

Queensland's leadership and crisis management education

Jane Zsombok, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

A Queensland initiative, Operational Leadership and Crisis Management Masterclass series, is delivering beneficial outcomes for managers of disasters.

Disaster management training, education and capability development is a key element of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) responsibilities and commitment to Queensland disaster management stakeholders.

The masterclass series develops and enhances the capability of disaster managers and supports the effective performance of their roles. Masterclass sessions extend learning and build on other Queensland disaster management training. Participants include those with roles as Local Disaster Management Group Chair, Local Disaster Coordinator, Local Recovery Coordinator or District Disaster Coordinator. To date, 48 per cent of attendees have been from local government, which is indicative of the critical role local governments perform in disaster management.

During 2019, QFES delivered three sessions:

- Meteorology for Disaster Managers Masterclass
- High Consequence Decision Making Masterclass
- Leadership in Disaster, Crisis and Adversity Masterclass.

The Meteorology for Disaster Managers Masterclass was facilitated by meteorologists from the Bureau of Meteorology and attended by 239 stakeholders across 12 locations during April and May. QFES worked in collaboration with the Bureau of Meteorology to design and develop the one-day sessions. Participants were given expert insights into weather and weather forecasting to support their decision-making during response operations. Participants said:

[My] Knowledge of meteorology has been greatly improved.

Improved my knowledge, content is very relevant for my role.

The High Consequence Decision Making Masterclass and the Leadership in Disaster, Crisis and Adversity Masterclass were designed and customised for the Queensland disaster management sector by QFES and the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience. These masterclass sessions were facilitated by subject-matter experts and provided a blend of practitioner experience and academic knowledge.

The High Consequence Decision Making Masterclass focused on making critical decisions in situations of uncertainty, defensible decision-making and mitigating the effects of uncertainty in making evidence-based decisions. The masterclasses were delivered through 10 one-day sessions over June and July, reaching 227 participants who are in decision-making roles.

The Leadership in Disaster, Crisis and Adversity Masterclass focused on leadership using coordination, collaboration and relationships to help managers improve and leverage networks and relationships as well as crisis communication and engagement. This masterclass was conducted during July and August via 10 one-day sessions and was attended by 232 participants from disaster management roles. Participants indicated high levels of satisfaction and skills enhancement from training:

Excellent training which has challenged my way of thinking.

Validated many current practices and provided many new tools applicable to emergency managers.

Encouraged higher order thinking which resulted in deep learning.

A key element of the QFES training strategy is to provide access for the sector across Queensland's vast geographical size. This was a critical factor in the delivery methodology. Masterclass sessions were conducted in Brisbane, Bundaberg, Cairns, Gympie, Longreach, Mackay, Rockhampton, Roma, Toowoomba and Townsville.

The masterclass series is a component of training provided under the Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework that is managed by the Emergency Management Training Command of QFES. Further sessions in the masterclass series are planned for 2020.

For further information, contact the QFES Emergency Management Training Command via email at DMTraining.Feedback@qfes.qld.gov.au.