

Preparing Emergency Services for Operations in a Climate Challenged World

¹ BNHCRC

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Preparing Emergency Services for Operations in a Climate-Challenged World was a 12 month research project beginning in 2020 that focused on a research question that the BNHCRC and member agencies were seeking to address:

"How can fire and emergency service agencies develop and use forward-looking (and linked) climate and social change scenarios to best prepare their businesses so that they can continue to provide effective services in a climate-challenged world?"

Purpose

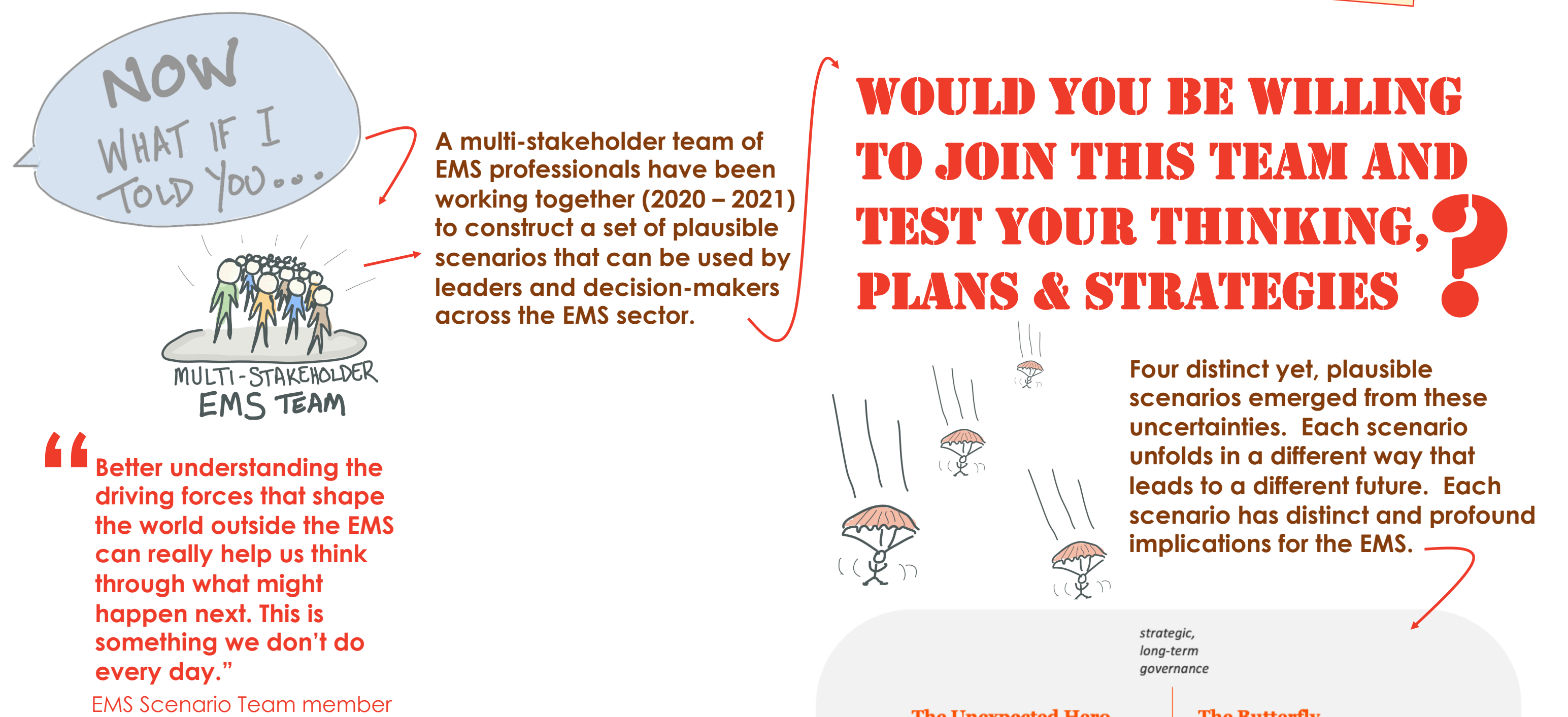
- To construct a set of plausible scenarios that illuminate the assumptions and blind-spots in thinking and decision making, and challenge us to test the robustness and adaptability of our organisational strategies and planning processes.
- To do this in a way that has practical application to support EMS and related organisations to collectively achieve their mission of creating safety and resilience in an uncertain, volatile and climate challenged world.

Process

- A multi-stakeholder team of EMS professionals from Australia and New Zealand worked together via a series of workshops and sub-group sessions, facilitated by Reos Partners across 2020-2021, to explore the driving forces in the world (social, technical, economic, environmental, political) that impact on the future of the EMS.
- Senior leaders from within and outside the sector provided an overarching strategic context for the work.
- Strategic guidance from BNHCRC and AFAC.
- A climate research team from RMIT University supported the work of the scenario team with reported data and evidence.

Results

- New relationships, capacities, insights, commitments.
- A set of plausible scenarios that depict challenging, plausible futures for EMS
- Literature review
- A guide for using scenarios in practice



What's UNCERTAIN?

It is these driving forces (or key uncertainties) that laid out the structural framework for these possible future scenarios.

- The degree to which governance regimes are long-term, proactive and strategic versus short-term, less active and responsive;
- The extent to which social cohesiveness is present in society - whether society bonds together in collective support for one another versus operating in an individualistic, "me first" approach;
- The extent of economic prosperity and access to capital;
- The degree to which societal functioning is reliant upon technology;
- The extent of population spread and movement between rural and urban landscapes;
- The extent of global geo-political tension; and
- The impact of epidemics/pandemics.

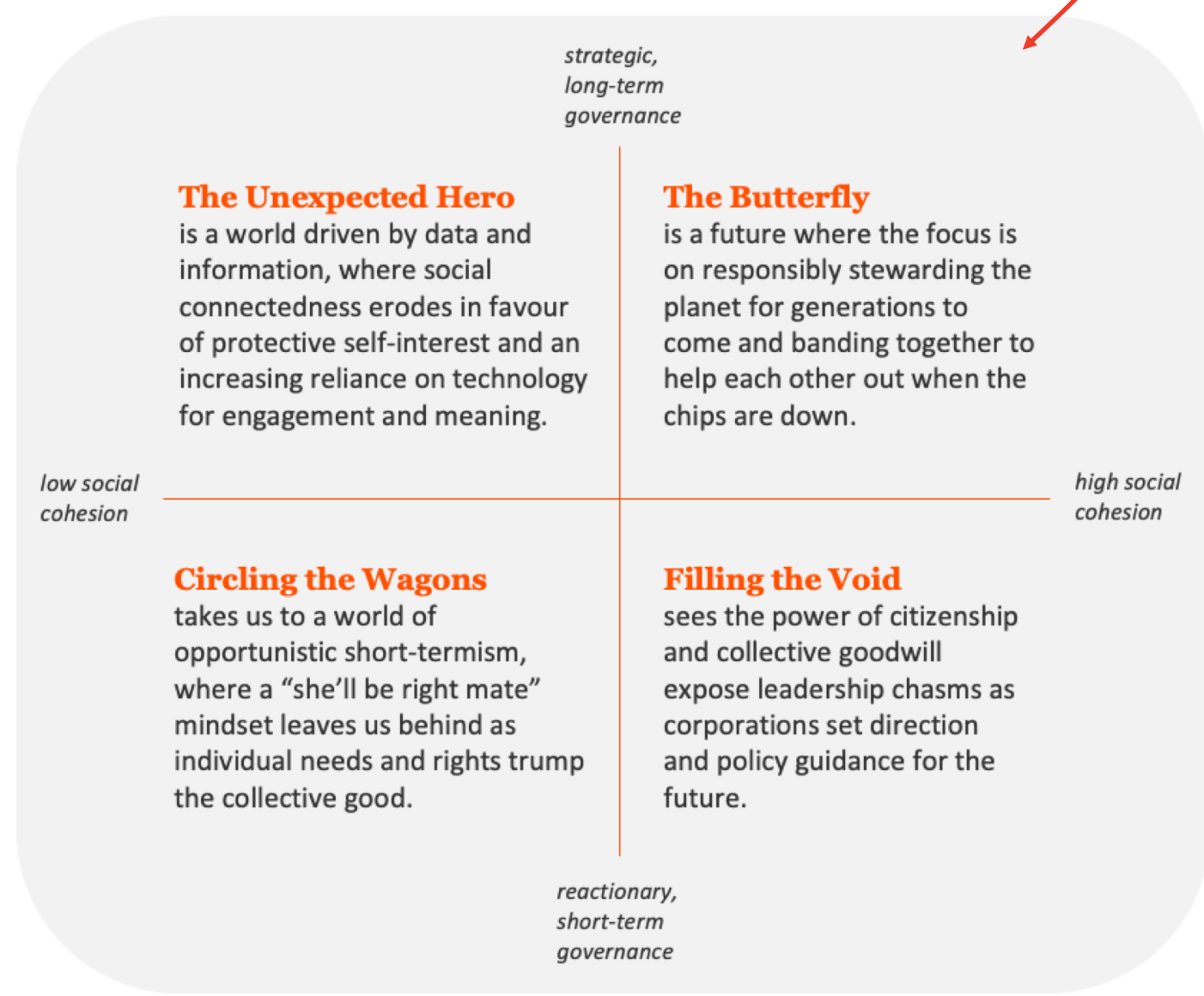
"A small change in one of more these uncertainties can have an enormous impact on the EMS."

What's CERTAIN?

Climate Turbulence is Already Here

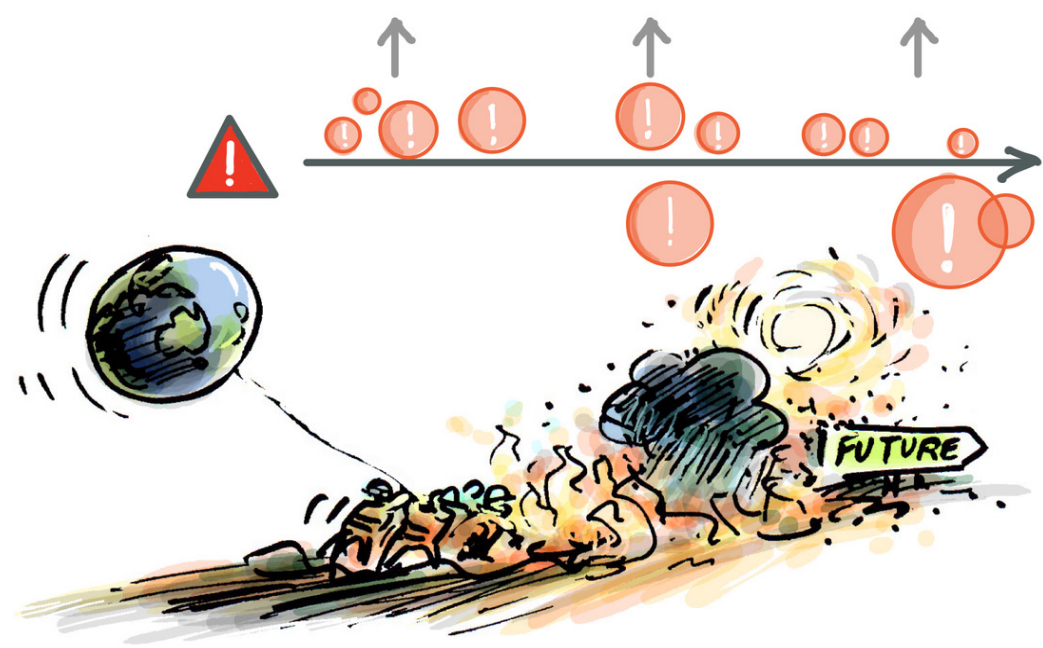
The planet is already on a fixed trajectory of changing weather and climate. Across all scenarios from 2021-2035 the following will occur:

- there will be a **continuation of existing climate trends**
- whilst on this trajectory, there will also continue to be **increasing volatility, frequency and magnitude of weather extremes**



The project research team has produced a **Hazard Event Map** to be used as an "overlay" to all scenarios. In this way it is possible to explore the same hazard events in different scenarios.

In doing so, it will highlight the different extent of risk and degree of impact that these same hazard events pose in the different scenarios that might emerge.



USING SCENARIOS IN PRACTICE

WE PUT SCENARIOS TO USE TO ...

- ✓ PROVOKE STRATEGIC INSIGHTS
- ✓ CHALLENGE & EXPAND ASSUMPTIONS
- ✓ DEVELOP FORESIGHT CAPACITY
- ✓ DRIVE ACTION-ORIENTED OUTCOMES

SCENARIOS FOR PLANNING & DECISION-MAKING IN EMERGENCY SERVICES

- ✓ WIND TUNNELLING OF EXISTING STRATEGIES & PLANS
- ✓ OVERLAYING CLIMATE ONTO SCENARIOS
- ✓ INTEGRATE INSIGHTS WITH INTERNAL PROCESSES

TALK WITH US ...

By parachuting into each scenario, exploring and visualising what is going on, and then overlaying the increasing volatility, frequency and magnitude of weather extremes, it is possible to experience a cognitive and visceral sense of what the future in each scenario may hold. By immersing ourselves in each scenario we can begin to feel what it's like to live in there as a leader or worker, a citizen, a neighbour, a spouse, parent etc.

To start applying these transformative scenarios in your own organisation, please contact:

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