

Emergency Management and Preventive Health Overlap

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Australia's vulnerability – can we cope with catastrophic events...

The community – naivety; expectations; complacency

Acknowledging others' experiences

Testing and addressing capability gaps

Where preventative health fits

Australia's dependency on volunteers and where this fits

Things to take away and think about

Here is why I know they overlap...

BECAUSE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO
OUR HEALTH AND EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS AT THE HIGHEST STRATEGIC LEVELS,
BOTH NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

- DECADES AS A VOLUNTEER
- MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUSTRALIAN HEALTH PRINCIPALS POLICY COMMITTEE
- PRESIDENT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION – when Covid 19 started, the PHAA urged acceptance of the science and drawing on qualified professional advice to guide governments' approaches to vaccine priority, availability, and distribution processes
- OVER 6 YEARS AS DIRECTOR GENERAL, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA during the busiest and most catastrophic period in modern times.... think 9/11; Canberra fires; the Bali Bombings; the Madrid and London bombings; the Indian Ocean Tsunami....
 - Years as CEO of the Australian peak drug and alcohol body

Catastrophic Events – Response and Recovery

When thinking about catastrophic events, the rule is
10 casualties to a single death.

When was Australia's last large-scale event? Our largest event ever?

Granville: January 18, 1977 = **83** deaths; **213** injured

How many emergency beds does Australia have on the eastern seaboard? **400**

World Events – a snap-shot

Event	Date	Deaths	Treated	Notes
911	11 September 2001	2,996	~ 40,000	
Bali I	12 October 2002	202 (88 Aussies)	209 (66 Aussies)	
Madrid Train Bombings	11 March 2004	193	2,050	
Indian Ocean Tsunami	26 December 2004	227,898	~ 500,000	1.7 million displaced
London Bombings	7 July 2005	56	784	
Hurricane Katrina	23 – 31 August 2005	1,392	7,543	1.5 million displaced
Kashmir Earthquake	8 October 2005	87,351	75,266	3.5 million displaced
Haiti Earthquake I	12 January 2010	~ 316,000 + 5,899 cholera	~ 300,000 + 216,000 cholera	1.5 million displaced
Japan Tsunami	11 March 2011	19,759	6,242 injured	2,553 missing 470,000 displaced
Haiti Earthquake II	14 August 2021	2,248 + 850 cholera	12,763 + 55,846 cholera	650,000 displaced
COVID world-wide	to April 2024	7,010,681	704,753,890	

Major Events at home

Event	Date	Deaths	Treated
Canberra Firestorm	18 – 22 January 2003	4	490
Black Saturday Bushfires	7 February – 14 March 2009	179	414
Summer 2014 Heatwave		860	
Black Summer Bushfires	December 2019 – January 2020	34 + 450 smoke-related	445 + 4,500 smoke-related

Preventive Health Risk Factors

Tobacco – 1 in 7 smoke daily

Diet – 1 in 4 children and 2 in 3 adults are obese

Physical Activity Standards – only half Adults and 2 in 3 Children participate

Chronic Disease – affects over half Australians, most having 2 of each: diabetes, heart, kidney, cancer

Alcohol – 4000 deaths annually

Mental Health – one third of Australians will experience in lifetime

Total Australian Health Budget ~\$250 billion per annum

but

only **1.3%** or \$3.25 billion is spent on prevention

= \$125 per annum, per person

vs Britain and Canada who invest 4%

Significant Prevention Success but we can do better!

Seatbelts/RBT but road toll of **1200** deaths pa and
61,500 injuries/hospitalisations

Slip Slop Slap Campaign but still have **92,000** melanoma cases pa diagnosed
and **1300** deaths due to sun exposure

Life Be In It but cardiac arrest deaths still **22,000** per annum

HIV/AIDS – success of clean needles (including safe injecting) and naloxone; approach
to treating drug use as a health issue and not a criminal one

Plain Packaging – cigarettes and recent decisions on vapes

Cancers Awareness – **170,000** pa diagnosed,
53,000 deaths pa, average 5 years life span from diagnosis to death
breast cancer **3,700** pa; prostate 3,700 pa; lung cancer **9,000** pa

Our Volunteer Dependency

raising, sustaining, training, retaining

500,000 active volunteers across first responders and many other areas of health, community support and welfare

Current problems:

average age is 49, availability, time-pressures; tyranny of distance, rural decline, recruiting, attracting especially from multicultural and disability sectors, skills portability, employee release and community misunderstandings

Recognition, Responsibility & Indemnity – liability is the same as for career personnel, so training is a big and ongoing commitment

If Australia had to pay for the time and labour of volunteers...

it would cost in the in the order of **\$17.5 billion** per annum

Thoughts to ponder

Is there a future for Volunteerism?? Is there more each of us can be doing?

Think Big on Disaster – very fortunate to date but only a matter of time!

Complacency – we need to be continually learning, engaging and preparing

All Hazards approach – acting on the advice of the experts will help future-proof us on climate, health, resilience, preparedness.... because they're all linked

Improve Investment in Health Prevention = lower health expense in the long-term

CPR/Defibs/First Aid training across the education system

Climate Change and Large-Scale Severe Storms/Flooding/Events

= compounding disasters are here to stay; Helene, Milton....

There will be profound strategic implications for us, our neighbours and the world
if we adjust too slowly to the effects of Climate Change