The Macedon Digest

The Australian Newsletter of Disaster Management

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EMERGENCY WORKER STRESS

At an International Conference dealing with stress and trauma in the emergency services, an American expert in the field, Professor Jeffrey Mitchell, pushed for an expansion of Critical Incident Stress Debriefing. (CISD).

The conference, held in Melbourne over the period 26 to 28 August 1988, was told by Professor Mitchell from the University of Maryland's Emergency Health Service Department, that emergency workers have special needs. Emergency personnel are different from other members of the workforce and have particular personality traits. They were often obsessive compulsives and perfectionists and frequently looked for immediate gratification and excitement from their jobs. They wanted control of their own situations and had a strong desire to be needed. In return for this, they were extremely dedicated and tended to suppress their emotions, which they saw as a danger to them professionally. In this highly charged environment, there was a need for very highly trained and experienced mental health operatives, to work with emergency workers to develop appropriate staff support strategies.

".... emergency workers have special needs. Emergency Personnel are different from other members of the workforce....."

Professor Mitchell indicated that CISD is a comparatively new field, having only been developed in a structured way since the mid 1970's. A critical incident was defined by Professor Mitchell as "any event which has sufficient emotional power to overwhelm an individual's usual ability to cope." As such, formal debriefings are a necessity for these extraordinary events.

CISD for the emergency services grew from research in the 1970's, which examined the relationship between stress and the high turnover of emergency service workers. For example, one year after the PSA plane crash in San Diego in 1978 in which over 150 people died, many emergency service personnel involved in the rescue operations had left the service and there had been a 31% increase in the usage of mental health services by the remainder.

The first training of CISD teams occurred in January 1983 and today there are 75 teams in the US and teams in five other countries, including Australia. The Australian team, established in August 1986, is based in the Social Biology Resource Centre in Melbourne. The past six years have shown that CISD teams must include peer group personnel, and that teams will only be effective if they are well trained and highly experienced. A combination of 2/3 peer group and 1/3 mental health workers, is considered a reasonable CISD team mix, providing communications are maintained between all personnel. Mental health specialist members of the team must be very carefully chosen, as experience has shown that only a very small percentage of the profession are able to be effective in CISD situations. In fact the wrong kind of mental health person can often have a negative impact on CISD operations. The mental health component of CISD teams should provide leadership, supervision, diagnosis and counselling skills.

"CISD teams.... will only be effective if they are well trained and highly experienced"

For the future well being of emergency workers, Professor Mitchell expressed the view that CISD teams are not the only answer. There is also a need for very efficient pre-incident training programs using the most recent field research. But he was careful to point-out that researchers should not encroach on the internal perimeter of an emergency scene. Their involvement should always be secondary to the clinical needs of the emergency workers. If they carry-out research, it should be confidential, ethically based and elicit a voluntary response. In other words, it should be a very carefully designed research project.

As wives and children can also get hurt, there must be spouse support programs. People who enter the CISD field, must not be solely attracted by financial incentives; they must be motivated to a greater extent by a recognition of the needs of the stressed individuals.

There is a need within the first 24 hours after an incident, for more "defusing" rather that "debriefing", in other words a less structured approach in the very early post-impact phase. There is also a need to avoid in-service squabbles and to ensure that all mental health services work together during all incidents, to maintain the highest levels of effectiveness. CISD team involvement should in fact, transcend all geographic, political and industrial boundaries. Follow-up services are necessary and the needs of local communities must be considered. CISD teams need to be aware that they can also be affected and must also go through debriefing procedures.

ACDC PROGRAM

2 October to 16 December

Residential Courses:

- Disaster Recovery Management (1128) 2-7 October
- Exercise Writing (1162) 6-11 November
- Flood Preparedness Seminar (1136) 21-25 November
- Disaster Response Management (1137) 27 November -2 December
- Risk Perception Workshop (1138) 5-9 December
- Introduction to Hazard Analysis (1140) 11-16 December

External Courses:

- CD Planning (WA) (1130) 10 - 14 October
- CD Planning (SA) (1131) 10 - 14 October
- CD Planning (QLD) (1132) 23 - 28 October
- Response Management (WA) (1134) 7-11 November

Details about these activities are contained in the 1988/89 ACDC Handbook; or contact the College direct on (054) 261205.

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR IMPACT ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE

This Conference was held in Brisbane at the Griffith University, from 5 to 9 July 1988. It was sponsored by a number of organisations including the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), the Institute of Environmental Studies at the University of Illinois, the World Bank, the Government of Norway, the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau and the Australian Department of Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories.

The theme of the conference was integrating impact assessment into the planning process, and focused on integration in environmental impact assessment, evaluated progress and trends in theory, method and institutional arrangements, and identified needed improvements and promising directions for practice and research.

Following the conference opening, concurrent sessions were run on a variety of topics such as:

- Integrated Environmental Planning Applications to Coastal Zones for developing countries;
- Risk Assessment of Hazardous Chemicals in developing countries;
- Integrating environmental assessment into water resource planning;
- Toxic impact assessment; and
- Nuclear impact studies.

For further information about this conference and any of the papers presented, contact:

Sue Just,
School of Australian Environmental Studies,
Griffith University, Brisbane, QLD 4111.
Phone: (07) 2757202

WORKSHOP ON RISK COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSE

At this Workshop in October 1987, organised by the Flood Hazard Research Centre in London, 22 participants from both Britain and overseas, were asked to consider ways of improving the effectiveness of risk communication. Public education compaigns designed to raise hazard preparedness and warnings were examined. Emphasis was on the expected end result in risk communication - in this case defined as reducing losses from hazards and improving safety.

The main themes that emerged from the Workshop papers and discussion concerned:

- the importance of the political, cultural, social, bureaucratic and scientific context of risk communication;
- the credibility of the organisations providing the information; in many cases credibility has been weakened by the general erosion of public confidence in societal institutions including those of government and commerce;
- the human factor, the psychology of persuasion, of risk perception and of information processing, and the role of experience;
- the role of the media, in providing warnings and informing people's attitudes and values;
- assessing success, the difficulty of demonstrating that a particular warning or public awareness campaign caused an observed response; and
- the emerging problem of legal liability; this applies to both warnings and to the provision of general information. Research recommendations include the need to put much more energy into ensuring that existing research results are applied, more evaluative research, development of low-cost alternatives to conventional risk communication campaigns, and proactive analysis of the legal problems.

The Workshop proceedings, consisting of a collection of papers and discussion edited by John Handmer and Edmund Penning-Rowsell, are to be published by Gower Technical Press of Aldershop, England, and should be available in late 1988. For further information contact:

John Handmer,
CRES, Australian National University,
Canberra, 2601.

ACDC SEMINAR - "TRAINING IN COUNTER DISASTER SKILLS"

This seminar was conducted at ACDC, between 8-13 May 1988. Around 60 persons, comprising representatives from all the emergency services of the states/territories of Australia attended.

The programme had two broad streams of activity. Firstly, the presentation of a series of lecturettes and case studies covering a wide variety of emergency and disaster situations. This information created an appropriate

background for (secondly) discussion in syndicates of three topics focusing on training in skills. The topics were "Competency", "The Training Requirement", and "Co-ordination of Training".

The questions asked within these topics were general in nature and they were directed primarily towards the "common" range of skills used in an emergency or disaster situation; eg., cliff rescue or flood operations.

The need for competency to be widely recognized, for both the permanent and the part-time personnel was seen to be very important. Such recognition increases job satisfaction, improves safety, allows managers to be confident of abilities, satisfies public expectation and assists in the career advancement process. Levels of competency for the various skills should be set within a uniform system for permanent and part-time personnel. It is important for the basic level of competency for all skills to be carefully and clearly determined. Where certain skills require a higher standard of physical fitness and ability, this must be achieved.

It was concluded that the existence of our generally well trained and dedicated emergency services, able to react to local hazards and needs, reflected the strong points in our ability to train in counter-disaster skills. However it was noted the urban and rural environments have similar problems but dissimilar resources. The range of skills and the associated level of competency for each must be carefully evaluated. The fact that rural areas depend almost entirely on part-time personnel must be taken into consideration.

The Seminar found the major weakness in training in the common skills was the general lack of uniformity between the emergency services within and between states. This lack of uniformity was shown up by the varying training curricula, duplication of effort (eg., training manuals), lack of consultation to exchange ideas, varying techniques, parochial thinking, etc. Of particular interest was the unanimous conclusion that training for the emergency services should be co-ordinated across all states and developed along uniform lines.

The Commonwealth's (ie, the Natural Disasters Organization) primary interest in this seminar, was to ascertain how best we can assist the states in developing and maintaining a high level of expertise in the common disaster skills. This seminar has provided useful guidance.

NDO will review the findings and develop proposals for consideration. These proposals will be included in a summary of proceedings for the seminar, which will be published shortly.

Colonel Bob Hagerty, Director, Operations and Plans, NDO

COMPUTERS IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT RESEARCH WORKSHOP

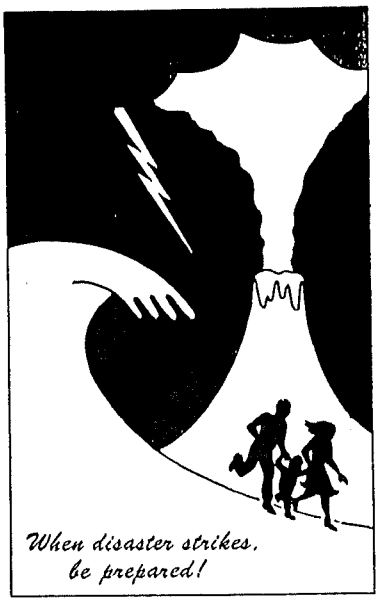
The Australian Counter Disaster College is conducting a Research Workshop (Activity No 1141) from January 31 to February 3rd, 1989.

The workshop will examine the current use and possible developments in the utilisation of computers in disaster management. Areas which could be examined include land use management, database development, real time modelling, training simulations, cost-benefit analysis, risk analysis and administration systems.

Persons with computer experience in areas such as these, and/or who have initiated developments in the computers in disaster management field, are invited to register interest to attend. Travel and accommodation will be paid by the college.

To register interest, send details of experience, projects implemented, and current work to:

Colin Wilson
Australian Counter Disaster College,
Mt. Macedon, Victoria, 3441
Tel: (054) 261205.



INTERNATIONAL Disaster Prevention Award

Sasakawa/UNDRO

An inter-governmental body for improving typhoon warning systems and flood forecasting in Asia and the Pacific, and for developing protective measures, has been chosen to receive the 1988 Sasakawa/UNDRO Disaster Prevention Award.

The ESCAP/WMO (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific/World Meteorological Organization) Typhoon Committee was selected from among 21 candidates for the Award by a five-member jury representing the main regions of the world. The Oceania region representative is the Director General of the Australian Natural Disasters Organisation, Major General Hori Howard. The jury met at UNDRO Headquarters in Geneva on 10 and 11 May 1988.

Endowed by Mr Ryoichi Sasakawa, the President of the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation, the Award which carries a prize of approximately US$40,000 is conferred annually in recognition of outstanding achievements in the field of disaster prevention and preparedness.

Suggestions or applications for nomination to the 1989 award from Australia, can be made before the end of March 1989. They should be sent to the Director, UN Information Centre, GPO Box 4045, Sydney, NSW 2001, with a brief resume of the case for award. Further details of the award may be obtained from the same address, or from the Director General Natural Disasters Organisation.

PRINCIPLES FOR SUPPORT AND RECOVERY FOR HUMAN SERVICES

This is the ninth and final article in a series on Human Responses to Natural Disasters, by Ruth Wraith and Rob Gordon from the Department of Child and Family Psychiatry, at the Melbourne Royal Children's Hospital. In this article, human services recovery principles in disaster are considered.

The study of human responses to disaster in the short, medium and long term indicates that the greatest component of disruption and suffering does not take the form of the pain and confusion of normal people struggling to accommodate to abnormal circumstances. Those who do manifest "treatable" conditions can be helped by the relevant services. The remainder however, are helped by the surroundings in which they find themselves if they constitute a caring community that transmits to them support and understanding along with providing for more specific requirements. This article considers some principles that arise from an understanding of the human experience. A disaster may be of assistance in planning, response, management of recovery and withdrawal of services. The difference between an intervention having a supportive, helpful effect, or aggravating the sense of victimization is often a matter of how things are done rather than what is done. If the services are not provided in the right way, the situation can be made worse.

Reports of past disasters abound with examples. One is from the Buffalo Creek flood in West Virginia, USA, in 1972, where a series of dams broke and swept away several small communities. Residents were rehoused in trailers on new communal sites on a first come first served basis without reference to need, relationships or other factors. The consequence was to increase the breakdown of social and community structure, prevent the resolution of short term problems, which would occur in a cohesive group and contribute to the high prevalence of serious long term mental health problems.

Such experiences indicate that it is not enough to address the necessary practical tasks. Services have to be provided so that the crucial community social structures are respected and supported, local initiatives and capabilities are recognised and used, and a message of care and understanding is conveyed to the recipients.

Disaster Context

The first principle *is that the quality of the human experience is the measure of response and recovery activities.* One of the difficulties encountered by disaster planners and managers, is that their appreciation of the psychological effects of disaster may not alert them to the consequences of their actions for those they seek to help. Although our earlier articles outline observations of short, medium and long-term personal, family and community responses, a number of points bear repeating for form the basis of the present discussion.

Many popular conceptions have proved to be myths. In disasters, people usually respond in a purposeful way using the information available; they work together for the common good and often put aside their own emotional needs to meet practical requirements. Although few people break down, most experience a variety of changes which may substantially interfere with their lives and relationships, often continuing to manifest some years after the event. However, most people work at their problems and achieve an adequate resolution that allows them to learn and grow from the experience. While this process is taking place, adults, children, families and communities are vulnerable to other life events and stresses. Normal crises will be harder to deal with when available resources are committed to recovering from disaster. This may mean the difference between successfully weathering a monetary crisis, a crisis in childhood or adolescence, or an economic change in the community, and becoming overwhelmed by them with resultant long term problems. It is not a matter of distinguishing between pre-existing and disaster-induced problems, but of understanding the recovery period as one in which factors which are normally structured and discrete, become fluid and combine across a whole community of people. Problems then take on a quite different meaning and are then responded to differently. The human face of recovery is to support individuals, families and communities through this crucial time so that the opportunities for new growth are maximised and the likelihood of lasting disruption is minimised.

"recovery can.....(provide the) opportunities for the disaster to be incorporated into tradition and history."

The second principle of recovery is that *people recover best when they have as much control as possible over their own lives and community.* This combats the fundamental human experience of disaster : namely the violation of assumptions about the safety, predictability and continuity of life, and an overwhelming feeling of loss of control. In itself, this feature is traumatic, quite apart from any specific suffering.

Another principle is that *recovery should aim at developing a sense of a new future rather than trying to return to the pre-disaster state.* This applies equally to individual, family or community perspectives. It is based on the fact that all who experience disaster are irrevocably changed by it, whether they fully realise it at the time or not.

A return to the past is not possible because it cannot be undone, and such an aim tends to encourage the natural tendency to push the disaster experience aside

instead of accepting and integrating it. A frequent complaint by affected people is that they lose a sense for the future as they conceived it. They often need help to begin planning a new future.

Under normal circumstances individuals live their lives embedded in family and social groups of many types. These in turn are underpinned by community structures at different levels. A disaster affects all these dimensions and a further recovery principle is *to recognize and promote the coordination and integration of recovery activities at all levels from individual to the community.* It is often the linkage between what is done for individuals, families, groups and the whole community which determines the effectiveness of an intervention. Anything that reduces the sense of isolation, of being a helpless pawn, of not being considered, recognised or understood promotes recovery.

"people recover best when they have as much control as possible over their own lives and community."

There is little doubt that disaster alters the direction of people's lives. It is also true that people take many years to fully appreciate the effect such an experience has had on them. Even direct effects such as remembering all the details of the events, feeling all the emotions involved in what has happened take years rather than months to occur. At a superficial level, people may appear to "return to normal" in everyday behaviour, yet they may still have much psychological work to do before they can feel they have put the disaster behind them and resumed their life's journey. This leads to the principle that recovery is a long-term process, *and short-term response and recovery interventions should provide a basis for and prepare the long-term recovery aims.* Mistakes in strategy of early intervention may only become apparent later when they may be recognized as an appropriate response to the present, but lacking a future oriented perspective. A long-term viewpoint will modify both criteria and style of execution of short-term activities.

It is characteristic of disasters that their impact is felt simultaneously at many different levels. While individuals are struggling to deal with their experiences, the very people they would turn to for support are either also affected and preoccupied in their own right, or unaffected and therefore lack that crucial quality of understanding that is being sought. For both reasons, isolation and loss of the social fabric of support intensifies the difficulties. The loss of familiar landmarks, routines, traditions and people mean that those affected have a struggle to adjust to much that is new, and need to recognise their immediate circumstances. All of this takes away from the psychological work involved in coming to terms with what they have been through. People are generally so stressed that it is easy for them to be highly emotional, to misunderstand the intentions of others, and to only see things from a narrow viewpoint. This means that people often experience strong emotional reactions to what from the managers' point of view, seem to be quite appropriate interventions. Politicians, for instance may make statements that are reasonable from their standpoint, but provoke unexpected strong reactions. The principle that follows from this situation *is that it is not only what is said and done in disasters, but how it is presented that determines whether it is felt to be helpful by the recipients.* Another way of putting this is : if things are said and done with an understanding of the experiences of the recipients, even the most practical interventions can have beneficial effects on their emotional, psychological and social well-being. In this way, response and recovery operations can be undertaken so that physical and psycho-social components are integrated into a single community support system.

Principles for Planning

A number of principles can assist disaster planning to maximise human recovery. The mode of operation and the overall integration of disaster services can support community structures to re-establish themselves, and give some coherence to the experience of clients whose social and family networks may not be functioning effectively. Rivalry, competition, disagreement and misunderstandings between response and recovery agencies not only impairs effectiveness of the service, but when taken from this viewpoint, accentuates or even pin-points the disorganization and conflict in the clients' own world. Interagency conflict is highly traumatizing for disaster affected people to experience. It makes them feel insignificant pawns in a political game and provokes a rejection of the entire system.

"it is not only what is said and done in disasters, but how it is presented that determines whether it is felt to be helpful by the recipients."

The most effective way to avoid such incidents is to ensure that *all agencies involved in the disaster share the same values and assumptions, and can communicate effectively.* Then the integrity of the system becomes a model for the community's recovery, and provides confidence and security for the recipients of the service.

The strategy adapted by the recovery system is also crucial. Experience shows that communities and individuals do not disintegrate in disaster, but soon mobilise existing resources and develop new ones, (so-called "emergent groups"), all of which carry a strong drive to undertake the recovery. Supporting and empowering the community's own efforts aids the re-establishment of competence and confidence. Therefore a principle for disaster planning to maximise the human aspects of recovery is *to build the service on existing or potential community resources, and to plan for the community to take control of as much as possible, as soon as possible.*

Disaster planning for human recovery, therefore can consider coordination and integration of equal

importance to provision of services and supplies. In the disaster area, three district systems arise; first there are the existing community systems including emergency services, local government, health, education and welfare; secondly there is the community-based system that arises in response to the disaster including transformations of existing services, emergent community groups responding to specific needs, and the informal support networks which come to the fore and require status and recognition, some of these elements are temporary others will become a permanent part of the community; thirdly there is the "official" disaster recovery system coming in from outside. Effective recovery requires all three systems, therefore each must be recognized by the others as essential and a shared concept of the recovery is required which allocates to each a part in the whole, with defined roles responsibilities and relationships. Where planning fails to anticipate the unexpected, conflict usually ensues, *planning maximises human recovery when it confirms and coordinates people's efforts to help themselves.*

This principle can be extended in light of the fact that a common finding in Australian communities is that many people are reluctant to accept help, and a feature of the disaster experience is people often not recognising their needs, or that they can be helped to feel differently. It is particularly true for help with personal problems which may be identified as being available from the informal network rather than formal services. If this is taken into account, *planning can focus on building up indirect services to those who do not present to agencies, by identifying and resourcing the informal networks.*

Principles for Response and Recovery

Personal recovery occurs in the context of family and community recovery. Therefore whatever facilitates the re-establishment of the social structure of the community also supports its members. The sudden intrusion of people with an authority from outside the community, is a further violation of its structure on top of that caused by the disaster. A principle which minimises this problem is whenever possible for *in-coming agencies to negotiate their entry and role with the community and not take for granted their right to intervene in the lives of others.* Local resources need to be affirmed and complemented rather than displaced, since they must undertake the very long-term recovery when outsiders have withdrawn.

The importance of integrating components of the recovery system, anticipating long term requirements and adapting to rapidly changing circumstances lead to the principle that *the recovery system is not static but must be designed to constantly evolve throughout its existence.* The post-disaster environment is a rapidly changing one with many factors not able to be confidently predicted

Many effects arise to cause further disruption during the recovery period. They have been referred to as Repercussion Effects or the Repercussion Disaster. It unfolds in a series of influences in the Recovery Period, as the consequences of the disaster fully manifest themselves in the various parts of personal community life. At the Response stage, the Repercussion Disaster is still ahead. A principle therefore is *for response and early recovery interactions, to address preparedness for and mitigation of the Repercussion Effects.* Careful attention to qualitative factors of *how* services are provided, *what* community systems are used and what is communicated *about* the activities can reduce their disruptive effects.

"in-coming agencies (should).....negotiate their entry and role with the community...."

In the recovery period many human needs arise which may not be directly addressed, but accummulate to create a heavy emotional burden. Everyone in the recovery system who has contact with affected people can significantly alter their experience through patience, understanding personal responses to disaster, conceiving their role as having a human service component expressed by their attitude if not their activity, and a knowledge of how to refer people or pass information on to other parts of the system. *All workers in disaster need information and training about the human component of their work to ensure the whole system addresses human needs.*

Most people affected by disaster are normal, coping with their lives and used to looking after themselves. *Getting services to those who need them requires a tactful combination of assertive outreach and respect for privacy and independence.* Integration of human services is essential for this to occur. Active measures are required to serve those (perhaps the majority) who will not use formal services. This can be done by using the media, public forum, self help and education to inform people about what to expect in themselves and others, how to assist themselves and what services are available. Strategies which focus not only on disaster-related issues, but also cover the full range of health, lifestyle and relationship topics provide effective assistance. During the recovery process, every aspect of peoples lives is stressed and challenged. The more this can be acknowledged as the norm, the more people will overcome their sense of isolation and be able to support each other. It will be an advantage if all normal community activities can see themselves as contributing to the recovery, whether they are in direct relation to disaster effects or not. *The most effective strategy is to take a preventative approach to the stresses ahead in addition to meeting current needs.*

The needs of disaster and community workers and their families are also part of the recovery scene. If they are stressed and overloaded, they will not perform adequately, and decision-making suffers. However it is easy for them to see themselves as "not involved," until their own difficulties have become evident. *Support for worker personal responses needs to be built-in as part of the response and recovery system.*

Principles for withdrawal and handover

Effective recovery services become integrated into the fabric of community life, and may make an important contribution to its reestablishment, especially by making

available expertise and resources previously absent. *Withdrawal of services is most constructive when it is gradual and follows the disappearance of a need or the community making its own arrangements to provide resources.* Sudden changes in the post disaster community only impede recovery. Deliberate planning to identify and hand back the roles and tasks that recovery agencies have performed integrates the transition into the community's process of development, enhancing its autonomy.

Withdrawal should be seen as a positive step towards the new future the community is building for itself, and can become an opportunity to review the general provision of services and resources. *The final stage of recovery may nurture initiatives and creative planning towards different goals from those prior to the disaster.*

However, withdrawal of formal recovery agencies does not mean the end of recovery and it is important that the disaster is kept in mind, since post-traumatic effects are most disruptive at personal and community levels when their relation to the disaster is forgotten or ignored. Hence withdrawal of services in effect means hand over of recovery to the community, rather than completion. *At this stage recovery can be seen as being undertaken through meeting normal personal and community needs, and providing opportunities for the disaster to be incorporated into tradition and history.* Only by successfully achieving this can a normal developmental pathway be resumed for individuals, families and the community. This leads to the final consideration in human service principles of recovery : the disaster as a symbol.

The Symbol of Disaster and Symbolic Recovery

Symbols are images or events which stand for and give meaning to aspects of life which cannot be fully understood in their own terms. Human life and culture is built around symbols that become the shared expression of important values. Common acceptance of symbols unifies groups and gives them a sense of their own identity. Symbolic actions or rituals serve to mark stages or changes in life. Without these an important structural element is missing.

The disaster is an event of such magnitude to those experiencing it, that it ceases to become just a real event, but takes on a symbolic significance that gives it a far-reaching meaning for the lives of those it touches. However it is likely that this meaning will be a destructive one, expressing the insignificance or fragility of human life against the world. In this sense the disaster becomes a negative symbol and as such must be countered by alternative symbols if it is not to endure throughout life as a destructive influence.

The cooperation and support of the immediate post-disaster period, and other generous, courageous, or creative acts by people in the recovery period, become important symbols of care, concern and hope. But symbols in the form of artistic dramatic or religious presentations are also necessary. They serve to put both disaster and human qualities in a broader context, emphasising the notion of recovery and the enrichment of life by linking the experiences of the past to the anticipated future.

The important recovery principle arising from this is that *the symbolic significance of response, recovery and withdrawal actions is a potent means of countering the destructive symbol of the disaster.* Some administrative decisions about apparently minor issues may become symbols to the community. When this happens it is wise to consider that the power of a symbol far outweighs what can be done with more material resources to convince people that they are recognised, cared for and understood, which are the necessary foundation for human recovery.

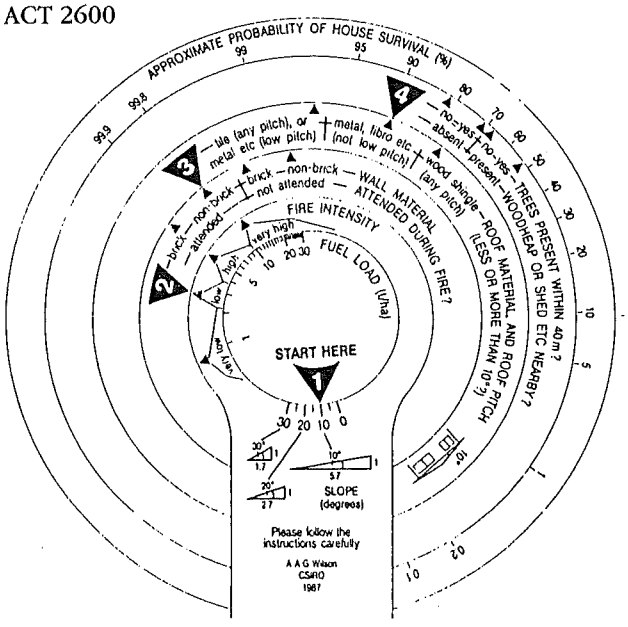
Administrative interventions and recovery strategies can be planned with their symbolic meaning in mind.

Finally, the community can be encouraged to explore its own creative talent in developing artistic or ceremonial means of giving symbolic expression to its own sense of recovery and the future. Recovery workers will be able to help facilitate this at each stage of recovery as a means of emphasising that there is a common human bond between all those touched by disaster and whose lives may be enriched by it, when it leads to a great sense of community and appreciation of human experience.

BUSHFIRE SURVIVAL

For those living in areas of high bushfire threat, the CSIRO National Bushfire Research Unit have developed a 'House Survival Meter'. This cardboard circular slide-rule, allows a quick and realistic assessment of the survival chances of houses in bushland areas. The meter highlights the major factors that contribute to the bushfire hazard, such as the amount of surrounding fuel, slope of the land, wall materials, roof materials and pitch, whether the house is occupied during a fire and finally, whether trees, woodheaps or sheds are located nearby. The meter conveys numerically, the relative importance of each factor, thus allowing the householder the opportunity to calculate house survival chances if certain hazards are lessened or eliminated.

The meter is available for $2, from:
CSIRO Natural Bushfire Research Unit,
PO Box 4008,
Queen Victoria Terrace,
ACT 2600



NEW AUSTRALIAN STANDARD

A project whose origins are now lost in the mists of time, has finally come to fruition. Following a postal ballot of the states and territories by the Standards Association of Australia, it is confirmed the draft standard for "Colour Identification of Emergency Services at a Major Disaster" is agreed. Seven of the eight states and territories and other agencies agreed, with two of the agreements being qualified with reservations. Publication of this new Australian Standard can be expected in a few months time.

Colonel Bob Hagerty Director Operations and Planning NDO, Chairman of SAA Technical Committee SF/40 (See TMD Vol 2, No 4, Page 7) wishes to publicly thank all the Committee for their hard work and perseverance in what has been a complex and at times emotional and vexatious task. Our sincere thanks go also to the SAA for their careful guidance and expertise in bringing the project to conclusion. As Bob Hagerty remarked -

"Perhaps a small step for mankind, but a big step for man"...!

The Committee recognised the practical difficulties in some aspects of implementation, however they were generally unanimous that considerable benefits will flow from adoption of the standard in the long term. The new Standard deserves your careful consideration - please do so.TMD will advise readers when the Standard is published

REFLECTIONS

Today's disaster victims are exposed to many traumas, such as the loss or damage to their property and belongings.But consider the plight of a flood victim in the colony of New South Wales in 1816, during "inundations" on the Nepean and Hawkesbury Rivers. The Governor of the day, Lachlan Macquarie, decreed that: *"In whatever Instances the Humanity of Government may be exercised towards the Relief of the Settlers in their present Distress, it is to be understood that it will be extended to them only for their temporary Assistance, and that Re-payment will be required in due Course"*

STAFF

Major J B (Jock) Hope-Campbell died in Kyneton Hospital on Saturday, 4 June 1988 after a long illness.Jock was one of the 'originals', joining ACDS in August 1955. Together with others of the 'old breed', like Vin Jerram and Bill Hoddinott, he helped Nick Carter take the College from its old civil defence orientation into its counter-disaster role in the mid-70's, before retiring after a period as Chief Instructor in September 1977.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara, three children and a number of grandchildren

SEWS OR SPACE INVADERS?

TMD Vol 2 No 3 of September 1987 gave details of the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS). Under a covering letter from the Minister for Defence, a tape-recording of SEWS was sent in November 1985, to each of the State/Territory Ministers for Police and Emergency Services. The letter commended that SEWS be introduced and a public education campaign be put into effect. Since that time, a few reports have been received by NDO, indicating that various sounds on radio or TV were similar to SEWS and that confusion could result. None of these reports were substantiated.

Recently it was suggested that SEWS was identical to the sounds emitted by most computer and video games. This advice caused some alarm at NDO and an intensive investigation was undertaken in the Canberra area. All the major computer game retail outlets were checked. The sound of SEWS was played to retailers who commented that in their experience, there was no similarity to the sounds used in any games they sold. In addition a total of 20 games were played. NDO checked also with the National Acoustic Laboratory in Sydney which designed and developed SEWS. In the designer's opinion, it is unlikely a computer game would use the sophisticated and complex tones, mixing and repetition that SEWS incorporates.

NDO would be interested to hear from anyone who discovers a sound similar to SEWS. Please contact NDO (Tel: 062 466600) and give full details.

As SEWS is a sound, it cannot be registered for copyright. NDO is taking steps to advise the appropriate authorities of the significance of SEWS, in an endeavour to ensure its proper significance.

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* Contributions are welcomed and should be addressed to:
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