

Urban Search and Rescue

The strategy for major structural collapse search and rescue

The development of a multi-agency Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability is progressing in Australia with the latest meeting of the USAR National Steering Committee being held in November 1999. The Committee has released a new USAR video which outlines the capabilities required by emergency management organisations for dealing with major structural collapses and focuses on the importance of multi-agency cooperation.

In December 1999, Mr Trevor Haines of EMA and Superintendent Garry Smith of NSW Police Service attended a United Nations debrief of the rescue response to the Turkey and Taiwan earthquakes. Among the many lessons learnt was the enormity of the devastation. In Turkey over 66,000 buildings were totally collapsed and a further 244,000 damaged, while in Taiwan 11,000 buildings collapsed and 8,000 were damaged. Neither country was able to cope sufficiently with the rescue requirement even with more than 30 countries providing specialised search and rescue teams and other aid.

In view of the increasing number of devastating earthquakes in 1999 and Australia's increasing involvement internationally, the work of the USAR National Steering Committee in 2000 will be focused on developing protocols for deployable self-contained teams and for receiving international teams into Australia.

For further information contact:

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Year 2000

As advised in the Spring edition of the AJEM, EMA and the Office for Government Online established a National Coordination Centre in Canberra to manage Commonwealth Government aspect of the Year 2000 Rollover. The Commonwealth Centre complemented similar centres established in capital cities by each of the States and Territories. While the Rollover passed uneventfully, the preparations made for managing the event proved invaluable and ensured that the Commonwealth Government was in a position to deal expeditiously with any likely service failures.

A website developed for providing information on the Rollover proved extremely popular nationally and internationally. The site recorded over 4 million 'hits' between midnight on 31 December 1999 and 6 am on 1 January 2000.

For further information contact:

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Funding for disaster prevention/management projects

EMA has project funding to support disaster prevention and management projects during 2000-01. Proposals aimed at reducing disaster-related loss of life, property damage, and economic and social disruption in Australia are now being sought from individuals, organisations or Federal, State/Territory and Local Government agencies.

EMA is seeking projects that will:

- improve Australia's capabilities for preventing or dealing with natural or technological hazards and disasters;
- improve community awareness of the risks posed by natural and technological hazards;
- focus on prevention, preparedness, response or recovery strategies; or
- reduce the vulnerability of communities or essential services to natural and technological hazards.

Projects could also relate to particular elements in the community, ie. schools or special interest groups.

While project funding is normally limited to cash funding of up to \$40 000, higher amounts may be considered in special circumstances. All proposals, irrespective of the funding amount, will be considered on merit.

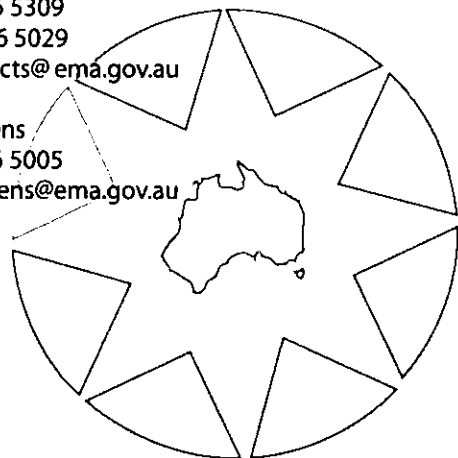
Instructions on how to submit an application for EMA Projects Program funding are available on the EMA web site at www.ema.gov.au.

Proposals should be addressed to EMA, PO Box 1020, Dickson ACT 2602, and must be received by 29 February 2000.

Please note that the EMA Projects Program replaces the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) and the Australian Emergency Management Projects Programs. It does not, however, replace the Australian Disaster Research Grants which are funded and administered separately.

For further information contact:

Chris Hunter at EMA
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email: projects@ema.gov.au
or
Susan Stevens
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EMA publication news

Disaster Prevention for the 21st Century

Proceedings of the Australian Disaster Conference 1999.
(426-pages)

Themes include:

- assessing the risk
- raising awareness
- reducing economic losses and social disruption
- preparing for response
- recovering from disaster

Printed copies available through EMA at a cost of \$100.

ph: +61 2 6266 5402

fax: +61 2 6266 5029

email: ema@ema.gov.au to order.

A 9-page final report of the conference and papers, which is not printed in the proceedings, is now available free of charge via the EMA homepage.

Public Information, Media and Disaster Mitigation.

Papers from the World Disaster Reduction Day Seminar, Sydney 1998 (42-pages).

CRES Resource and Environmental Studies Number 18.

Topics include:

- accuracy, timeliness and consistency of information - facilitating the flow of public information and preventing public panic
- Joint Media Information Centre
- public education & information to reduce natural disasters: an on-going role for all emergency managers and the media
- victims: treatment in emergencies and disasters
- media and community services—appeals and tributes.

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IDNDR Education 2000

Hazards Happen: Elements of Australian Natural Hazards CD

Hazards Happen: Elements of Australian Natural Hazards Educational CD is a new resource for schools structured according to earth, wind, air and fire, with interactive sections to help students learn what they can do to prepare for and prevent disasters. It includes hazard information and case studies. It was developed by education specialists at Queensland University of Technology with funding from Australia's IDNDR Program.

Contact EMA for details:

ph: +61 2 6266 5402

fax: +61 2 6266 5029

email: ema@ema.gov.au

Natural Disasters: You are the Manager CD

A new educational CD investigates types of natural hazards, ways of preventing hazards becoming disasters, response when disasters occur and the recovery process. An interactive scenario allows the user to 'manage' a natural disaster by assessing the risks and then making decisions about appropriate preparedness and response measures based on limited resources.

The CD also allows the user to examine the consequences of their choices. Included in the CD is a high quality video of natural disasters and interviews with experts in the field. Primary and secondary school versions of the video will also be available for separate sale.

This resource was produced by Classroom Video with partial funding through Australia's IDNDR Program.

Contact:

Classroom Video

ph: +61 2 9913 8700

fax +61 2 913 8077

email: classvid@classroomvideo.com.au

What's on at AEMI

In the new millennium emergency management is rapidly changing and the environment in which the Australian Emergency Management Institute works has also changed. As a result, the Institute has undertaken a review of its courses in consultation with the States/Territories and a new suite of educational activities will be offered.

Courses

AEMI will continue to conduct Recovery Management and Exercise Management courses. However, we will no longer be offering the Emergency Co-ordination Centre and Evacuation Management courses on-site at Mt Macedon. It is expected that State/Territories will offer these courses within their own state.

Two courses, *Understanding Emergency Risk Management* and *Implementing Emergency Risk Management* based on the emergency risk management competencies from the Public Safety Training Package will be offered. These courses will be delivered through a combination of four-day residential activities and workplace learning projects.

The first of the Understanding Emergency Risk Management courses was conducted in January 2000 and the Implementing Emergency Risk Management course will commence in June 2000.

New Professional Development Activities

The following activities are being developed by a national committee, with the intention of offering them to full time emergency managers in the financial year 2000/2001:

Induction course

Contemporary emergency management issues activity.

National Studies Program

The final activity in the National Studies Program for the financial year 1999/2000 is the workshop titled *The Rural Decline and Emergency Management in Australia*. The aim of this workshop is to identify the effect that the rural decline has on emergency management arrangements and capabilities within rural communities throughout Australia. This activity will be held at Mt Macedon from 10 to 12 May 2000.

The National Emergency Management Committee recommended the conduct of five activities for the financial year 2000/2001. They are:

- Measuring the Performance of Disaster Mitigation Projects and Programs
- Community Safety - Towards a Safer Community
- Economic and Financial Aspects of Disaster Recovery
- Determining the Effectiveness of Emergency Services Volunteer Brigades/Units
- Emergency Management of Australia's Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.

National Seminar

The Essential Service Disruption Seminar

Eden on the Park - Melbourne

May 8-9, 2000

The Essential Service Disruption seminar will be held at Eden On The Park in Melbourne from 8-9 May 2000.

The aim of the seminar is to share the lessons learnt from recent significant essential service disruptions, including the Auckland electric power failure, the Victorian gas shortage and the Sydney water quality incident.

For registration details

Contact:

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An Internet-based emergency management forum for Australians: The Australian Emergency Management Forum

The use of the Internet as an emergency management tool is increasing around the world at an enormous rate. Here in Australia we already have some very impressive emergency management sites, the EMA site and the Macquarie University's Natural Hazards Research Centre site are prime examples. Most state and territory emergency management agencies have their own Internet sites and these are providing increased access to emergency management plans, procedures, public awareness information and preparedness guides.

In 1998, emergency management teaching staff at Charles Sturt University recognised there was a need for an Australian based online emergency management discussion forum. A similar service has been in operation in the USA for a number of years.

This service, the Emergency Information Infrastructure Partnership (www.emforum.org) focuses on emergency management issues pertinent to the USA. The EIIP has welcomed international participation in its online activities, however time differences have precluded most emergency management professionals in Australia from participating in the live sessions.

Staff at CSU felt that a similar service established in Australia would enhance emergency management within the region and provide a venue for the discussion of Australian and regional emergency management issues. In 1999, Charles Sturt University was successful in obtaining IDNDR funding to develop and implement the Australian Emergency Management Forum (AEMF).

The AEMF will provide a number of online services that revolve around its core features of an online discussion forum and chat facility. It is planned that each month the AEMF will host a one-hour online chat session on a selected emergency management topic. A paper on the selected topic will be posted on the site prior to the scheduled chat session. The author of the discussion paper will be online 'live' during the chat session to answer participants' questions relating to the paper and discussion topic.

In addition to the chat session, a news group styled discussion forum will be available for visitors to post specific or general emergency management questions or issues. The use of this type of discussion facility enables questions and issues to be

raised in an open environment, thereby promoting potentially widespread involvement by the general emergency management community. Charles Sturt University currently utilises such discussion forums to bring together distance education students in specific subject cohorts. The use of these forums facilitates interaction and networking between the forum participants.

The AEMF will also provide links to previous discussion papers, chat session transcripts and Australian and International emergency management agencies, education and training providers, research facilities and Non Government Organisations. Agencies and organisations with a vested interest in emergency management will be invited to become associates of the AEMF, and links to their web sites will be provided from the AEMF site. Associates will also be able to provide specific advice and assistance in their area of expertise.

It is planned that trials and testing of the site will commence in January 2000, with the site being fully online by March 2000. Information regarding forthcoming online activities, emergency management and AEMF updates will be promulgated to associates and other interested organisations, groups and individuals on a regular basis via email.

The success of the site will hinge on the participation of organisations and individuals in the online activities. Therefore, if you are involved in emergency management at whatever level and would like to discuss emergency management issues that concern you, you are strongly encouraged to become a part of the Australian Emergency Management Forum and its activities.

For more information

If you would like to participate in or receive further information regarding the Australian Emergency Management Forum, please contact the forum administrator:

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