

Resilience and Vulnerability: Two Sides of the Same Coin

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We can't solve catastrophe but we can get better at minimising its effects!

A snapshot of historic and current antecedent conditions shaping our societies

“If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading” – Lao Tsu

- **Birth of liberalism - 1600's (Thomas Hobbes / John Locke)**
 - Our separation from nature and a desire to control/conquer it
 - **The birth of individualism**
 - Pursuit of external liberation over internal liberation (the shift away from the ethics of virtue to will and reason and the pursuit of externalities to achieve fulfillment)
 - The right to do anything one chooses to do constrained only by positive law (i.e. a law that prohibits something)
 - The rise of the nation state
 - The trading of personal freedoms for security
 - The creation of the social contract
 - The concept of risk entered our minds (our desire to control and create our future).
- **Current Isms - ideologies and grand narratives**
 - **Individualism (Unprecedented levels of over confidence in Self as more important than everyone else)**
 - Materialism & consumerism (pursuit of wealth and material goods and services to achieve happiness)
 - Subjectivism (everyone's opinions are equally valid and a source of truth to the individual)
 - Relativism (truth is determined by the individual through their own opinions, experiences and points of view only without the benefit of greater wisdom)
- **Declining trust in institutions**
 - Political, Business (banking/finance/insurance/private sector), Media, Religions
- **Breach of ethics**
 - Contributes to driving individuals to trust their own knowledge and experience over that of the institution's own knowledge (expertise) and capabilities, thus reinforcing individualism, subjectivism and relativism

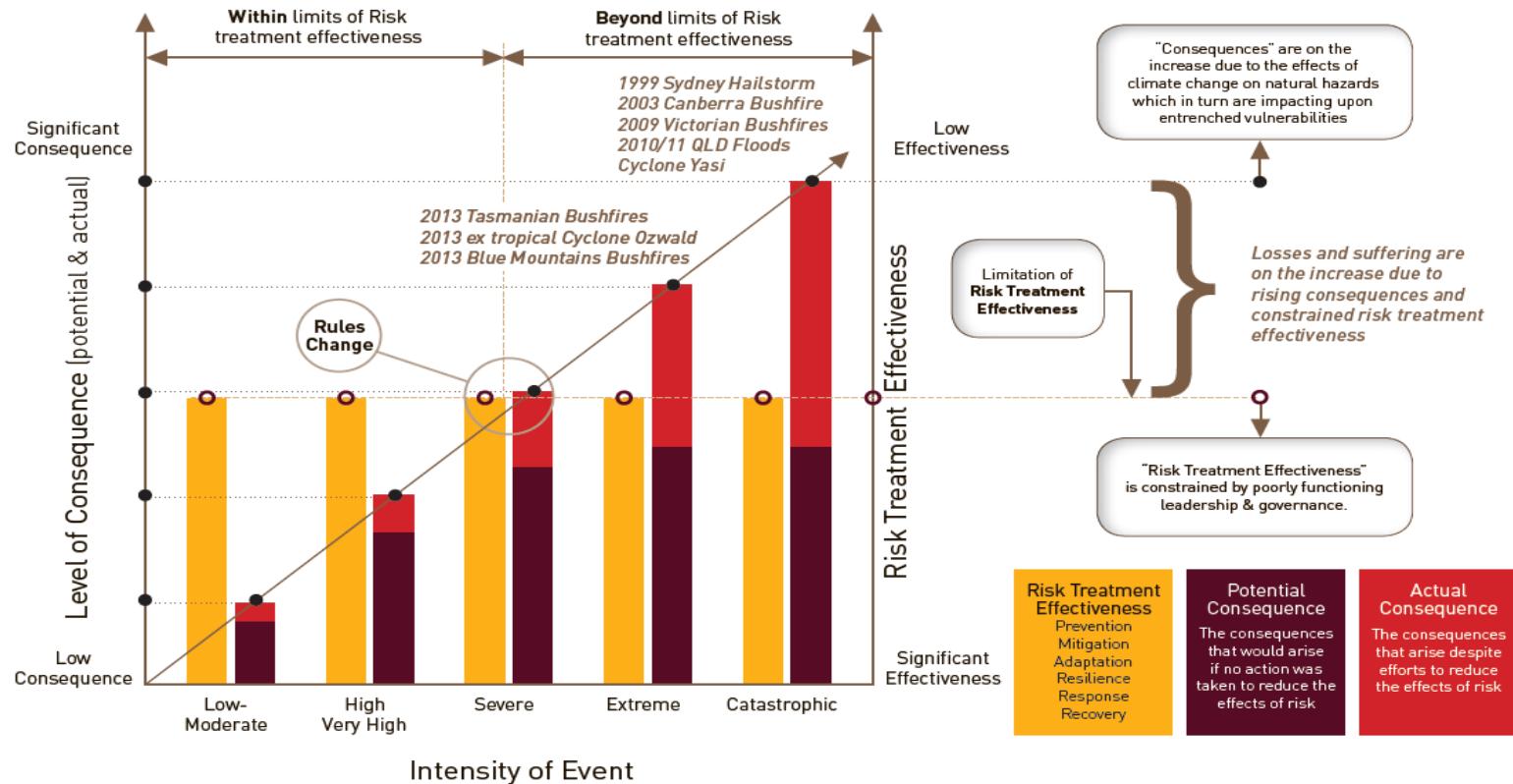


A snapshot of antecedent conditions shaping our future

- Australia's population is due to increase to 40m+ by 2050. This will require a city the size of Canberra every year for the next 30 years. National infrastructure will need to increase by 60%
- 16% of Australians think things are getting better whilst 49% think things are getting worse
- 2 million Australians are clinically diagnosed with anxiety and similar numbers with depression
- Failing to acknowledge people for whom they truly are is driving deep societal dissatisfaction.
- A loss of higher meaning and purpose is also a contributor.
- **Society is losing its social cohesion - one of the foundational tenets of resilience. Instead, there is a retreat into deeper individualism and self absorption.**
- We are not immune from these effects. In fact, we are part of them and we also perpetuate them. Therefore, they will pervade into our cultures and our leadership unless we become conscious of them and work to replace them with a different ethos.



Understanding our point of limitation – Lessons from the Past



Trust breached / overconfidence / lack of sensitivity / disunity / blameworthy



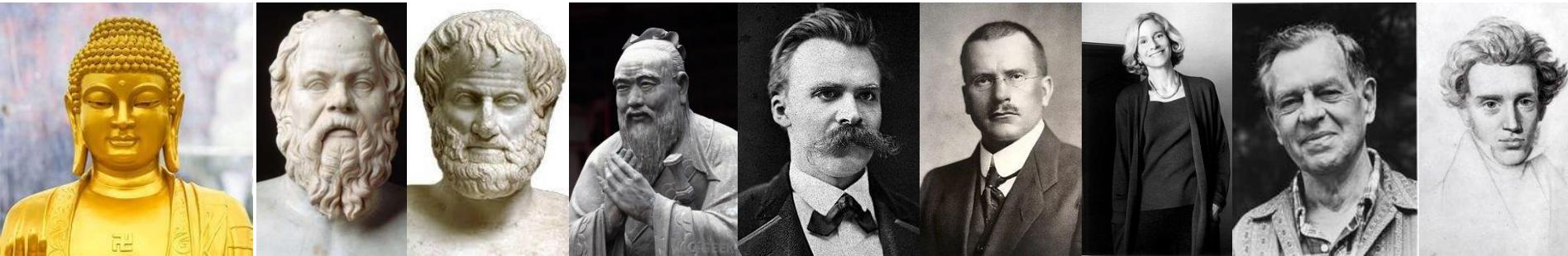
The Big Question

- ❖ What is our social contract with those we seek to protect and serve during times of severe to catastrophic disasters if we are constrained and mutually vulnerable?



A Philosophy for resilience in leadership

- Accept that Nature is our teacher not our enemy and we will always be subordinate to her wishes
- Uphold public trust and confidence as the highest measure of success
- Commit to the reduction of suffering as the greatest mission (be compassionate)
- Understand that the greatest source of all human suffering is the suffering of Self. The greatest happiness is in compassion for Others (the Four Noble Truths).
- See vulnerability as our strength – our capacity to be open to the relatedness between ourselves and others (everyone suffers)
- Grant ourselves permission to be vulnerable so as to see and relate to the suffering of others and to think, speak and act in ways that alleviate that suffering
- Have the confidence to imagine and the courage to act – to anticipate futures not previously experienced
- See all experiences as freely chosen and as a means by which to learn in order to live a life of meaning and purpose (ethics/virtue/excellence and the three pathways to wisdom)
- Realise that those we aid and assist are in a relationship of mutuality. We only get to fulfil our mission because of the perceived unfortunate circumstances that others find themselves in and often it will be their courage and bravery that will inspire us.
- Be kind to those you perceive as your enemy as they are the greatest teacher of your virtues



Three things to remember

"Life is not a problem to be solved; but a reality to be experienced" – Soren Kierkegaard

- **Who you are matters** – that includes the innate ability to be compassionate to Self and Other (**Confidence**)
- **What you do matters** – that includes the capacity to act in the best interests of Self and Other (**Courage**)
- **Who Others are and what Others do matters** - Make sure you tell them! (**Acknowledgement and Relatedness**)



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