

"Winter is coming"

The urgent and collective necessity to think and behave in new ways

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WARNING : This Poster is not presented as an absolute 'truth'. It is designed to begin conversations, and requires such conversations if it is to be effective.

Abstract: If we are to successfully face a future of increasingly intense and frequent hazards and emergencies, we need to abandon some of our ways of thinking and behaving. We must challenge our assumptions, increase the pace of our learning, improve our partnerships, and refresh our overall approach.

The approach we need will be different during the planning, preparedness, response and both short and long term recovery stages. We need to be flexible and adaptable depending on the stage, the event, and the community circumstances.

Most importantly, the approach we have relied on during one phase, or in one circumstance, may well undermine our ultimate success. The true challenge in 'Game of Thrones' was never that 'winter was coming' - that was always inevitable. The challenge was whether people could be adaptable - and those who adapted, survived. The ultimate success was a collaboration of equals prepared to agree on a new and unexpected way forward, under an unexpected leader. AND, this leadership was chosen based on the power of stories to shape the future.

Are we prepared to change the approach we know and love, for the greater good? Do we need a combination of both?
Are we prepared to acknowledge the power of stories, as the essence of the leadership we need?

The Old Model

Useful for preparing for and facing the emergency

Structured and planned

A focus on what is consistent and fair (even equal)

Objective and rational

Logical and controlled

Rule based and ordered

Formal inquiries - leading to learned lessons

Information and consultation

Sector or bureaucracy led

(Demonstrated by guidelines and handbooks)

The New Model

Essential for creating a sustainable and resilient future

Adaptable and innovative

Flexible and tailored

Subjective and compassionate

Emotional and dynamic

Values and principles based

Restorative practice to learn lessons

Collaboration and partnership

Community and partnership led

(Demonstrated by stories and lived experience)

Work underway across jurisdictions and the sector

Work has begun that will support this change. "Community-led co-design" projects are underway in rural and regional communities. Stories and case studies are being developed to capture lived experience. Values and principles underpin community engagement and Emergency Management (EM) strategy and guidance. Restorative practice has been explored in relation to bushfire response experience. Partnerships between the private sector, government and philanthropy are established. Much more is needed if we are to be adequately prepared for the crises that are inevitably coming our way.

Essential pre-conditions for the New Model

This is what we need for changes to be sufficient::

- **Hindsight and Foresight** to remember and (really) learn from what has already happened, and to see and understand the 'unimaginable scale of the inevitable'
- **Courage** to take seriously the need for change in how we think and act
- **Humility** so that we remember that we don't know everything and that we do need others
- **Leadership** at every level of the system to support the active change
- **Opportunities** for all parties to share information and listen to/learn from one another (i.e. inclusive and respectful conversations)
- **Openness** to what is new or uncomfortable, or just plain annoying
- **Flexibility** to work with different groups, change our thinking, adopt new practices
- **Funds and the willingness** to support all parties to participate (including communities), as we work together to create the future.

(Thanks to Jon, Arya, Bran, Sansa, Tyrion, Jamie, Brienne, Davos, and to so many of the others).

