

Foreword



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It's hard to fathom just how much our society has changed in 40 years, communities have changed, technology has changed and sadly so too have our disasters.

The advent of computers, machine learning and AI, particularly over the last 30 years have brought into sharp focus how we use tools but fundamental to it all is our ability to create, curate and record knowledge.

The 1980's foresight to create and maintain a collection of emergency management knowledge has left a legacy that we will use for decades to come.

In the April edition of the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* (AJEM), we continue celebrating 40 years of publication by looking back at the people and ideas that have helped shape the journal and the emergency management sector.

For AFAC, AJEM remains a cornerstone of how evidence, experience and insight are shared across the emergency management sector. It provides a trusted space where research meets practice, enabling practitioners, policymakers and leaders to learn from each other and strengthen collective capability over time.

This edition includes conversations with past journal contributors, who revisit their early articles, reflect on how their field has evolved, and share their perspectives on the future direction of AJEM. John Richardson, AIDR Executive Director reflects on AJEM's second decade, including how the emergency management field broadened and matured during this decade.

The research papers in this issue address critical questions emerging from recent disaster experience in Australia. Associate Professor Iftekhar Ahmed leads a paper on shelter after disasters, exploring the consequences of prolonged displacement and the limitations of temporary housing solutions in a context of housing shortages and rising regulatory costs.

Broader structural and social dimensions of disaster risk are explored in 2 further research papers. Dr Victoria Heinrich and team present research on flash flood warnings, examining how knowledge, experience and uncertainty are interpreted by both practitioners and the public, and identifying persistent gaps in understanding that complicate risk communication. Dr Silke Clausning examines the gendered impacts of disasters in Aotearoa New Zealand, highlighting how unpaid care responsibilities and employment disruption disproportionately affect women, and calling for stronger integration of gender equity into disaster law and policy.

The more we learn, the more society changes. As we look forward to the coming 40 years, we know that risk is changing in a complex and dynamic way. How our society will define knowledge is pointing to a range of new opportunities and threats. What won't change is the need to connect with our communities where they are in place and time.

AJEM remains a trusted place for shared learning and thoughtful debate. By connecting evidence with experience, the journal helps the sector adapt, improve and approach the future with confidence.