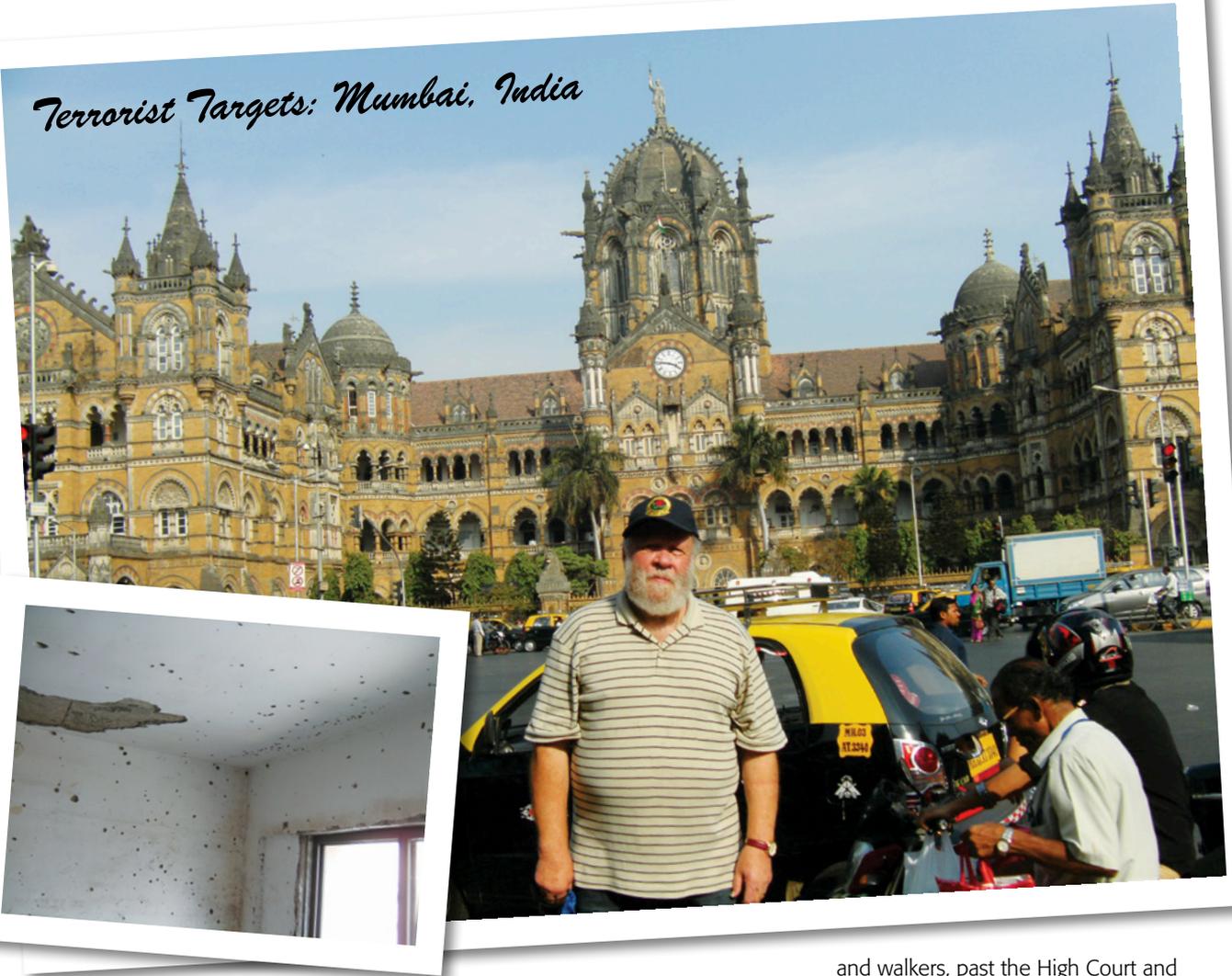
After a short climb up a bone-dry rocky spillway we reached a wide flight of steps that formed part of the dam wall.

Above the steep flight of steps were two wooden sluice gates, which are opened in the rainy season when the dam reaches capacity.

At those times visitors sit on the steps and allow the cooling stream to flow around them. At the side of the steps are teahouses and cafes, complete with changing rooms for men and women, so that they can dry out and change after the soaking. Inevitably some people try to swim in the dam and spillway despite the sign warning of the dangers...only to be swept away and drowned.

At the time of our visit in mid January 2015 the warning sign advised against swimming and noted that two people had died last year and one this year.

## *Terrorist Targets: Mumbai, India*



I travelled to Pune with my wife to attend a family member's small low-key wedding – just five hundred guests at the reception that saw me wearing a traditional Shirwani.

Sitting in my friend's apartment in Pune, on the eve of the 66th Indian Republic Day (26th January – the same day as Australia Day), the television news was dominated by President Obama's arrival in India to attend the Republic Day Parade in Delhi.

Indian television commentary centred on a highly significant nuclear power agreement that had been six years in the making, and on a speech by Indian Prime Minister Modi that called for America and India to fight terrorism together.

In his speech, Prime Minister Modi also demanded that Pakistan bring the organisers of the Mumbai 2008 terrorist attacks to justice. For me, this had special significance as Pune's Central Yerwada Prison was where the only Mumbai terrorist to be captured alive in Mumbai was incarcerated and after a trial was hanged. Later, while visiting Mumbai,

I took the opportunity to visit the major targets of the 2008 attacks.

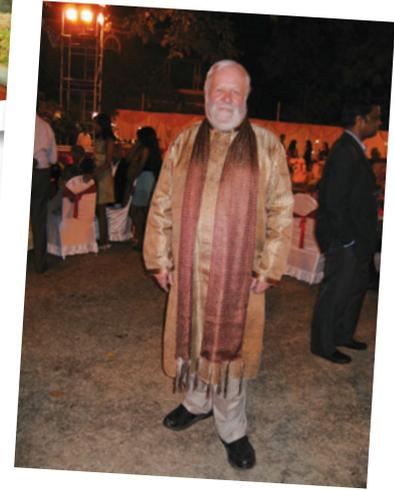
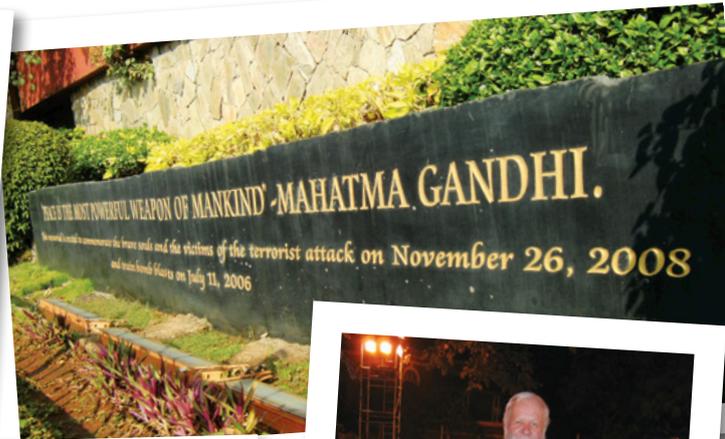
En route to our hotel in New Marine Lines, Mumbai, my wife and I passed the scene of the first terrorist attack Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus (previously known as Victoria Terminus or VT). It is a magnificent heritage building and houses the main railway interchange in Mumbai. It was after this attack that the only terrorist to be wounded was taken prisoner. At the time of our visit there was a major police presence in the area, with numerous police carrying lathi sticks, others carrying rifles and their officers wearing sidearms. There was a coach full of police standing in reserve and a Mumbai Police water-cannon had been deployed in support. There were eight outside broadcast TV units in attendance to cover whatever protest was about to occur, and so, in line with general DEFAT advice, we steered clear of the area lest we become embroiled in a riot!

The following morning we walked from our hotel, through the Maidan, an open space full of cricketers, soccer players

and walkers, past the High Court and nearby Flora Fountain to Colaba and the Gateway of India. Standing at the water's edge, with tourist boats heading for the Elephanta Caves bobbing in the water, we had an excellent view of the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower Hotel, which had been targeted in 2008. Watching the television news broadcasts in Australia at the time of the attacks, I had been amazed to see the top floors ablaze during the three-day siege. Sad, as since I had first visited Mumbai in 1978, I had fantasised about staying in that hotel when I won the lottery. Now restored to its former glory it remains a must-see Mumbai icon – although staying there remains an unaffordable dream.

We then walked a short distance to have breakfast at another of the terrorist targets – the quirky Leopold Café on Colaba Causeway.

Established in 1871 the café has long been popular with foreign tourists and was more recently immortalised in Gregory David Roberts' epic novel 'Shantaram'. The café has many interesting wall decorations, a framed t-shirt, a famous wall mural, and



signs advertising the Thai Spa upstairs. However, it also still bears the scars of the attack with bullet holes still visible in the walls and windows. Passing through security at the front café entrance our bags were scanned by one of the two security guards. We decided to have breakfast from the extensive menu of Indian, European and Chinese dishes, and purchase the obligatory Café Leopold souvenir t-shirt.

Moving on – but only after several mis-directions by well-meaning locals – we finally located Nariman House, or Chabad House, in a small side street not too far from the Leopold Café. A Jewish community outreach centre, Nariman House was also attacked by the terrorists. Security has been increased dramatically since the attack, with surveillance cameras, solid steel doors and bulletproof glass, but after expressing an interest to the security officers (and showing our Australian passports) we were cordially invited in to meet the rabbi and others in their prayer room on the second floor. On entering the prayer room there was an information board that detailed the names of the rabbis who had died during the attack as well as the chronology and location of their deaths. The room itself has been completely renovated, although bullet holes are still visible in the alcove where the holy book is kept and one wall to the left of the room has been preserved with its bullet holes still visible. We were told that the holy book was itself destroyed in the attack but has since been replaced with the assistance of other synagogues. A visiting Israeli tourist offered to take us up to the fourth and fifth floors which were still awaiting renovation. He showed us the numerous bullet holes in the floors and ceilings,



as well as the hole left in one wall by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG).

Neither my wife nor I are Jewish but the hospitality shown to us at Nariman House was extremely gracious. We were offered chilled drinking water on arrival, and were asked polite questions about Australia and its population with empathy being expressed for our own terrorist experience at the Lindt Café in Martin Place.

Another morning walk took us past Church Gate railway station outside which was a memorial to the Mumbai terrorist attacks of 2008 and the earlier taxi bombings of 2006. A plaque contained the insightful words of Mahatma Gandhi, 'Peace is the most powerful weapon of mankind'.

At a t-junction at the end of the street we turned left on Marine Drive (also known as The Queen's Necklace) and strolled to the Oberoi Trident Hotel – another victim of the Mumbai terrorist attack.

The hotel today has strict security with vehicles being stopped for inspection at the gates, mirrors-on-wheels used to view underneath each vehicle and car boots being opened and their contents checked. Security guards and metal detectors are visible at the entrance for pedestrians. I noted with interest that the street at the rear of the hotel is named after one of India's legendary Freedom Fighters Ramnath Goenka. Ironically, I was watching the movie *Die Another Day* later that afternoon in my Mumbai hotel, when I heard 007 being reminded that 'One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter'. However, this could not be said of Goenka as he was a newspaper publisher who evidently believed that the pen was mightier than the sword.

Opposite the Oberoi Trident on the Marine Drive Promenade, three monkeys with chains around their necks were performing for tourists to the beat of small drums: dancing, doing back-flips, sleeping on command and standing guard duty holding a miniature night-stick...all the while being chained by their necks in sharp contrast to the acrobatic freedom of the monkeys I had seen in the wild at Khandala. Not my cup of chai but other tourists still took photos and handed over their rupees to perpetuate the cruelty. ●



## THE AWARD

The AIES Young Volunteer's Award, proudly supported by the Emergency Response Division of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, aims to reward one young person for their outstanding and ongoing contributions and commitment to their chosen emergency service.

The award winner will receive a fully sponsored voyage in the sail training ship Young Endeavour where he or she can develop their skills in teamwork, leadership and communication.

Runners up will receive a certificate of commendation from the AIES.

## NOMINATIONS

A member of the public, the young volunteer's supervisor, manager or another emergency service member, can make nominations. At least two referees who have known the nominee for a minimum of 12 months and who can attest to the nominee's volunteer service must second all nominations.

## NOMINATION CRITERIA

The nominee will be assessed on his or her:

- commitment to the emergency services including continuity and length of service
- demonstrated willingness to learn and progress within the emergency service
- current or future leadership potential

The nominee must:

- a. be a volunteer member of an emergency service organisation for a period of at least two years
- b. be aged between 18 and 33 years of age
- c. be available to undertake the voyage on the date nominated in the award

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In addition, nominees must meet all of Young Endeavour's mandatory selection criteria including:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- be able to swim 50 metres and be in good health
- weigh less than 120kg
- complete a medical examination to the required standard
- not having completed a voyage in Young Endeavour previously

## SELECTION

The award committee will select the winner by assessing each nomination against the selection criteria. The authenticity of all claims in the winning submission will be verified.

The award committee's decision of the winner of the AIES Young Volunteer's Award is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

## PRESENTATION

Within three months of completion of the voyage, the awardee will be required to provide a written report on their voyage and make a presentation at an AIES Division meeting. The written report will be published in the Institute's journal *National Emergency Response* and by the award sponsor the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

## NOMINATIONS

Nominations should be marked CONFIDENTIAL and sent to the Registrar of the Division of the AIES in which the nominees resides.

Details can be found on our website at [www.aies.net.au](http://www.aies.net.au)

**Nominations must be received by 4pm 1st February each year.**

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This award is subject to the terms and conditions as detailed on the AIES website.

## MORE INFORMATION

More information on the award can be found on our website, [www.aies.net.au](http://www.aies.net.au)



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From	TO	Appointment/Position	Duty/Responsibility

**Emergency Training Courses**

Institution	Course/Year	Results (where applicable)

**Qualifications (Degrees, Diplomas, etc)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Decorations/Awards etc** \_\_\_\_\_

**Referees** (Persons who have known me for several years and can give evidence of my character and background)

Name	Address	Phone	Email
(1) _____	_____	_____	_____
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I declare the above particulars to be true and hereby agree to be bound by the Constitution, By-Laws and Code of Ethics of the Institution)

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Completed Application forms with fees should be forwarded to the Division Registrar in the State where you normally reside. Further information may also be obtained by contacting your Division Registrar or Company Secretary of the Institute at the following addresses:

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To provide a professional body for the study of the roles and functions of Emergency Services and Emergency Management Organisations throughout Australia, and the promotion and advancement of professional standards in these and associated services.

#### **THE INSTITUTE'S OBJECTIVES**

- To raise the status and advance the interests of the profession of emergency management and counter disaster services administration.
- To represent generally the views and interests of the profession and to promote a high standard of integrity and efficiency in the skills of emergency and counter disaster administration.
- To provide opportunities for association among members and students to promote and protect their mutual interest.
- To facilitate full interchange of concepts and techniques amongst members.
- To bring to the notice of the public such matters that are deemed to be important for safety and protection of the community and to promote research and development of emergency services generally.
- To establish a national organisation to foster international co-operation in counter-disaster services administration.

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- Are members of a permanent emergency service or associated service, or
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Admission as a member may be granted if in the opinion of the General Council the applicant meets all other conditions of membership and passes such examinations and/or other tests as may be required by General Council.

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# AIES CONTACTS

## GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Email: [enquiries@aies.net.au](mailto:enquiries@aies.net.au)

## NATIONAL COUNCIL

President  
Steve Jenkins MAIES

Email: [president@aies.net.au](mailto:president@aies.net.au)

Vice President  
Scott Milne FAIES

Email: [vice.president@aies.net.au](mailto:vice.president@aies.net.au)

Company Secretary  
Peter Schar FAIES

Email: [registrar@aies.net.au](mailto:registrar@aies.net.au)

National Treasurer  
David Mack MAIES

Email: [treasurer@aies.net.au](mailto:treasurer@aies.net.au)

National Membership Registrar/Webmaster  
John Rice LFAIES

Email: [membership@aies.net.au](mailto:membership@aies.net.au)

## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY DIVISION

President  
Scott Milne ESM FAIES

Email: [president.act@aies.net.au](mailto:president.act@aies.net.au)  
Phone: 02 6267 5603  
0400 332 780

Registrar  
Phil Gaden MAIES

Email: [registrar.act@aies.net.au](mailto:registrar.act@aies.net.au)  
Phone: 0413 137 761

PO Box 504  
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2601

## NEW SOUTH WALES/NEW ZEALAND

President  
Anthony Macvean MAIES

Email: [president.nsw@aies.net.au](mailto:president.nsw@aies.net.au)

Registrar  
Anthony Macvean MAIES

Email: [registrar.nsw@aies.net.au](mailto:registrar.nsw@aies.net.au)

PO Box 695  
HABERFIELD NSW 2045

## QUEENSLAND

President  
Steve Jenkins MAIES

Email: [president.qld@aies.net.au](mailto:president.qld@aies.net.au)  
Phone: 0412 753 790

Treasurer/Registrar  
Jenny Crump MAIES

Email: [registrar.qld@aies.net.au](mailto:registrar.qld@aies.net.au)  
Phone: 0418 726 224

PO Box 590  
FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA/WESTERN AUSTRALIA/NORTHERN TERRITORY

President  
Brian Mattner, MAIES

Email: [president.sa@aies.net.au](mailto:president.sa@aies.net.au)  
Phone: 0421 618 773

Registrar  
Peter Bos MAIES

Email: [registrar.sa@aies.net.au](mailto:registrar.sa@aies.net.au)  
Phone: 0401 426 812

PO Box 10530  
ADELAIDE BUSINESS CENTRE SA 5000

## TASMANIA

President  
Ron Jones LFAIES

Email: [president.tas@aies.net.au](mailto:president.tas@aies.net.au)  
Phone: 0427 008 705

Registrar  
Neil Wright MAIES

Email: [registrar.tas@aies.net.au](mailto:registrar.tas@aies.net.au)  
0418 569 925

PO Box 1  
LINDISFARNE TAS 7015

## VICTORIA

President  
Alan Marshall C.StJ, LFAIES

Email: [president.vic@aies.net.au](mailto:president.vic@aies.net.au)  
Phone: 0428 308 008

Registrar  
Alan Alder OAM, LFAIES

Email: [registrar.vic@aies.net.au](mailto:registrar.vic@aies.net.au)  
Phone: 03 9844 3237

44 Webb Street  
WARRANDYTE VIC 3113

## NATIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE JOURNAL

Editor  
Kristi High

Email: [editor@aies.net.au](mailto:editor@aies.net.au)  
Phone: 0407 366 466

# EXERCISE NORTHERN SHIELD 2015

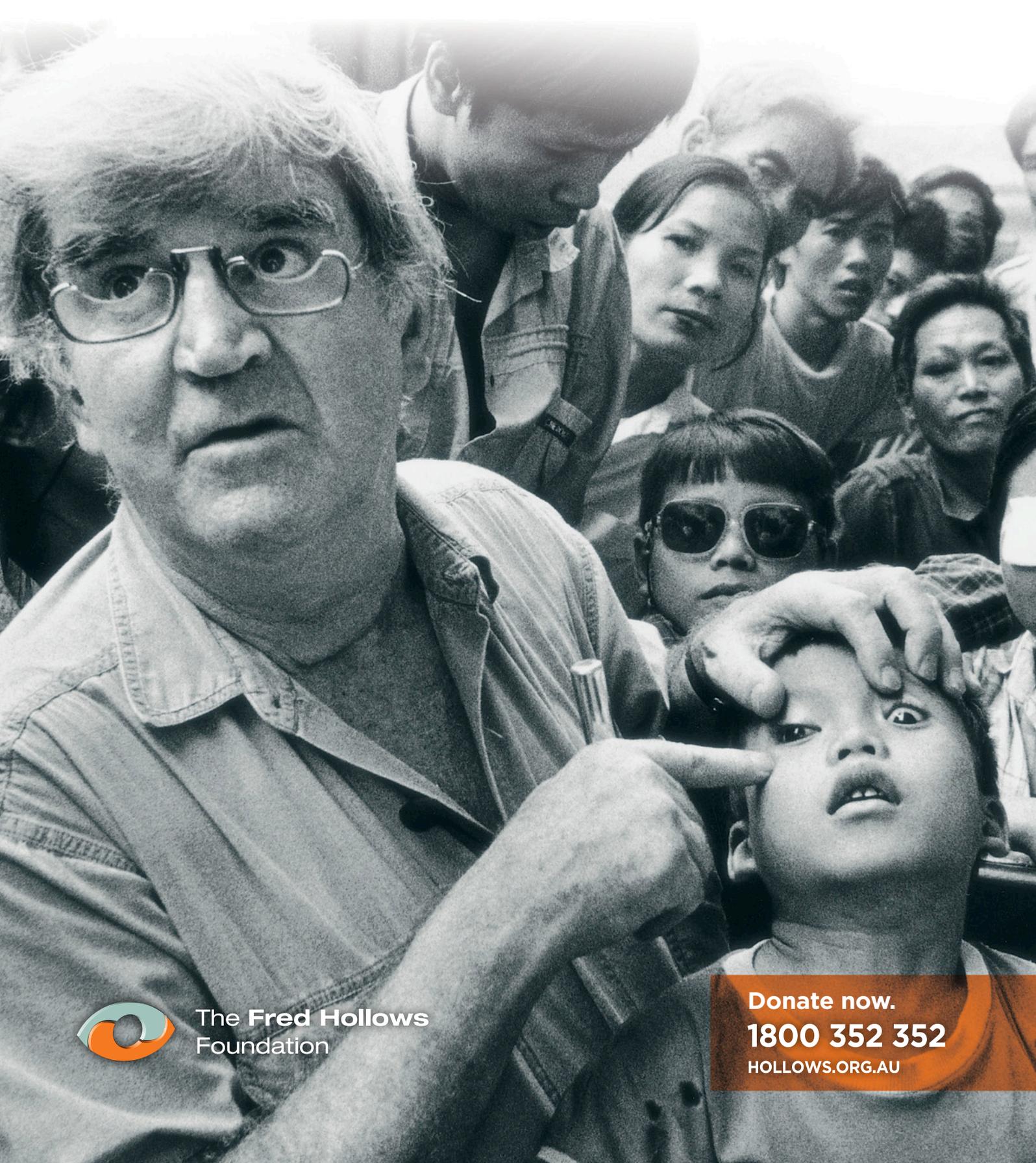


**A**ustralian Army officer Lieutenant John Blunt (left), from the Ready Combat Team, conducts an after action brief with 1st Class Constable Shelley McQueen from the Exmouth Police Force at RAAF Base Learmonth Western Australia during Exercise Northern Shield 2015, which ran from 19-24 September and involved 1,000 troops from the Army and Air Force. ●

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