

WORKSHOP 7: Emergency management and the health sector

31 July 2008 – 9 am-12 pm

Responding to disasters presents the health sector with many challenges. This workshop will explore expectations within the health sector of its roles; and discuss the competencies, procedures and systems required to deliver services within a disaster environment. It will examine strategic and operational issues in emergency management for the health sector and managing community health needs during and following disasters.

Session one (2 hours)

Emergency Management Translation: A Driver for Change in the Health Sector

Presenters: David Allen and Douglas Paton

What components make for an efficient and effective health sector response and recovery process? Who is identifying and applying the defined information and actions that the health sector need to understand and do in respect of specific community hazards and risks? How can “hospital and health services” collectively identify the capacity and capability required to fulfil health roles and responsibilities, and have appropriate authorities been notified by health agencies of potential gaps?

Advancements are being made internationally in respect of minimising community risks based on personal experiences, perceived and experienced consequences and past responses. However it is critical that future health sector emergency planning also recognises significant research findings associated with psychological and social and institutional processes as well as the many geological/ biological/climatological/technological scientific research projects that are currently underway.

This workshop will focus on a scenario driven approach to identifying the relevance of the above factors and on seeking out potential gaps that need further attention.

Session two (1 hour)

International Emergency Management: What are the challenges and perspective?

Presenter: Gerard Clerc

The recent natural disasters in China and Myanmar, the lengthy recovery phase of the Asian Tsunami and Hurricane Katarina, the threat of infectious diseases spreading, the ongoing conflicts worldwide, have highlighted the challenges faced by the governments, humanitarian organisations and the international community when faced with events that are beyond their normal capacities.

What are the major issues that hamper the quick delivery of international assistance and how to prevent an emergency situation turning in another crisis? What are the risks of manipulation and how to ensure an impartial coverage of the needs? What is the international legal framework for international assistance? What are the risks and challenges during an international response?

This workshop will focus on experience gained in various countries. Its aim is to raise awareness and encourage discussion on the challenges faced by governmental agencies during an international relief operation from a variety of perspectives.

Presenters Biographical Details

David Allen

Currently working on projects with Environment Canterbury and the Joint Centre for Disaster Research David Allen is an Associate Fellow of the NZ Institute of Management and holds a Diploma of Environmental Management (University of Auckland). Previous to completing a review of local authority responses to the 2004 Manawatu floods David served with Auckland City Civil Defence Emergency Management, overseeing and coordinating emergency response planning and staff development including APEC, America's Cup Challenge and Millenium/Y2K activities (David was a recipient sponsor of an ACENZ Merit Award for Auckland City emergency planning), and served one year as regional Emergency Management Coordinator.

Following two years in Canada, leading a fire service related performance management/benchmarking project (providing an international perspective to David's thirty one years with New Zealand Fire Service), David was the Emergency Management Coordinator for Auckland District Health Board, where he focused on implementing emergency management as a management discipline, and, coordinating integration across the 'provider' and 'funder' arms to increase health 'sector-wide' capabilities.

Douglas Paton, PhD, C. Psychol.

Douglas Paton PhD C.Psychol. is a Professor in the School of Psychology, University of Tasmania and a Visiting Researcher at the Joint Massey/GNS Disaster Research Centre. His research focuses on developing and testing models of personal, family and community resilience for natural hazards and working in extreme environments. Douglas is the Australian delegate to the UNESCO Education for Natural Disaster Preparedness in the Asia-Pacific program. He is currently a member of a working party convened by the US General Accountability Office that will be reporting on organizational resilience to the US Congress and is a member of the National Mental Health Disaster Response Taskforce where he is involved in developing national policy for training disaster response workers.

Gerard Clerc

Gerard Clerc is presently working for the NZ Ministry of Health as Northern Region Emergency Management Advisor as a member of the Emergency Management Team, Risk and Assurance. He cooperates with the health sector and other agencies involved in Emergency Planning. Between 2000 and 2006, Gerard worked for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), an independent organisation whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and international violence and to provide them with assistance. As such, Gerard had various involvements in several programmes, projects and relief operations in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Myanmar and in the Eastern Europe region.

Previous to this experience, Gerard served 11 years with the Swiss police service, mainly in the field of investigations, which allowed him to deal with a wide range of situations and multi-agency work. His participation in an exchange programme with the UK Metropolitan Police and New Scotland Yard provided him with an international perspective within this discipline.