**August Hazardous Webinar – Enhancing decision making in emergency management**

**Unanswered Q&A**

* **Reflecting on the New Zealand "Report of the Government Inquiry into the Response to the North island Severe Weather Events"**[**https://bit.ly/3ySBZ8B**](https://mcas-proxyweb.mcas.ms/certificate-checker?login=false&originalUrl=https%3A%2F%2Furl.au.m.mimecastprotect.com.mcas.ms%2Fs%2FbAuSC91Zxvhpz4Dni1u9CqF4kH%3Fdomain%3Dbit.ly%26McasTsid%3D20893&McasCSRF=1ff7114267ac5ac1c7b48a1c11f10432c677ebe14109e766981230c4eebd8390)**Pg 12 "The emergency management system is not fit-for-purpose"**

**What are the impacts within Australia?**

Our project focuses on decision making rather than the state-level arrangements that this question highlights. We have not looked closely at these arrangements and so are not in a position to comment further on these for Australia.

**With this presentation, the focus is on the Emergency Services Sector 5% of the Aus NEMA Emergency Management Continuum, and not the wider domain sector of Disaster Management Continuum.**

We are not quite sure what the 5% statistic relates to or where it comes from, so cannot respond directly to this part of the question. We would recommend reviewing the *Australian Emergency Management Arrangements Handbook* (AIDR, 2023) for helpful descriptions of the key terms cited in this question – emergency management, emergencies and disasters. We note that emergency management is a broad term that focuses on managing risks to communities and the environment and includes prevention, response and recovery. AIDR (2023) highlights that ‘emergencies can and do happen on a daily basis’ (p. viii) and ‘that in some cases, the scale, complexity or consequences is such that the emergency is considered a disaster’ (p. viii). Quite a number of the project’s interviewed participants had worked on emergencies that developed into disasters. Some of our project’s participants had roles that involved broader planning/preparation/prevention or recovery responsibilities. We would also add that a number of the interviews discussed their preparation and recovery decision making for various hazards, emergencies and disasters (e.g., discussion of decision making to support community recovery following a large scale flood).

**Does this mean that the project is limited to 5% of the industry sector.**

We are not quite sure what the 5% statistic relates to or where it comes from, so cannot respond directly to this part of the question. However, the project will provide important insights that will more broadly be applicable to the sector. These include: how decision making is generally undertaken in practice, the effectiveness of the decision making training currently provided, the strengths and limitations of the cognitive aids used by practitioners, and opportunities to strengthen how practitioners are prepared for their decision making roles.

* **Hi, super interesting. I am curious to know what you find about the role of emotions in their decision-making process? And especially as the situation is changing? Thanks**Our research hasn’t directly looked at this topic but there is other research that indicates that more skilled decision makers can better maintain focus through their ability to make the best use of their metacognitive resources (i.e., thinking about their thinking). Metacognition helps skilled decision makers to more effectively monitor and manage their information load and their degree of emotional arousal. Deep structure knowledge of the domain can help more skilled decision makers’ anticipate likely developments and thus potentially be better placed to manage the changing situation.The broader topic of how emotions shape decision making is examined by Lerner et al. (2015) (see *Annual Review of Psychology*, *66*, 799-823, doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115043).
* **It would be really interesting to know whether there was any commonality in ethical challenges in decision making in emergencies and particularly if they are working in regions where they live**This topic did not arise in our survey or interviews. There is other Australian research that examines land management firefighters’ work experiences and notes some of challenges of living and working in rural communities (see Lingard et al., 2024 *Safety Science, 178*, 106619, doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2024.106619).
* **How can we receive updates on the progress of the study?**We will continue to work with the NHRA to provide updates on the project. We will also publish our findings and the products we develop as part of this project.
* **It's important that we are not loose with terminology - it leads to confusion. Emergency management is not only about response. Could these approaches apply to preparedness and prevention too?**Thank you for the reminder on the need to be more precise with our language. As noted earlier the project will provide important insights that will more broadly be applicable to the sector. These include: how decision making is generally undertaken in practice, the effectiveness of the decision making training currently provided, the strengths and limitations of the cognitive aids used by practitioners, and opportunities to strengthen how practitioners are prepared for their decision making roles.