

Vale

Roger Trelease Jones OAM



Roger Jones was a visionary leader and trailblazer in emergency management in Australia. He died on 4 April 2024 at the age of 92. He was a pioneer and architect in emergency management, disaster risk reduction, public safety and the prepared community. His loss is felt deeply by his family, community, state and country.

Roger graduated as a teacher and joined the Australian Defence Force in 1956. In the 1970s, he was posted to Canberra to the newly established Natural Disasters Organisation (NDO), now the National Emergency Management Agency, as its first Director, Operations and Plans working under Major General Alan Stretton.

Just 7 months into the appointment, Roger coordinated the evacuation of nearly 45,000 people from the devastated and isolated city of Darwin after Cyclone Tracy in December 1974. He also coordinated the immediate restoration and early reconstruction efforts.

In 1975, Roger joined the NDO's research and training arm, the Australian Emergency Management Institute (AEMI) at Mount Macedon in Victoria, as its first Deputy Director and Chief Instructor. His immediate tasks were to establish a research capability and to develop a new set of emergency management concepts and principles as a basis for curriculum development to replace the civil defence doctrine.

In February 1983, Mount Macedon bore the brunt of the Ash Wednesday fires that raged across Victoria and South Australia. While his family evacuated from the mountain, Roger worked with staff to shelter 300 locals at AEMI facilities during the fire, protecting the evacuees and buildings. Following the fires, Roger worked voluntarily on community clean-up and restoration with the local council.

In 1984, Roger was recruited by the Victorian State Government to write Victoria's first *Emergency Management Act 1986*, an Act which legislated new arrangements for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in the state. Today, all states and territories have comparable legislation and management arrangements. In 1987, he returned to AEMI as Director and participated in the early planning for the development of a new community-based emergency risk management model. This model is accepted internationally as ISO 31000:2009 – Risk Management: Principles and Guidelines. His pioneering work included emergency management risk as a function of hazard and vulnerability, and the implementation of the widely used concept of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR).

In 1994, Roger left AEMI to work as an emergency management consultant undertaking national and international consultancies in emergency management and specialising in disaster reduction and public safety risk management. Roger recognised the need to adapt emergency risk management principles and processes to the needs of communities rather than organisations. He was a strong proponent of 'the prepared community' both in Australia and overseas.

In 2000, he represented Australia in the South African National Council of Provinces Disaster Management Project on behalf of the Australian Development Assistance Bureau. This project resulted in the *South African Disaster Management Act 2003*, which is internationally recognised as the most comprehensive national framework for disaster risk reduction.

Roger participated in the development of the Pacific's contribution to the 2005 Hyogo Conference and was involved in the development of its Pacific counterpart, the Pacific Regional Framework for Action for Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters 2005–2015. During that period, he made consultancy visits as a member of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission's Regional High Level Advocacy Team to members of the Pacific Forum to advise and assist in the development of disaster risk reduction and disaster management arrangements and plans.

In Australia, Roger served on various emergency services advisory committees including state and national Australian Red Cross and the Victoria State Emergency Service. He was also involved in many community and charitable activities including the Royal Humane Society of Australasia and, in 2012, was awarded the Order of Australia for his services.

At the age of 88, Roger completed a Master of Philosophy, his thesis titled 'Developments in Australian Emergency Management Theory, Policy and Practice, 1930-2015'. This is the first comprehensive history of the development of emergency management in Australia from its earliest civil defence foundations to the present day.

His legacy and pioneering work in research and development, his publications and development of policy and practice live on and will influence new generations of emergency managers across the country and internationally.