



**Australian Government**

**Attorney-General's Department**

**Emergency Management Australia**

## **Security in Government Conference SIG 2007**

### **'The Future of Security'**

### **All Hazards Planning for Australia's Security**

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The debate has been ongoing in Australia for some time with regard to what exactly national security is, and what exactly qualifies an emergency to be considered a national security event.

I need to emphasize that my personal view, which is what will be reflected in this presentation is that national security relates to more than just the terrorist threat and it is more than planning in isolation for responding to acts of terrorism. My definition of national security encompasses the principle that any threat that poses risks to Australia's people, our environment, our property and our economy is a national security emergency and therefore planning to mitigate, respond to and recover from a national security emergency must be conducted considering all hazards.

The national security environment that includes man made emergencies such as acts of terrorism, natural hazards such as tsunami and earthquake, public health emergencies such as pandemic and threats to our critical infrastructure has changed dramatically since the inaugural Security in Government conference in 1987. The speed of change nowadays is rapid and unrelenting.

Only a few years ago, Australia was a country where the concept of 'security' was nothing more than making sure that your front door was locked if you left home for any length of time...

Where the idea of a "bomb", referred to the first car that your young son bought thinking that he had found himself a bargain...

**EMA** *'safer sustainable communities'*

And a “suspicious package” was the gift that your mother in law presented you with at Christmas that generally ended up being nothing more than more of the same jocks and socks.

Of course now some things have changed. In any modern culture, change is inevitable and most of the time, change is good. In many ways, change has brought the world closer together.

Advances in technology mean that we think nothing about jumping on a plane arriving anywhere in the world within hours rather than weeks to conduct meetings

Advances in information technology mean that we can communicate with each other from anywhere on earth almost at the speed of light.

Cultural, religious, political and ethnic diversity no longer prevent our citizens from mixing in what is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse countries in the world.

The advent of the global village and globalisation generally has figuratively speaking seen us witnessing a shrinking world.....it has for all intents and purposes become a much smaller place.

Whilst those changes already mentioned are positives there are others that are not so.

Issues such as the recent spread of global terrorism and the subsequent declaration of the war on terror have contributed to a level of societal fear, and have galvanised the minds of governments and their agencies in their attempts to find ways to mitigate the threat.

I have been somewhat fortunate over the past few years to have been in a position to visit a number of countries and in doing so to be able to review the way in which overseas agencies manage the terrorist threat relative to their management of other types of emergency. The relevance of my travels and analysis to this discussion is that in a number of cases it was quite apparent, that where agencies chose not to consider terrorism as part of an all hazards planning process they risked, and in a number of cases experienced an information/communication disconnect between crisis and consequence management agencies.

In the worst case scenario as witnessed during the response to 9/11 these disconnects can lead to tragic emergency response outcomes and increase the likelihood of poor public safety outcomes, in the best case scenario we are likely to see inadequate preparation and ineffective utilization of resources by consequence management agencies.

Following 9/11 many were heard to say that the world had changed as a result of the attacks, and whilst I am not sure to what extent those specific events changed the world, I believe that the way in which governments around the globe including the Australian government's and their agencies approach the terrorism issue certainly did change.

Even though terrorism has been a consideration in many countries for centuries, recognition of the threat associated with this activity has become greatly enhanced since 9/11, and attacks of major significance to Australia such as the two Bali bombings and the Jakarta Australian embassy attack have helped focus our efforts.

One response to these and other significant events by governments both in Australia and other parts of the world has been a massive increase in intelligence gathering activity and the equally proportional increase in allocation of resources and budget that accompanies it. Whilst the rapid injection of new money into the intelligence gathering arena was much needed and warmly welcomed, as was the resulting enhanced capacity to acquire critical information, with it came an equally significant level of community expectation that scenes such as those witnessed in New York City, Madrid in Spain and Beslan in Russia will not be replicated in Australia.

These expectations have seen Australian governments respond in a number of ways to help us try to meet them, some of which include;

- The development of specific terrorism related public awareness and education strategies;
- Enhanced relationships between the Australian Government and State/Territory Governments, examples of which include changes to emergency management structures resulting in the creation of the National Counter Terrorism Committee, the Australian Emergency Management Committee and a raft of other forums that focus on critical infrastructure protection and other areas of importance;
- Significant increases in funding at Australian Government and State/Territory levels for policing and response and recovery operations. We have seen cost sharing initiatives introduced where the Australian and State/Territory governments have jointly invested in the development of response agency national capability enhancements in areas including chemical, biological and radiological and urban search and rescue.
- We have seen significant increases in intelligence gathering capability through increased funding, increased resourcing by way of manpower, enhanced technological capacity, and greatly improved relationships with many overseas jurisdictions.

Whilst all of these examples have been delivered by governments as counter terrorism initiatives, the bonus is that many of them have much broader application across a range of natural hazards as well.

The change in tactics employed by some terrorist organisations and the resultant world wide fear that this has created, combined with the previously mentioned changes in the way that we respond to the threat also saw some subtle changes start to creep into emergency management practice.

Prior to 9/11 and the subsequent attacks that have occurred around the world, Australia historically worked within a Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery or PPRR paradigm, designed to deal with all hazards including those for which we have had little or no experience.

However, as we started to invest significant amounts of money and effort into the intelligence gathering aspects of counter terrorism, we saw a subtle shift toward working more within a crisis/consequence management paradigm. Whilst ultimately the two approaches are not significantly different, and the objectives of emergency response/recovery and emergency management agencies are the same in both, there are risks associated with this sort of shift. We need to recognise the similarities in the Incident Lifecycle in the Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Paradigm compared to the Crisis/Consequence Paradigm and work further toward enhancing those similarities.

Some believed that 9/11 and similar events were creating real issues for emergency management practitioners. They worried that the attention being focused on terrorism created the possibility that political and bureaucratic priorities may change, possibly resulting in the available slices of the emergency management budget pie becoming smaller, as the funding of what might be considered traditional emergency management programs risked becoming subsumed in increasing allocation to intelligence and security agencies.

We have however.....regardless of these early fears realised that whilst there are some very specific issues relating to terrorism that need to be considered, we need to and in fact do consider the issue more and more as part of an all hazards planning process.

The Australian emergency management landscape is broad with many stakeholders playing a role in ensuring better public safety outcomes. Generally speaking, the various levels of government and their non government counterparts work well together, particularly when managing the issues associated with natural disasters and the more traditional man made or technological disasters such as those associated with industry and transport.

The terrorism issue combined with the emerging threats of pandemic, bioterrorism, WMD proliferation and cyber-crime, with environmental issues like the consequences of climate change and the increase in the number, frequency and intensity of natural disasters, mean that all governments and the private sector must continue to develop effective and coordinated all hazards arrangements.

The trend to increasing natural disasters including: cyclones, storms, floods, extreme temperature; drought; and bushfires are of regular concern to Australians. It would appear that the impacts on these hazards as a result of climate change are escalating. For example, we have fire seasons starting earlier and finishing later, and bushfires are tending to increased severity....often now referred to as mega-fires.

In fact Commissioner Mick Keelty from the Australian Federal Police recently commented when interviewed by the Australian Security Magazine that 'climate change

has the potential to wreak havoc, cause more deaths, and pose national security issues like we've never seen before'

And whilst Mr. Keelty's national security focus is slightly different to mine, we are both agreed that this is probably the biggest threat to Australia's national security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The experiences gained from coping with these regular natural hazard events is significant and ongoing and Australia has well established, tried and tested arrangements for dealing with the consequences of these hazards.

We also have a regular all agencies based, counter terrorism exercise program that is linking into Australia's consequence management arrangements.

We are continuing to work on capacity and capability building and the development of enhanced arrangements to deal with Catastrophic Disaster.

We have made significant progress over the last few years in developing crisis/consequence partnerships, so how can we continue to move forward and be prepared for the significant challenges ahead, and can we work even more effectively together into the future?

An 'All hazards' planning approach has been a fundamental plank in emergency management for many years and is equally now more often being applied to Australia's security planning.

The cooperation across crisis and consequence in relation to security has been progressively strengthened. We need to continue to work together in recognising that the partnership between all levels of government, statutory authorities, voluntary and community organisations and the private sector are required to enable sound all hazards security planning. In doing so we will be better placed to deal with this evolving security landscape and to safeguard Australians and Australian interests into the future.

One of the roles of my organisation Emergency Management Australia is to work with states and territories and the Australian Government to increase capacity and capability to deal with the potential consequences of threats to Australia.

Emergency Management Australia adopts a number of approaches that have proven their worth over the years. Some of these I have already alluded to and they include;

- Taking an 'all hazards' approach to managing emergencies;
- Planning across the PPRR paradigm, Prevention, Preparedness as an element of all that we do, Response and Recovery;
- Encouraging an 'all-agencies approach' to planning
- Using known systems;
- Focusing on building a prepared and resilient community; and
- Building networks and partnerships in the planning process.

We often hear the phrase 'all hazards approach', however we also often hear it used as nothing more than a throw away line – something to which lip service is paid. In essence the 'all hazards approach' relates to dealing with all types of emergencies or disasters using the same set of management arrangements. To help support this rationale behind this simple concept I offer the following,

In the winter of 2004 William. L. Waugh, Professor of Public Administration and Urban Studies at Georgia State University observed the following in relation to the way in which the terrorism threat was being managed in the United States;

*'The all-hazards approach must be continued. The risks posed by earthquakes in California and by hurricanes along the Gulf Coast are potentially far greater than those posed by terrorists. The risks posed by influenza and other diseases witnessed by the recent SARS epidemic are far greater than those posed by terrorists with anthrax, sarin, or other biological and chemical agents.*

*Does a cocktail of "weaponised" biological agents produced by a "rogue state" or purchased (or stolen) from an old Soviet weapons lab pose a threat greater than the flu? In a perverse way, many emergency managers may be hoping for a catastrophe wrought by seismic or meteorological phenomena that will remind policymakers that there are forces more powerful than al-Qaeda and that the capabilities to deal with them need to be maintained'.*

I doubt that Waugh could have perceived just how prophetic these comments would be when he made them only a couple of months before the tragic Indian Ocean tsunami that took more than a quarter of a million lives and left many more homeless and destitute.

This is an area that we in Australia are continually striving to strengthen, and having considered the issue carefully, I believe that planning for the prevention of and response to terrorist incidents should be conducted as part of the all hazards, all agencies approach to emergency management and within the PPRR paradigm.

Certainly we need to be aware of the specific criminal investigation issues and the additional threats to responders that these events create, however this awareness and providing for it should not inhibit our overall capacity to manage the issue in the most effective way possible.

This view is based on the premise that even though the cause of the event is deliberate and designed to create mass casualties, fear, and instability in our community, the resulting response to an incident will still at this time be provided by the same State/Territory emergency management arrangements that would provide the response to a structure collapse caused by an earthquake rather than a bomb, or mass casualties resulting from an airliner crash caused by mechanical malfunction rather than suicide hijacker.

And just as the public fear created by an explosion in a public place can act as a force multiplier for a terrorist, adopting the all-hazards approach to managing the issue maximizes the existence of current and enhanced capabilities and resources and can also serve as a force-multiplier for response and recovery agencies, that is, it can enhance the value of existing resources by more effectively combining their use.

This occurs because an all hazards approach allows us to get maximum use out of scarce resources and promotes redundancy in planning, training, equipment, and response capacity.

Ultimately, with some significant differences, terrorism is a hazard not unlike other kinds of natural and technological emergencies; however these differences are not so great as to cause us to manage them outside of the arrangements used to manage all other emergencies.

Using the same set of management arrangements is important for a range of reasons:

- On an individual level, people react to crisis by focusing on the familiar and responding with reactions based on experience;
- From an organisational perspective, plans and exercises should be built around known and tested systems and arrangements. Crisis is not the time to try and adapt or learn new arrangements or to build new networks;
- In all likelihood, any hazard impact is likely to involve multiple agencies, often with different cultures, needing to work together. Familiar systems and relationships reduce the possible impact of bringing them together;

We need to be able to rapidly implement arrangements to deal with diverse disasters on the scale of the Kobe earthquake, the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York/Washington, the Indian Ocean tsunami, Tropical Cyclone Larry and Hurricane Katrina.

Such events have some things in common including that they affect large numbers of people, disrupt community activity, and damage critical infrastructure, they often spread beyond their area of origin and result in widespread fear and anxiety; and, in some cases result in a lack of confidence in the ability of governments to protect the community.

A prepared community is more likely to be resilient in facing an emergency, than a community simply informed of an imminent impact. Given a combination of mobile community, an increasingly busy and preoccupied population, information overload and a readiness on the part of some to distrust government and authority, how do we prepare communities to be resilient?

It is our responsibility to better prepare our communities to deal with disaster by learning from what has gone before and by adapting to new technology and new demands.

We have good arrangements and networks in place for a coordinated all agencies approach, although there remains a tendency to silo within some agencies that needs to be overcome.

The entire community must be engaged in the process of prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

Arrangements must be reliable, robust, and recognising interdependencies have redundancy built in to them.

We have come along way in just a few years, in developing arrangements, systems and networks across emergency management, critical infrastructure protection and counter terrorism.

We have moved toward nationally consistent approaches and we have recognised interdependencies and critical relationships.

We have identified further work and improvements that can be made. Taking a nationally consistent approach to the development of these arrangements is increasingly essential.

It does not mean that agencies or jurisdictions are constrained from using any specific tool or methodology, or that they should be explicitly required to use a particular approach or solution. What a nationally consistent approach does mean is that Australian communities are likely to get the best possible outcome of our combined endeavours if we consider and plan for the risk in a consistent way.

We are improving the current state of play, and these approaches will ensure that duplication is minimised and synergies maximised. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that there is a great deal of work progressing in this space generally.

At the Australian Government, State and Territory and Local Government levels, there is considerable interaction and dialogue to ensure that meaningful cooperation continues.

The need to do more in partnering the public realm with the private sector and non government organisations will continue to be key in enhancing what is already a cooperative approach to ensuring a safer sustainable and more resilient community

Having benchmarked Australia's all hazards approach to many countries around the world, I believe that we are making very good progress and in many ways we are leaders in the sector. However, that doesn't mean that we can be complacent and we should continue to strive to do better, identifying all possible ways to enhance our already sound arrangements.

The all hazards approach provides opportunities to **prevent** terrorism from occurring and/or to mitigate its impacts, to take full advantage of the full array of available State/Territory and national resources when **responding** to terrorist incidents, and to ensure that the **recovery** needs of affected individuals and communities are met following any attack.

Dealing with this issue as part of the all hazards emergency management continuum will ensure that political impacts are negated, the community is more resilient and better prepared to cope with terrorist violence, and the emergency services/emergency management community are well placed to provide response and recovery services that meet the needs of the incident.

In closing I would suggest that just like natural disasters, terrorism does not respect geographic boundaries and as such all elements of the community are at risk.

We need to recognise this and apply all appropriate means in an attempt to prevent attacks. We may not be able to guarantee that we can completely prevent these incidents from occurring however we can minimise the impact of them by ensuring that our response and recovery agencies are as well placed as they possibly can be to manage their effects. The only way to ensure this is to maintain the all hazards, all agencies emergency management approach and focus heavily on inter-agency collaboration while working within the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery paradigm.