



# POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNANCE (PIGS) OF NATURAL HAZARDS



**Michael Eburn,<sup>1,2</sup> Karen Hussey,<sup>2</sup> Jamie Pittock<sup>2</sup> and Stephen Dovers<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> ANU College of Law, Australian National University, ACT.

<sup>2</sup> Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University, ACT.

Institutional arrangements anticipated by the public and established by government to deal with risk are progressively struggling under the weight of preparing for, responding to and recovering from increasing threats from natural hazards that will impact upon greater numbers of people as well as from the challenges posed by expanding expectations and rapid advances in information technology. Integral to these challenges is the need to identify, clarify and balance the roles and responsibilities of governments, communities, the private sector and individuals. As evidenced through one inquiry and review after another, current policy and service delivery models are, in some instances, becoming unsustainable.

This research project will shed invaluable light on current policy, institutional and governance arrangements with a view to developing new approaches to shared responsibility to increase community resilience to all natural hazards. The research will pursue, in detail, important issues exposed for the first time in recent work in Bushfire CRC and NCCARF projects by the researchers. It will, in three related themes, consider issues of policies, institutions and governance across the entire "Prevent, Prepare, Respond and Recover" (PPRR) spectrum. Each theme will draw on the expertise of the entire team to contribute to, and inform the research. They are presented here as a single project to reflect the mutual contribution the researchers will make and the synergies between the clusters. Although each theme would, standing alone, contribute to the development of national resilience, the project, in its entirety, will provide invaluable insight into the efficacy of Australia's current policies, institutions and governance arrangements.

## THEME 1: LEGAL AND POLICY BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This research will identify legal, policy and governance barriers to more active community (including the business community) involvement in emergency management.

The research will identify solutions whether in reform of policy and governance structures and processes or how they are applied in practice.

### EARLY FINDINGS – TO BE PRESENTED AT THIS CONFERENCE

Michael Eburn, David Hudson, Ignatious Cha and Stephen Dovers, 'Learning from adversity: What has 75 years of bushfire inquiries (1939-2013) taught us?'

Karen Hussey and Stephen Dovers, 'Protecting and managing critical infrastructure under a changing climate: roles, responsibilities and the allocation of risk'.

## THEME 2: PERVERSE INCENTIVES FOR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Perverse incentives can be both institutional and financial. They may be caused by the governance structures that are in place or by financial incentives that are offered. The research will focus on possible perverse incentives in the allocation and requirements of disaster relief funding and other measures provided or created by both the Commonwealth and States/Territories.

Institutional processes at the local, state and federal levels that may inhibit effective rebuilding and 'betterment' in communities immediately after a disaster will also be explored. Where appropriate, the researchers will identify and draw on international experience in these two domains in order to provide additional insight into governance arrangements that may avoid perverse incentives.

The research will explore alternative arrangements to overcome the perverse incentives identified as well as analysis of the likely impediments or resistance to reform in these areas.

## THEME3: THE USE OF ROYAL COMMISSIONS AND OTHER POST EVENT INQUIRIES

Current post event inquiries may not be fully effective in developing effective policy; they are retrospective rather than forward thinking and can be harmful to communities including the community of emergency service workers. This project will explore alternative lesson learned centres such as the United States' Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Centre in Tucson, Arizona to determine the nature of their operations and whether something similar could be adopted in the Australian context.

The outcome from this research will be to suggest new approaches to the lessons learned paradigm to ensure that issues of public interest are aired but with a view to improving future resilience rather than finding fault in past practices.



Michael Eburn



Karen Hussey



Jamie Pittock



Stephen Dovers



Australian National University

For project enquiries, contact the Chief Investigator  
Dr Michael Eburn  
P: (02) 6125 6424  
E: [michael.eburn@anu.edu.au](mailto:michael.eburn@anu.edu.au)

Pig photo: <http://clinicallydepressedpug.tumblr.com/post/34838043976/baby-pigs-appear-very-greedy-when-they-are>