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First name	Tony
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I am making this submission as	Emergency services
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Submission type	Personal
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Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	
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Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	
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Consent to make submission public	Public
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Your story	I have worked in school education for 44 years and I have been a member of the RFS since 1991. I was commissioned in the Australian Army in 1976 and served 6 years. As part of my work in school education, I have supported Catholic schools in emergency management since late 2009. I have provided emergency management training to school communities. As an RFS members, I have seen many fires in the Blue Mountains and been deployed to Canberra and Victoria. Most recently I have work in Community Engagement and I have worked in support of an Incident Management Team.
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1.1 Causes and contributing factors	
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1.2 Preparation and planning	
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**1.3 Response to
bushfires**

1.4 Any other matters

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The need for better support for community resilience in NSW

This submission seeks to address the following Terms of Reference:

Term of Reference 2

The preparation and planning by agencies, government, other entities and the community for bushfires in NSW, including current laws, practices and strategies, and building standards and their application and effect;

Term of Reference 5

Preparation and planning for future bushfire threats and risks, and

Term of Reference 7

Appropriate action to adapt to future bushfire risks to communities and ecosystems.

Abstract

NSW has committed itself to the 2011 *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* which aims to empower local communities to prepare for emergencies. However legislative obligations for emergency management in NSW remain primarily focused on the responsibility of the agencies for specific hazards while agencies advocate for community engagement.

Effective community resilience requires individuals and organisations to take responsibility for preparing for emergencies. However, an “all hazard” framework to support planning for emergencies has not been made available. By default, most organisations expect the agencies to direct the community in how to respond. This contradictory situation where agencies promote community resilience when key resources to support planning for community organisations are lacking undermines a commitment to community resilience.

Once an incident begins, the Australasian Interservice Incident Management System (AIIMS) provides a tried and tested means of dealing with emergencies, based on an “all hazards” approach. No similar approach has been developed to support the community in making plans. The article proposes that a framework developed to address bushfire threats to schools in the Blue Mountains of NSW could be the basis for an “all hazards” planning framework.

Recommendations:

1. That NSW develop and resource an “all hazards” framework for emergency planning for all community organisations;

2. That the framework is jointly developed and maintained by the Office of Emergency Management, in consultation and with the cooperation of the “combat agencies” and the Health NSW;
3. That the framework will promote cooperation between combat agencies and organisations through mutual acknowledgement of the roles and responsibilities of both;
4. That the framework will enable the organisations that use it to develop and maintain plans which:
 - a. Are informed by the history of emergencies geographically and by demography;
 - b. Reflect all hazards, informed by risk assessments;
 - c. Are comprehensive and based on “hoping for the best while planning for the worst”;
 - d. Are tested by rehearsals;
 - e. Are a key part of the induction and work of people in the organisation.

Introduction

With the experience of the recent summer and as the number of serious climate related incidents appears to grow, agencies are making more thorough preparations for managing emergencies although Covid 19 has demonstrated that there remain significant deficiencies in preparation. In NSW, many local councils and their Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs) have made efforts to ensure that business and community groups, including schools and hospitals, have plans in place. Recently school authorities have been proactive in ensuring that school leadership teams have effective emergency plans in place.¹ In combat agency planning and preparation, the focus has been mainly “top down”, reflecting institutional responsibilities but this is not the only approach. The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) aims to promote disaster resilience throughout communities.² The NSW Office of Emergency Management has developed a framework which directs more attention to mitigation as opposed to recovery and response.³ However, with the scale of recent events, particularly Covid 19, can these approaches be accepted as sufficient? This submission focuses on the legislative and administrative arrangements in force in NSW to support community resilience.

Agencies and Legislation

Combat agencies in NSW are driven by their legislative obligations and the resultant budget allocations. A glance at the legislation which drives Fire and Rescue NSW, the NSW Police Force, the NSW Rural Fire Service, the NSW State Emergency Service and the framework provided by the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* (SERMAct) reveals agencies with discrete, primary obligations and general obligations when emergencies require inter-agency cooperation. In spite of recent events, these obligations are likely to impress NSW Treasury less than the agencies’ primary responsibilities.⁴

¹ A.A. McArthur, “Lessons Learnt: Two Schools in a Major Bushfire,” *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* 34, no. 3 (2019), 67.

² <https://www.aidr.org.au/about-aidr/>

³ *Emergency Risk Management Framework* (Sydney: Office of Emergency Management, 2017), 2.

⁴ viz. Allan McConnell, and Lynn Drennan, “Mission Impossible? Planning and Preparing for Crisis,” *Journal of contingencies and crisis management* 14, no. 2 (2006), 63.

The SERMA Act defines the architecture of Emergency Management in NSW. This 30 year old Act has served and continues to serve NSW well however, compared to current discourses and approaches, it is distinguished by two features: the single reference to “Commonwealth support” and the lack of any reference to “resilience”.⁵ While surprise at the lack of attention to Commonwealth assistance may simply reflect the scale of the recent bushfire emergencies, the lack of reference to resilience is different. The lack of a reference to resilience, particularly community resilience, relates to the extent to which concern about resilience is a comparatively recent development.

The *NSW Police Act 1990* defines the “mission and functions” of the NSW Police Force to include “the provision of essential services in emergencies” and “the provision of police services in emergencies and rescue operations is subject to the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989”.⁶ These functions primarily involve the State Emergency Operations Controller, the provision of executive support to Regional Emergency Management Committees and Operations Controllers, coordination of rescue operations and evacuations including the use of force.⁷ It ought to be noted that while police have very clear functions in an emergency, their functions prior to an emergency are in ensuring a capacity to fulfil their functions, should an emergency eventuate.

The purposes of Fire and Rescue NSW (F&RNSW) are prescribed by the *Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989* in terms of the functions of the Commissioner summarised as: “take all practicable measures for preventing and extinguishing fires and protecting and saving life and property in case of fire in any fire district”. “Fire districts” under this act refer to cities and towns. The Commissioner can dispatch units outside fire districts and is required to take directions and to provide assistance in accordance with the SERMA Act.⁸ To support its activities, Fire and Rescue NSW provides community education as a component of its fire prevention strategies.⁹

⁵ State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989, Sect 15, 2, (p).

⁶ *Police Act 1990* (NSW, 1990), Sect 6, Sect 6(3)(a), Sect 6, (5).

⁷ *State Emergency Service Act 1989* (NSW, 1989), Sect 18, 32, 50, 60L, 61D.

⁸ *Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989* (NSW, 1989), Sect 5A.

⁹ <https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=9189>

The activities of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) are governed by the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. The RFS's functions are simply to provide "rural fire services" for the state which are further defined in terms of: "prevention, mitigation and suppression of fires in rural fire districts" and "the protection of infrastructure and environmental, economic, cultural, agricultural and community assets from destruction or damage arising from fires in rural fire districts". However, the RFS is required to provide "advisory services" and "as directed by the State Emergency Operations Controller, to deal with an emergency where no other agency has lawful authority to assume command of the emergency operation". There are also obligations to assist the SERMA's State Emergency Operations Controller and to assist other agencies at their request.¹⁰ The functions challenge the RFS to engage more in what is now termed "community engagement" than those of other agencies.

The functions of the last of the NSW combat agencies, the NSW State Emergency Service (SES), are defined in the *State Emergency Service Act 1989*. The Act states that the key functions are: "to protect persons from dangers to their safety and health, and to protect property from destruction or damage, arising from floods, storms and tsunamis". Like the other agencies, it is required to support the State Emergency Operations Controller consistent with the requirements of the SERMA and to support other agencies, at their request. Its sole requirement for community engagement lies in its requirement: "to co-ordinate the evacuation and welfare of affected communities".¹¹

The *Public Health Act 2010* defines the responsibilities of the Minister of Health. Under this Act, the Minister may declare any part of NSW as a "public risk area" and take measures to reduce or remove risks to public health.¹² However, such declaration and measures have no effect in any part of the state "for which a state of emergency exists under the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989".¹³ The Act does permit the Minister of Health to act when an emergency has been declared under the SERMA.¹⁴ It ought to be noted that the Public Health Act does not lay emphasis on emergencies to the same degree as the other Acts discussed above. The limited powers needed to address the

¹⁰ *Rural Fires Act 1997* (NSW, 1997), Sect 9.

¹¹ *State Emergency Service Act 1989*, Sect 8.

¹² *Public Health Act 2010* (Sydney: NSW, 2010), Sect 7(3).

¹³ *Public Health Act 2010*, Sect 7(6).

¹⁴ *Public Health Act 2010*, Sect 8.

Covid 19 crisis led to *COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures) Act 2020* being passed in March 2020. This Act enables criminal trials to be conducted “in a way that is appropriate given the public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic”.¹⁵

NSW has an agency to support emergency management: the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), under the NSW Department of Justice. OEM is effectively the secretarial and delivery arm of the SERMA Act.¹⁶ OEM houses the NSW State Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN) required by the SERMA Act and the subordinate “sub-plans”.¹⁷ The EMPLAN and the sub-plans provide a comprehensive framework which enables the state to prepare for and respond to the range of foreseeable hazards using a Prevention, Preparation, Response and Recovery approach.¹⁸ The EMPLAN specifies that: “Agencies will engage with the community and stakeholders which will improve community understanding of these arrangements and promote disaster resilience”.¹⁹ It ought to be noted that this requirement is additional to the combat agencies’ obligations summarised above.

OEM sponsored sub-plans address specific hazards but there are also “supporting plans”. Some refer to services like energy, telecommunications, the environment but one refers to Health Services.²⁰ Under this plan are: “Evacuation Decision Guidelines for Private Health and Residential Care Facilities”.²¹ This document includes a decision-making “algorithm” to assist institutions. This is the sole document which aims to prepare non-government agencies for making a response to an emergency. OEM does recognise the need to address other community needs but has asked for community feedback on what would assist.²²

¹⁵ *Covid-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures) Act 2020* (Sydney: NSW, 2020), Division 1.

¹⁶ <https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/about-us/about-us.aspx>

¹⁷ <https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/publications/plans/Plans.aspx>

¹⁸ *New South Wales State Emergency Management Plan* (Sydney: NSW Government, 2018), Sect 110.

¹⁹ *New South Wales State Emergency Management Plan*, Sect 116.

²⁰ <https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/publications/plans/supporting-plans/supporting-plans.aspx>

²¹ <https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Documents/publications/guidelines/Guideline-Evacuation-Decision-Making-Guidelines-for-Health-and-Aged-Care-Facilities.pdf>

²² <https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/for-the-community/get-ready/community-service-organisations.aspx>

Implicit in the NSW arrangements is the assumption that the community, i.e. individuals and organisations, will take directions from the agencies. In individual emergencies, this is reasonable but in large scale situations, particularly in the onset of an emergency, waiting to be told what may not suffice and certainly didn't in the bushfires in Eastern Australia in the summer of 2019-2020. The focus on resilience is designed to mitigate this reliance but even within the community resilience arrangements, the contradiction remains.²³

Community Resilience

Community resilience is a comparatively recent discourse in emergency management, partly explaining why it does not appear on the SERMA Act or in any of the agency Acts. Emergency Management Australia's 1998 document for school principals refers to resilience.²⁴ However, a year later, Buckle, in examining Australian disaster experience, argued that understanding resilience within a community would enable targeted interventions to reduce vulnerability.²⁵ The concept of resilience appears in international literature too.²⁶ In Australia, reviewing the experience of the communities of Daylesford and

²³ Anna Lukaszewicz, Stephen Dovers, and Michael Eburn, "Shared Responsibility: The Who, What and How," *Environmental Hazards* 16, no. 4 (2017), 309.

²⁴ Australia, Emergency Management, *Emergency/disaster Planning for Principals* (Canberra: Emergency Management Australia, 1998).

²⁵ Philip Buckle, "Re-Defining Community and Vulnerability in the Context of Emergency Management," *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* Summer 1998/99 (1999), 26.

²⁶ For example: Shane R. Jimerson, Stephen E. Brock, and Sarah W. Pletcher, "An Integrated Model of School Crisis Preparedness and Intervention: A Shared Foundation to Facilitate International Crisis Intervention," *School Psychology International* 26, no. 3 (2005), 296; Megumi Kano, and Linda B. Bourque, "Experiences with and Preparedness for Emergencies and Disasters Among Public Schools in California," *NASSP Bulletin* 91, no. 3 (2007), 215; Wilson MacNeil, and Keith Topping, "Crisis Management in Schools: Evidence Based Prevention," *Journal of Educational Enquiry* 7, no. 1 (2008), passim; Susan L. Cutter, *et al.*, "A Place-Based Model for Understanding Community Resilience to Natural Disasters," *Global Environmental Change* 18 (2008); Council on School Health, "Disaster Planning for Schools," *Pediatrics* 122, no. 4 (2008), 900; Thomas D. Phelan, *Emergency Management and Tactical Response Operations: Bridging the Gap* (Amsterdam; Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann/Elsevier, 2008), 199; John Twigg, *Characteristics of a Disaster-Resilient Community: A Guidance Note* (London: Interagency Group (ActionAid, British Red Cross, Christian Aid, Practical Action, Plan UK and Tearfund), 2009); George D. Haddow, Jane A. Bullock, and Damon P. Coppola, *Introduction to Emergency Management* (Burlington, MA: Butterworth Heinemann, 2011), 61, 121, 216, 242, 252, 257, 260, 274, 285.

Hepburn in Black Saturday, Holmgren argued that: “in the final analysis households and communities will be resilient, or not, based on their own motivations and actions, not by the authorities waving magic wands”.²⁷ Holmgren was attracted to resilience because it was clear that government agencies were unable to provide the level of community protection needed in an incident on the scale of that which occurred in Victoria in 2009. McLennan and Handmer were not so attracted to such resilience, questioning the feasibility of what was seen as “responsibility sharing” between individuals and community and government agencies who are in a far better position to identify and manage risks.²⁸

In 2011, the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* was released, the result of work and thinking, the origins of which lay in a decision just months before the 2009 fires in Victoria.²⁹ The document lays out the role of government, expressed in terms of “individuals” and “communities” and “having clear and effective education systems”.³⁰ The document argues for “shared responsibility”, climate changes as a long term threat, “resilient communities” and seeks partnerships and networks “from all levels of government, business, the not-for-profit sector”. The case is argued at greater length in the *Companion Booklet*.³¹ The aim of the strategy was empowering individuals and communities characterised by:

“• *Local communities are engaged and have knowledge and expertise of local risk, how a disaster resulting from that risk would affect the local community, and how potential treatments can be harnessed, to mitigate the risks.*

• *Accurate and authoritative risk information is provided, tailored to the needs of the audience, and the tools to interpret and act on that information, are available.*

²⁷ David Holmgren, “Bushfire Resilient Communities and Landscapes: A Discussion Paper for Daylesford and Hepburn Townships.” (2009), 16.

²⁸ Blythe J. McLennan, and John Handmer, “Reframing Responsibility-Sharing for Bushfire Risk Management in Australia After Black Saturday,” *Environmental Hazards* 11, no. 1 (2012).

²⁹ *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2011), III.

³⁰ *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*, V.

³¹ *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience: Companion Booklet* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2012), 6.

- *Communities are aware of vulnerable elements of the community and consider their needs in the development of programs and plans.*
- *The community develops a strong understanding of the financial implications of disasters, options such as insurance are available to reduce the financial burden, and there are more choices and incentives to mitigate financial risks to households and businesses.*
- *Individuals and businesses have a strong understanding of the availability and coverage of insurance, including the risks that are included and excluded from their existing insurance policies.*
- *Information is available to enable individuals to make objective assessments about the defensibility of properties and communities from potential hazards and communicated appropriately.*
- *Programs and activities in schools and the broader community actively encourage volunteering.*
- *Significant providers of goods and/or services to the community undertake business continuity planning”.*³²

The intended outcomes, if achieved, would see all parts of each community understanding hazards, identifying mitigations and having plans. The Companion Booklet has Case Studies which include a voluntary South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management Group (SAVEM Inc.) which was funded to develop plans and is integrated into state planning, this being, presumably, an aim of the take up of resilience.³³ The national strategy was further supported by the addition of a handbook released by the Australian Emergency Management Institute.³⁴

The closure of the Mount Macedon Emergency Management Facility by the Commonwealth in 2014 and then the establishment of the *Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience* (AIDR) raised questions about cost and responsibility shifting from the

³² *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*, 1-10.

³³ *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience: Companion Booklet*, 20.

³⁴ *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience: Community Engagement Framework Handbook 6* (Canberra: Australian Emergency Management Institute, 2013).

Commonwealth to states and territories.³⁵ Nevertheless, AIDR now part of the Department of Home Affairs but formerly, of Attorney General, began operation in 2015. Its strategies are concentrated on knowledge dissemination and professional development for emergency managers.³⁶ By comparison, the New Zealand *Resilient Organisations*, established under a government grant, takes a different approach to resilience by placing its focus on how organisations are managed rather than in the emergencies themselves.³⁷

Of particular importance are AIDR's handbooks which include some on emergency management although the emergency planning handbook is not available, being under review.³⁸ AIDR has been active, promoting knowledge acquisition and dissemination in relation to disaster resilience.³⁹ Its programs include programs for schools, addressing primarily children's understanding of emergencies using the Disaster Resilience Education Strategy Group.⁴⁰ Its limitation in NSW is that its engagement with NSW initiatives and activities is minimal and even for AIDR's school education activities, sector representatives no longer attend its meetings because of their lack of relevance.

Implementation of National Policy in NSW

NSW has committed itself to promote community resilience and much effective work has been done by the combat agencies. F&RNSW has put resources into community information programs including the promotion of the use and maintenance of internal smoke alarms, bushfire plans and escape plans from homes.⁴¹ RFS has well publicised messaging promoting family plans for bushfires.⁴² SES encourages people to be informed about their "local risk".⁴³ Emergency NSW has advice for the community in terms of "get ready" for individuals, councils, community service organisations and businesses.⁴⁴ Of these,

³⁵ <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/mount-macedon-disaster-training-campus-shut-down-20140518-38hyp.html>

³⁶ <https://www.aidr.org.au/media/5683/aidr-on-a-page.pdf>

³⁷ <https://www.resorgs.org.nz>

³⁸ <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/collections/handbook-collection/> ;
<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/emergency-planning-handbook/>

³⁹ <https://www.aidr.org.au>

⁴⁰ <https://www.aidr.org.au/programs/education-for-young-people-program/>

⁴¹ <https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=879>

⁴² <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare>

⁴³ <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/your-local-risk/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/getready>

the most detailed support is provided for businesses in the form of a tool guide with detailed advice.⁴⁵ The weakness in the NSW provision is, because of its agency centric approach, the lack of an enunciated common conceptual framework for emergency planning and hazard related advice, which would enable NSW to fulfil the requirements of the 2011 National Strategy. While the work of the agencies is admirable, effective emergency plans should address all hazards, all risks. A common response framework exists once emergencies begin: the *Australasian Interservice Incident Management System* (AIIMS).⁴⁶ But where do organisations, business and institutions in NSW go to learn how to develop emergency management plans prior to emergencies? What information should they access?

Regarding the first question, a possible national conceptual framework and support materials for supporting resilience are available from *Resilient Community Organisations*, available from the *Australian Council for Social Service* (ACOSS) and funded by the Commonwealth although many web links are no longer active.⁴⁷ The key concepts in the framework are:

Step 1: Leadership;

Step 2: Building Networks;

Step 3: Know Your Risks;

Step 4: Manage Your Risks;

Step 5: Preparing Others;

Step 6: Learning and improving.⁴⁸

The ACOSS resource of 2015 used the then current ISO 31000:2009 for risk management and includes a plan template.⁴⁹ While aimed at community organisations, the

⁴⁵ https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/167831/Get-ready-disaster-tool-brochure.pdf

⁴⁶ *The Australian Inter-Service Incident Management System* (Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council, 2013).

⁴⁷ <https://resilience.acoss.org.au>

⁴⁸ <https://resilience.acoss.org.au/the-six-steps/managing-your-risks/policies-and-procedures-for-disasters-and-emergencies>

⁴⁹ <https://resilience.acoss.org.au/site/assets/uploads/8c5a265a-an-introduction-to-risk->

framework is quite transferrable to other organisations using the Prevent, Prepare, Respond, Recover (PPRR) framework but the lack of maintenance of the resource limits its utility. AIDR provides a more detailed resource to support risk assessment: the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NEFAG) Online, based on AIDR's Handbooks 10 and 10.1 which reference to AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009; this could update the ACOSS resource.⁵⁰

A strength of the ACOSS approach is its understanding of the critical importance of organisational leadership in ensuring the emergency planning is done and kept current. The limitations of the ACOSS framework are its assumptions that organisations need not know what the combat agencies do, although perhaps that is addressed in "Networks", a lack of attention to the importance of emergency history in "know your risks" and little attention to how to develop the plan. Regardless of these concerns, while the Commonwealth is not providing an up-to-date framework, NSW could develop an emergency planning framework for organisations. There is already experience on what such a framework can deliver in practice. Based on experience with the *Hawkesbury Road Project*, its key elements ought to be:

1. Understanding emergencies, including the importance of leadership;
2. Knowing the role of combat agencies;
3. Knowing the hazard potential and vulnerability in your location based on history and demography;
4. Conducting a risk assessment;
5. Building an emergency management plan arising from the risk assessment;
6. Socialising the plan with the community to promote resilience;
7. Testing and improving the plan as a continual, cyclic process.

The *Hawkesbury Road Project* is the response of an RFS Brigade and a school education agency to an expectation that school principals would decide whether to close or

[management.pdf](#) , https://resilience.acoss.org.au/site/assets/uploaded/f7dc0adf-disaster-plan-for-community-organisations-template-final_v12_aug16.docx.

⁵⁰ <http://elearning.aidr.org.au/index.php?>

evacuate a school.⁵¹ This expectation, consistent with how the RFS sees community resilience came as a complete surprise to the school sector. The Project was an attempt to use the knowledge and experience of the largest RFS brigade in the Blue Mountains to support local schools to make emergency plans which reflected reasonable expectations of combat agencies and an understanding of likely bushfire behaviour. The Project has conducted three workshops, beginning in 2013, with the schools in the Springwood-Winmalee area. It has brought together Police, F&RNSW, RFS and SES. The effect has been to greatly enhance the mutual understanding between the institutions and the agencies to the benefit of all.

In seeking to assist the schools, a key insight of the Project is that emergencies arising from natural causes almost always impact geographically and are reflected in history of repeated events. However, for a community in an urban/suburban area, demography is likely to be a predictor too. By using the elements above, the Project provided a methodology which constructed a “bridge” between the knowledge and experience of combat agencies and community institutions. This bridge also has served to lessen the schools’ dependence on agency “top-down” direction by promoting situational awareness by school leaders. It remains, that wider use of this approach requires the lack of a cross-agency framework to be addressed.

Expanding the approach of the Project to a state-wide implementation would require agreement between the combat agencies on common messaging on hazards for which they are uniquely responsible for combatting. De facto, the agencies already operate in this fashion, e.g. common messaging on bushfire threats is developed by RFS and used by F&RNSW.⁵² Within NSW’s emergency arrangements, the ideal body to coordinate such an initiative would be Emergency NSW.⁵³ It already provides a component for business but this needs to be expanded to combine the elements above, or similar, with the consistent messaging from the combat agencies to promote better community resilience through more

⁵¹ McArthur, "Lessons Learnt: Two Schools in a Major Bushfire," 67.

⁵² <https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=9209>

⁵³ Interagency issues need to be addressed: Hayim Granot, “Emergency Inter-Organizational Relationships,” *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal* 6, no. 5 (1997).

effective and thorough emergency planning by organisations, as agreed to with the Commonwealth in 2010.

There is however a further element to this. The adoption of a common framework for the promotion of organisational resilience in emergencies would also require an acceptance by the agencies of the legitimacy of responses to emergencies by community organisations. The assumption that organisations should wait to be told what to do will not work when the organisations are empowered to be partly responsible for their own safety.⁵⁴ For incident controllers, the decisions of community organisations, i.e. businesses, welfare organisations, hospitals, retirement homes, schools, need to be taken into account as something more than static entities which require their direction.

Conclusion

In combat agency planning and preparation, the focus has been mainly “top down”, reflecting legislated institutional responsibilities. The commitment of NSW to the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* however requires a different kind of agency engagement with an expanded group of stakeholders. The limitations in the AIDR approach by the Commonwealth cannot be sufficient to reduce NSW’s responsibility to work to empower the community to be more resilient in the face of emergencies. An essential element in this empowerment is a requirement for a more integrated, coordinated development of a framework for community organisations of all types, enabling them to develop plans reflective of the risks and hazards to which they are likely to be exposed. The framework proposed would serve as a useful, tested basis from which to work.

Recommendations:

1. That NSW develop and resource an “all hazards” framework for emergency planning for all community organisations;
2. That the framework is jointly developed and maintained by the Office of Emergency Management, in consultation and with the cooperation of the “combat agencies” and the Health NSW;

⁵⁴ i.e. Lukasiewicz, Dovers, and Eburn, "Shared Responsibility: The Who, What and How," 309.

3. That the framework will promote cooperation between combat agencies and organisations through mutual acknowledgement of the roles and responsibilities of both;
4. That the framework will enable the organisations that use it to develop and maintain plans which:
 - a. Are informed by the history of emergencies geographically and by demography;
 - b. Reflect all hazards, informed by risk assessments;
 - c. Are comprehensive and based on “hoping for the best while planning for the worst”;
 - d. Are tested by rehearsals;
 - e. Are a key part of the induction and work of people in the organisation.

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