Decision Making

Problem
- In EM decisions have to be made in complex, dynamic and demanding situations
- As incidents increase in scale and complexity decision making will become increasingly challenging

Method
- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior staff from 18 agencies
- Policy and procedure documents were analysed
- A literature review was carried out

Findings
- Decision making occurs in the context of doctrine, policies, procedures and other organisational systems.
- There are two main types of EM decision making
  - ‘Type 1’ (automatic, heuristic, intuitive)
  - ‘Type 2’ (conscious, analytical, reasoning and reflective)
- Each type has strengths and weaknesses
- Decision making can be subject to biases which can lead to sub-optimal decisions

Conclusions
- There is a need to identify when it is appropriate to use Type 1 and Type 2 decision making.
- Biases associated with each Type need to be identified and mitigated

Team Monitoring

Problem
- Monitoring teams is important to maintain an effective coordinated response
- There is currently little information about how people at regional and state levels monitor teams

Method
- 11 desktop simulation/semi-structured interviews were conducted
- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior staff from 18 agencies
- A literature review was carried out

Findings
- Only 1 agency had a formal method of monitoring teams
- Some informal methods of identifying team issues could be identified, based on:
  - Information quality
  - Intuition
- Much of the current team monitoring is based on looking at team outputs
- Looking at outputs will not necessarily detect a problem in team functioning
- A number of methods of monitoring teams were identified in the literature
  - mapping team information flow,
  - examining team-based behavioural markers

Conclusions
- There is an opportunity to develop enhanced team monitoring methods
- Team monitoring should include a consideration of team processes (e.g. through team-based behavioural markers)

Organisational Learning

Problem
- Despite efforts, organisational improvements based on learning from experiences can be challenging
- There is a need to capitalise on localised efforts to analyse operational experience and to share these learnings

Method
- Environmental scan with end-user agencies to ascertain what strategies they currently have in place to assess performance following an incident, or season of events.

Findings
- There is considerable activity occurring in agencies to capture lessons that may be learned from after action reviews and post incident review.
- However challenges remain. E.g., the process of assessing previous performance is highly variable; there is high variability in the training provided to assessors and there is limited systematic sharing of learning from evaluations across the sector.

Conclusions
- There is a need to further interrogate the tensions between espoused theories of how emergency management ought to be practiced and how it occurs in theatre. Without acknowledgement of this difference and the tensions it creates, little may be learned.