

# Continuity Forum News

For Members of Continuity Forum Pty Ltd

Edition 20: October 2010

## Trans-Tasman lawyers' office puts theory into practice during NZ earthquake

More often than not a disaster recovery plan sits in the drawer and is rarely called on, there for the 'just in case' scenario.

But lawyers from Duncan Cotterill, who have an office in Sydney and four spread across New Zealand (Christchurch, Auckland, Wellington and Nelson), have had first-hand experience of implementing their plan, following the traumatic earthquake in Christchurch on Saturday, 4 September 2010.

Since the initial dust settled, Janice Fredric (Christchurch-based Chief Executive of the trans-Tasman firm), has been working closely with IT manager Roger Sillars to ensure continuity of service for Duncan Cotterill's network.

The top priority was to contact all the staff in Christchurch. Lists were easily accessed as updated staff contacts with personal details are emailed to each of the management team's personal addresses each month.

"This meant that we were able to talk with all our 120 Christchurch people, check their well-being and find out whether there was anything they needed. We subsequently posted a comprehensive message for all staff on our website homepage and set up a telephone information line along with my personal contact details. We then put up regular updates for staff as the picture became clearer," Fredric said.

From a business perspective, the most pressing issue was to establish that the firm-wide computer network was unscathed, as some core components operate out of the Christchurch office. It is the largest office in the Duncan Cotterill network and houses the management team.

Fredric and Sillars negotiated the CBD rubble to enter Duncan Cotterill's offices and check the computers and wider network.

According to Fredric, "This was a real priority for us because the Christchurch office manages the trans-Tasman computer network. Each centre has its own servers and can operate independently to a large extent but Christchurch handles the likes of the main legal database and remote access."

If access to the building had not been possible, Duncan Cotterill could have implemented its off-site disaster recovery location which houses replica systems. As a tertiary option it would have been possible to transport the off-site disaster recovery systems to Nelson.

Fredric said the trans-Tasman network meant that Duncan Cotterill was able to provide continuity of cover for its clients who needed urgent work handled while the Christchurch office was disabled. The main Christchurch telephone line was redirected to the Nelson office who handled taking messages and forwarding client enquiries to staff.

Amid the disruption, clients were contacted, urgent meetings rescheduled and work that couldn't be handled in Christchurch was completed in the other centres. However, most of the work has been completed by Christchurch staff working remotely with back-up from other offices.

Fredric said that from a pragmatic viewpoint, it was intriguing to see the disaster recovery plan in action. Was there anything Duncan Cotterill would change?

"Of course there are things we can improve for the next time there is a major event – let's hope it's a long way off. But



Janice Fredric, Chief Executive, Duncan Cotterill



Duncan Cotterill office after earthquake

overall we were pretty pleased with how it all worked – both from a personal and business perspective."

For further information, please visit [www.DuncanCotterill.com](http://www.DuncanCotterill.com) or contact Janice Fredric, Chief Executive, Duncan Cotterill on +64 (0)21 227 2066 or email [j.fredric@DuncanCotterill.com](mailto:j.fredric@DuncanCotterill.com).



**Continuity Forum News** is a quarterly newsletter for the member organisations of Continuity Forum Pty Ltd.

Continuity Forum Pty Ltd is an active network of organisations that share an interest in seeing that their business continuity and disaster recovery plans are resilient and continually reviewed.

*Suggestions for contributions and advertising enquiries:*  
support@continuity.net.au.

*Subscriptions and general enquiries:*  
manager@continuity.net.au.

*Membership and events enquiries:*  
info@continuity.net.au

#### Continuity Forum Pty Ltd

Manager

Linda Nguyen

Member Services Officer

Agnes Manlutac (Editor)

Operations Support Officer

Laila Kabani

Administration Officer

Kristine Nunez

Finance Manager

Grace Yi

New Zealand Representative

David Thompson (Continuity Services Pty Ltd) Email: nzrep@continuity.net.au

New Zealand Committee:

David Thompson (Chair), Brian Potter (Telecom New Zealand), David Dunsheath (Business Continuity Planning Ltd), Cari Ramsay (Reserve Bank of New Zealand), Dean McCarthy (BCM International Limited)

Graphics for **Continuity Forum News**  
sonia.powell@zohannia.com.au

Continuity Forum Pty Ltd

ABN: 66 110 423 268

PO Box 810, ARTARMON  
NSW 1570 Australia

Ph: +61 (0) 2 9415 4180

Fax: +61 (0) 2 9411 8585

www.continuity.net.au

ISSN 1833-301X

Dear Members,

As the end of 2010 draws closer we are pleased to publish Continuity Forum's second themed newsletter "**Raising business continuity awareness in government**".

Our previous newsletter "**Culture and leadership in business continuity**" focused on the importance of having a strong BC culture in your organisation. Our theme for this edition is similar however the focus is with government departments. More details about the theme for the January 2011 edition will be released shortly.

In this newsletter you will also read about last month's earthquake in New Zealand. Our front page article tells of the earthquake's impact on one business and our NZ Advisory Committee (page 4) share their thoughts about this recent incident. Our thoughts are with those affected.

During July-September it has been a pleasure welcoming nine new members. A list of those recently joined is at the bottom of this page. Our team of staff and advisors has also grown with recent additions in New Zealand and Sydney. We thank Dean McCarthy and Cari Ramsay who are now part of our NZ Advisory Committee, and Laila Kabani and Kristine Nunez who have increased their assistance in our Sydney headoffice.

As we conclude, please be reminded of our remaining events. Our *Government Conference* in Canberra will take place on 17 November. We look forward to delivering topics from speakers within this industry. A series of *Christmas Drinks Meetings* will also be held across various capital cities in Australia and New Zealand. The meetings will run from 30 November - 9 December and will be jointly coordinated with selected Australian local chapters of the BCI.

We hope you can attend to help us kick-start the holiday season and celebrate the close of another year.

Best wishes,

Linda Nguyen  
Manager  
Continuity Forum Pty Ltd  
manager@continuity.net.au

Agnes Manlutac  
Member Services Officer  
Continuity Forum Pty Ltd  
support@continuity.net.au

#### In this edition

Moving forward: Continuity Forum's major new events of the year	page 3
NZ Committee Corner	page 4
Member Profile: Department of Finance and Deregulation	page 5
BC and EM in local government – it matters to you!	page 6
A closer look: BC awareness in four Victorian government departments	page 8
Sharing the umbrella: a decade of the Disasters ACT Network	page 10
What triggers a business continuity plan?	page 12

#### Welcome to our new members in July-September 2010

- Charles Sturt University
- Department of Finance and Deregulation
- Department of Justice Victoria
- Melbourne City Council (City of Melbourne)
- Office of National Assessments (ONA)
- Qantas Airways Ltd
- State Water Corporation
- Wesfarmers General Insurance Limited
- WorkCover (NSW)

A full list of members is available on our website

## Moving forward: Continuity Forum's major new events of the year

The **Advanced Business Continuity Management Seminar** and the **Continuity Forum Conference** were two new Continuity Forum events this year. Held during late July and early September, the events provided quality information to business continuity practitioners in the industry. Attendees were joined by experts who shared valuable insight on current trends that impact the lives of businesses and people during a disaster.

### Advanced Business Continuity Management Seminar, Sydney

Six industry experts delivered four thought-provoking presentations to those seeking practical methods on developing, testing and maintaining successful business continuity plans.

The seminar began with a presentation on *Elastic Plans*, by Saul Midler of Linus Information Security Solutions and was followed by a topic on *Event-Agnostic Planning* by Brigitte Theuma of Deloitte. The two presentations addressed the importance of having flexible BC plans and the relevance in having multiple response plans for different business disruption events.

Other speakers at the seminar were Jodie Wentworth and Mira Lose from RiskLogic, and Doug Lamprecht and John Hickey from Belfor Aylene. Through actively engaging with the delegates, the speakers discussed *Planning to Manage a Crisis* (by RiskLogic) and *Red Alert Disasters* (by Belfor Aylene).

According to Risk Logic, running an exercise doesn't just test a plan, but also tests people's leadership skills and emotional intelligence. Disasters must also be managed with the correct equipment and technology, as demonstrated by Belfor Aylene's real life examples of various business disruptions.

"The information about the competencies requested for the crisis management team was particularly insightful," commented one delegate.

Other attendees found the event was relevant to their needs and beneficial for their ongoing learning.

The seminar was Continuity Forum's first half-day event, held on 29 July. Further plans are taking place for future half-day seminars in Australia.



Delegates at the Advanced BCM Seminar in Sydney



Delegates at Stream 1 in CF Conference, Melbourne

### Continuity Forum Conference, Melbourne

Showcasing quality presentations and facilitating in-depth discussions were part of the major highlights at Continuity Forum's first annual Conference. Based on an assortment of topics delivered by both practitioners and exhibitors, the event was made relevant to those highly experienced and to those new in the industry.

Two streams enabled delegates to select different topics according to their needs. The first stream comprising of the fundamentals of BC included introductory topics for beginners seeking general advice on the best approach to business continuity. The second stream was pitched at a higher level to give others a closer look into some of the different strategic approaches to business continuity.

According to those in attendance, the conference had an excellent blend of topics and speakers.



Continuity Forum Conference held in Melbourne

"It was great to re-affirm some of my thinking with some of the strategies and methodologies presented," commented a delegate.

The event carried on until the evening, with discussions continuing over canapés and drinks.

Continuity Forum plans to hold its next annual conference in 2011. To suggest topics/speakers or for information on sponsorship, contact Linda Nguyen at manager@continuity.net.au or phone +61 (0)2 9415 4180.

## New Zealand Committee Corner: News From the NZ Advisory Committee



In the last couple of months we have seen momentous changes in the business continuity industry.

Firstly, the launch of the new combined Australian & New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 5050 *Business continuity – Managing disruption-related risks* is very likely to change the way business continuity is perceived and implemented in organisations. We are already seeing a number of the larger organisations adopting 5050 to partner their risk management systems, especially if these are aligned to the Risk Management Standard ISO31000.

Then on Saturday 4 September 2010 at 4:35am an earthquake measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale changed the face of the Canterbury region including Christchurch - the country's third largest city.

**On behalf of Continuity Forum and its members, we extend to all of the residents and businesses our heart-felt thoughts and prayers for a speedy recovery.**

This earthquake has been a timely reminder that we live in a country that has a fascinating and challenging hazardscape that requires organisations and their staff to always be prepared.

The New Zealand Advisory Committee

has also seen some changes this year. Firstly we saw the departure of Brigitte Theuma who took a leading Risk & BCM role in Australia. Secondly, the Committee and NZ Members were privileged with having two very competent people join the Committee: Dean McCarthy (Auckland) and Cari Ramsay (Wellington). We welcome Dean and Cari, and thank Brigitte for her efforts and support over the years.

Forthcoming and final meetings for 2010:

- 19 October: Continuity Forum's final **BC @ Lunch** Meeting for the year. The topic for discussion is *AS/NZS 5050 - is disruption related risks really what BCM is about*
- 30 November: Continuity Forum's final **Member Meeting** (end-of-year Christmas Drinks event). Speaker John Hamilton, Director of the Ministry of Civil Defence Emergency Management will



David Thompson (Chair)



Cari Ramsay (Member)



David Dunsheath (Member)



Brian Potter (Member)

present on *Lessons learnt from recent earthquakes*

Please contact David Thompson phone +64 (0)27 489 8849 or email support@continuity.net.au. ■

### AS/NZS 5050:2010 reviewed

Tim Janes, MBCI, president of the Business Continuity Institute Australasian Chapter has published a review of the recently released BC standard:

- AS/NZS 5050 is now a single document, having been compressed from the three separate documents in the draft Standard.
- The standard's thorough coverage of risk management activities will be appreciated by readers who are new to the world of business continuity, and perhaps are having difficulty with the assessment of their organisation's business continuity risks, functions and priorities.
- The discipline of business continuity has always been in a state of constant evolution, progressing to accommodate new ideas, practices and technology. AS/NZS 5050 aims to continue this trend in its stated principle to go beyond current business continuity concepts.

To read the complete review visit:  
<http://www.continuitycentral.com/feature0807.html>.

Source: [www.continuitycentral.com](http://www.continuitycentral.com). ■

### Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission final report

The final report from the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission was presented to the Governor of Victoria and the Victorian Parliament on 31 July 2010, eighteen months after the 2009 bushfires. The report contains the findings from the devastating fires which resulted in 173 deaths last year. The report is now available to the public and is divided into 4 volumes (plus a summary) based on the community consultations, public submissions and personal testimonies gathered in Victoria.

For more information and to download the report visit:  
[www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au](http://www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au).

Source: [www.continuitycentral.com](http://www.continuitycentral.com) ■

### Australian government launches 'Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy'

The strategy promotes a resilient approach to ensuring the continued operation of critical infrastructure in the face of a major disaster or emergency by:

- coordinating planning across sectors and networks;
- having responsive, flexible and timely recovery measures; and
- encouraging cultures that focus on providing a minimum level of service before returning to full operation.

The strategy builds on the previous *Critical Infrastructure Protection Program* and has been developed with key stakeholders, including Critical Infrastructure Advisory Council members, State and Territory Governments as well as owners and operators of critical infrastructure.

The Strategy can be viewed at [www.tisn.gov.au](http://www.tisn.gov.au). Source: [www.continuitycentral.com](http://www.continuitycentral.com) ■

# Member Profile: Department of Finance and Deregulation



Australian Government

Department of Finance and Deregulation

As a central agency of the Australian Government, the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance) has an important role across a wide range of policy areas, particularly expenditure and financial management, deregulation reform and the operations of government.

Finance delivers a range of essential services including vetting all costing inputs to the Australian Government Budget, managing the Australian Government's non-defence domestic property portfolio and key asset sales.

Finance is also responsible for implementing the Government's deregulation agenda and the financial framework for Australian Government agencies. It provides entitlements advice and support to parliamentarians and their employees, maintains shareholder oversight for Government Business Enterprises, provides general insurance services to government agencies and promotes improved risk management.

Through the Australian Government Information Management Office, Finance also provides strategic advice, guidance and services to all government agencies on how they use new and existing information and communication technologies.

In 2008 Finance undertook an enhancement project that produced a unique methodology for mitigating Finance's risks in respect of business continuity management (BCM). Finance's enhanced BCM Framework:

- no longer uses a scenario-based approach to BCM preparedness,

moving instead to a "resilience model" designed to more effectively use departmental resources;

- no longer relies on a central corporate area to maintain and promote all facets of BCM across the Department;
- no longer needs continual reviewing of its business continuity plans. By removing personal and confidential information, these plans are now freely available across the organisation;
- has introduced "recovery kits" to better manage sensitive, confidential and varying information;
- has an annual review process that does not run in parallel but rather complements Finance's operational and annual business planning cycles; and
- has established a more effective communication strategy across the BCM disciplines. ■






Sarah Kawe, Business Continuity Manager, Department of Finance and Deregulation

The world's *most sought after* business continuity and disaster recovery industry certification:

## Certified Business Continuity Professional

Only available through the Disaster Recovery Institute in all major Australian cities and via the web:

-  4.5 day *Business Continuity Planning*
-  2.5 day *Business Continuity Planning Review*
-  4 x 3 hr **webinar based** *Business Continuity Planning Review*

**Premium** facilities and catering on all public courses.  
Discounts available for **in-house** courses and **group** bookings.

To view a public training schedule or book a course, contact:

[www.DRI-ANZ.org](http://www.DRI-ANZ.org) [info@DRI-ANZ.org](mailto:info@DRI-ANZ.org) 02 6238 2995

**DRI**<sup>®</sup>  
**AUSTRALIA**  
the institute for  
continuity management

# Business continuity and emergency management in local government – it matters to you!

By Peter Alsop, Coordinator Risk Management; Dale Ashley, Risk Management Officer; and Christine Drummond, Emergency Management Coordinator - Melbourne City Council

Melbourne is Victoria’s capital city and the business, administrative, cultural and recreational hub of the state. There are 90,000 residents, 770,000 daily visitors and over a million international visitors each year. The entire Melbourne metropolitan area has a population of approx 3.9 million. Melbourne City Council oversees the city centre and several inner suburbs. Organisational emergencies are defined as a significant interruption solely affecting the business continuity of one or more work areas. Municipal emergencies are defined as emergencies affecting an area contained within the defined boundaries of the city.

## Structure and activation of our plans

Council’s preparedness for dealing with issues, emergencies and crises is covered in many plans (Diagram 1). Over the past four years these plans have been significantly revised to improve alignment

and ensure continuity of the business and operations at organisational and municipal-wide levels.

### Organisation responsibility

Melbourne City Council has legislative and community obligations for the delivery of services. We have a heavy reliance on contractors and must ensure that contracted service providers have appropriate contingencies and plans, which was verified during the 2009 Swine Flu pandemic. Some local emergencies may involve internal work areas such as building security, OHS, information technology or health services.

### Municipal responsibility

Local government is the closest level of government to the community and is often the first point of contact for assistance and advice. There is an expectation that local government will provide leadership during emergencies and establish

partnerships with agencies and service providers within its community.

Each municipality is required to develop and maintain a municipal emergency management plan, based around the fundamentals of planning, prevention, response and recovery for municipal emergencies. When the municipal emergency management plan is activated actual management of the crisis is no longer the responsibility of the Council, however there is still a city management responsibility. At that stage, Victoria Police or another appointed lead agency will manage the crisis. Council must provide support services as requested by the municipal emergency response coordinator who is a Victoria Police Officer. This may include managing arrangements for municipal resources and assisting the affected local and neighbouring communities to recover following an emergency. Diagram 2 defines the



roles in the municipal emergency management plan.

Whilst the municipal emergency management plan covers the entire municipality the Melbourne CBD safety plan focuses on the CBD and incidents that will require evacuation. It acknowledges that it is paramount to be prepared for a wide range of possible significant events, from major natural disasters such as fire or flood, to a hijack or even terrorist event. The plan establishes a coordinated multi agency response for the safety of people within the CBD. It was developed in partnership with Victoria's police and emergency services, support agencies and stakeholders.

Council has developed an *Influenza Pandemic Action Plan* that aims to prepare for an influenza pandemic outbreak within Melbourne and to provide the appropriate response and resources to minimise potential impacts and maintain essential community services provided by Council. This includes coordinating and conducting mass vaccination and identifying suitable facilities for mass vaccination centres.

### Exercising our plans and key learnings

Council regularly tests its plans and

recently carried out a business continuity pandemic scenario and a major CBD emergency management scenario looking at infrastructure failure. These involved extensive preparation with internal and external stakeholders, government agencies and contractors.

The testing of our *Information Technology Disaster Recovery Plan* is conducted every six months, with our backup facility now located 10km away due to an identified risk exposure.

Following our business continuity exercise in 2009, key strengths were identified in the areas of documented roles and responsibilities, communications and leadership. Improvement opportunities were identified in the following areas:

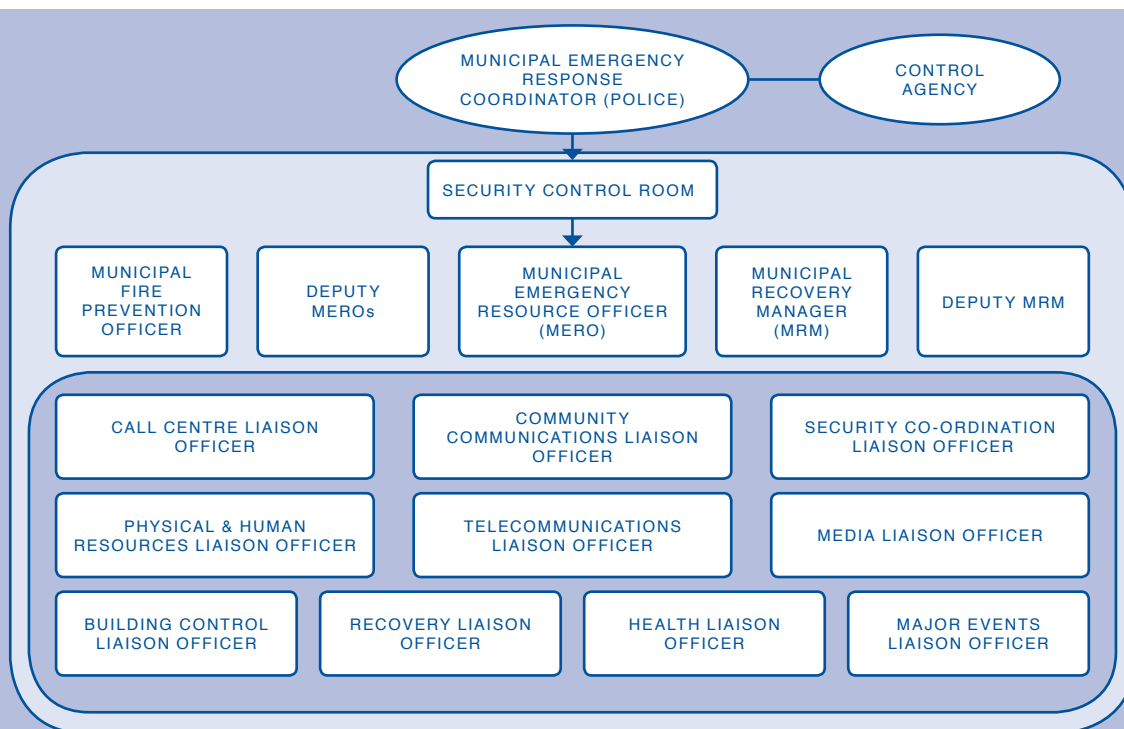
- staff awareness of roles and responsibilities;
- staff industrial relations issues and workloads during and post crises;
- lack of sufficient documented information regarding staff skills, experience and qualifications that would be required to assist during staff deployments;
- working from home capabilities;
- planning for public access and visits to Council facilities during a pandemic;
- identification of vulnerable groups in

the community;

- clarifying differences in roles and responsibilities between Council, the Victorian government and agencies;
- clear, template-based communications plans and protocols that can be updated for councilors, staff, community and the media; and
- political issues requiring early identification and management to balance the corporate requirements with the needs of the elected officials.

Our recent exercises have confirmed that regular testing of Council's crisis, business continuity and emergency management plans is the best assessment of the effectiveness of key documents. Further rehearsals of simulated incidents are scheduled as these place people under the pressures of a real scenario and will help draw out issues and requirements that can be addressed prior to any live incidents. Council strives to work cooperatively with all stakeholders to ensure the continuity of services and lifestyle for residents, business and visitors to the municipality.

*Please refer to www.continuity.net.au for copies of key Melbourne City Council business continuity and emergency management plans.*



**Diagram 2: Roles in the municipal emergency management plan**

# A closer look: BC awareness in four Victorian gove

By Tracie Thompson, Linus Information Security Solutions Pty Ltd

In this article four Victorian Government Departments share their BC awareness position. While each Department's approach and BC program maturity differs, each case confirms that investment in a BC awareness program will produce positive results and that BC awareness is an ongoing process.

## Department of Human Services (DHS)

DHS supports Victorians most in need to live safe, happy and fulfilling lives by delivering community and housing services. The Department has approximately 11,000 staff across six divisions and eight regions.<sup>1</sup>

BC policy is set in Head Office and implemented in the 8 regions around the State. Forty-three critical services have been identified within DHS, mostly in the regions. These critical services all have BC plans which are reviewed annually but may not be exercised annually.

BC plans and exercises are used to increase BC awareness

BC plans and exercises are used to increase BC awareness. As a result, BC awareness is high in the regions but not as high in Head Office, with the exception of the Office of Housing which is very aware of BC due to the nature of the service provided.<sup>2</sup>

## Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE)

DSE is Victoria's lead government agency for sustainable management of water resources, climate change, bushfires, public land, forests and ecosystems.<sup>3</sup> The department employs 2700 staff, working in 90 different locations across the state in 19 business areas.

Given the importance of the services provided by the department, the

Given the importance of the services provided by the department, BC has always been a priority for DSE

development of business continuity has always been a priority for DSE. As part of its BC development program a pilot study was conducted by Land Victoria during 2009 to trial a new approach to BCM. The success of the pilot has resulted in the development of a program to use the new methodology across the whole department.

The program focuses on DSE functions that can't be interrupted for an extended period. Each area responsible for these functions has a coordinator who is the primary contact for BC. The department's Business Continuity Advisor, Duncan Sinclair, is currently working with each of the coordinators to implement the program in their business area.

Regular reports on the progress made in each area are made to the department's Risk and Audit and Management Committees.

Future plans include engaging the BC coordinators more effectively by running exercises to improve the department's BC capability.

## Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD)

DPCD's purpose is to create livable communities that are sustainable, connected and inclusive.<sup>4</sup> DPCD operates from more than 30 sites across Melbourne's CBD, regional and metropolitan areas. Its response to disasters is coordinated centrally.

A program of training sessions is delivered to the BC team's members with roles in DPCD's emergency response and business recovery processes. These sessions are conducted internally and members are provided with materials and checklists to support them in their roles.

In addition to training, DPCD delivers a program of annual exercising to increase awareness, identify and correct plan inadequacies and to ensure the BC team members are familiar with their roles and responsibilities.

In the past 18 months DPCD has responded to a number of incidents that required the activation of its BC plan. These real-life incidents have since contributed significantly to an increased awareness of BC.

Eleanor Filling, Business Continuity Manager, says that BC awareness and education amongst staff is an ongoing process. DPCD has increased its focus

Real-life incidents have contributed significantly to an increased awareness of BC

to improve awareness in regional and metropolitan areas using road shows, office signage and staff hand-outs. The Intranet has also been used to raise BC awareness through BC homepages, articles and the promotion of *Business Continuity Awareness Week* (which included a competition with prizes). New starters to the department are provided with an 'Employment Information Kit' which contains high level information about the BC plan, the 1300 crisis information line for staff in the event of a disaster and a card listing the number of this service.

Planned future initiatives involve influencing other business areas within

# Government departments



the department to identify and address possible silos between BC, risk, security and emergency. Examples of this include:

- undertaking 'Site Risk Assessments' to identify operational risks,
- identifying critical recovery roles for consideration in HR succession risk management planning, and
- ensuring the continuation of critical services and resources via possible amendments to contracts, tender processes and templates.

DPCD has worked collaboratively with other departments and a number of key government service providers to increase the awareness of BC requirements and joint departmental needs.

## Department of Transport (DoT)

DoT is responsible for public transport, roads and ports across Victoria, and employs 2000 staff across 20 divisions.

According to Ben Lester, Senior Advisor - Solution & Resilience, BCM has been a key focus of the department's 'Think Risk' approach over the past three years which has led to a significant improvement in recovery capability throughout the department.

After undertaking a two year BCM revitalisation project (2007-2009), the re-launched program has provided a robust and consistent framework to managing BC risk and recovery across the department.

BCM capability and awareness has been improved within the department through several initiatives such as training, exercising and communicating

regularly with people who have BCM roles and responsibilities.

The training program consists of various sessions including: Introduction to BCM, basic / intermediate / advanced Linus Revive User Training, BCP Development / Maintenance pack, and BCM Program Structure / Roles / Responsibilities. The sessions are conducted in group settings, one-on-one and via 'self-user' packs, with attendees taking away support materials and

**'Think Risk' has led to a significant improvement in recovery capability throughout the department**

checklists to help them implement their learning.

An annual exercising program is also in place involving each division. The 2009/2010 exercise program focused on gauging divisional BC capabilities. The 2010/2011 program will focus on interdependencies with other divisions, departments and third party relationships.

Regular communication with BCM divisional representative and recovery teams are vital to build resilience. Mechanisms such as the Intranet and

email are regularly used to discuss current and future developments. Quarterly 'BC Rep Forums' provide an opportunity for all BC Reps and their divisional recovery teams to get together and discuss past learnings, current topics and future initiatives. A Guest Speaker is invited to present at the forum providing another educational component for the program. In the near future a BCM intranet portal will be developed to provide a central repository for 'all things BCM'. This combination of training, exercising and communicating delivers a strong BC awareness position across DOT.

We thank Linus Revive customers Damian Adams (DHS), Duncan Sinclair (DSE), Nick Daicos (DSE), Eleanor Filling (DPCD) and Ben Lester (DoT) for sharing their experiences for this article.

*Linus Information Security Solutions provide Linus Revive BC Software. Saul Midler, CEO, will host the Melbourne Round Table discussion in November on AS/NZS5050.*

- 1 [www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)
- 2 Information provided by Damian Adams who was the BC Manager at the time of interview. Damian has since left DHS to take up a position at the Bureau of Meteorology.
- 3 [www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)
- 4 [www.dpcd.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au)
- 5 [www.transport.vic.gov.au](http://www.transport.vic.gov.au)

# Sharing the umbrella: a decade of the Disasters ACT Network

By Bernard Kertesz, Convenor of DISACT and Senior Conservator of the Australian War Memorial



The 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2010 was a significant day for heritage collections in the Australian Capital Territory. That morning, at a symposium held at the National Library, CEOs and senior executives from twelve Commonwealth, ACT and private sector agencies met to endorse the *Letter of Intent on Cooperative Disaster Preparedness* (the LOI). This document sets out a framework for cooperation between heritage collecting institutions in the ACT region. Its aim is to encourage a best practice approach in the prevention of and preparation for disasters which might affect their cultural collections. This is fundamental since it is recognised by each institution that their collections are core to their business.

The LOI further provides for cooperative preparedness arrangements and, where practicable, the provision of aid in the event of a disaster which affects one or more organisations.

Upon signing, each signatory organisation committed to the following goals:

- to establish and maintain a disaster recovery plan for their collections which is tested, adequately resourced and integrated into their overall continuity planning,
- to have staff who are trained and tested in collections disaster recovery,
- to foster best practice in disaster preparedness by encouraging the free flow of information, and
- to enhance the preparedness of all by the sharing of resources.

The signing of this document would not have been possible without the participation of a dedicated group of preparedness practitioners, the Disasters ACT Network (DISACT). This group of mainly operational level staff from their respective institutions, had been meeting irregularly before realising they needed to formalise their operations not only to enhance their collective preparedness but also maintain momentum.

The National Library's fire in 1985 revealed that preparedness was an issue however 1998's report from the Australian National Audit Office on *Safeguarding Our National Collections* revealed that many Commonwealth cultural collecting institutions were still inadequately prepared. DISACT was formed at the end of 1998 and its primary strategy to achieve its goals was to establish senior level endorsement of the group's operations so that it would be adequately resourced to organise meetings, seminars, online resources and disaster recovery workshops. The first DISACT agreement, the *MOU on Cooperative Disaster Preparedness*, circulated systematically through each Commonwealth cultural collecting organisation for over two years before being signed off in 2003. By the middle of the decade, DISACT was attracting increasing interest from other Federal and ACT government agencies and from private sector organisations, particularly after the tragic toll of the 2003 Canberra bushfires and more recent hail and flooding events.

DISACT was clearly a potential regional resource made possible by the modest size of Canberra. The relatively high



Hon. Senator Kate Lundy with senior public and private sector executives at the signing of the Letter of Intent on Cooperative Disaster Preparedness. (Photo courtesy of Greg Power, NLA)

concentration of large Commonwealth cultural institutions in the ACT meant that a solid group of conservators and collection managers would be available to maintain its operations.

This has proved to be the case; the network has organised two disaster recovery workshops each year since 2000, it holds regular quarterly meetings, has an active listserver with 60 members, resources the DISACT website and has organised three well-attended events including this year's symposium with over one hundred paid registrations. The activities that have proved most successful in maintaining the momentum have been the disaster recovery workshops and the network meetings. A commercial provider presents the two day workshop which is inevitably over-booked and the network members value the free flow of information available under the quarterly meeting's Chatham House rules.

A structural limitation that soon became obvious to DISACT members was that it was not an entity that could have financial dealings and therefore needed to pass on

liabilities for the organisation of events. To remedy this, DISACT has recently entered into partnerships for its events, most recently with Blue Shield Australia, the Australian arm of the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS). This body, the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross, partnered DISACT in organising this year's joint symposium, *Disaster Proofing Heritage Collections*, an event organised to coincide with Records Management Month and the ICBS international May-Day awareness program for threats to the world's heritage.

DISACT functions as an advocate for preparedness with an endorsement to operate but no real power to ensure that preparedness is in effect in each participating organisation. High profile events such as the signing of the LOI have helped to spike awareness, particularly at the most senior levels, and to keep the issue of preparedness on the agenda. The LOI format was a response to the anxieties aroused by the more legalistic tone of the previous MOU however the new agreement not only increased the flexibility of the operations and membership of

DISACT but also made the joint signing event possible.

Although cooperative disaster networks of cultural heritage practitioners do exist around the world, DISACT is arguably the first such network to not only cover the broad spectrum of heritage collections but also provide a forum for public and private heritage. The cultural sector has clearly recognised the DISACT model as an effective one; similar formalised organisations have recently been set up in other Australian states and in New Zealand to provide regional preparedness networks. Two recent examples of such arrangements are the establishment of the Ballarat Collections Network where heritage organisations are in partnership with the Ballarat City Council and the Canterbury Disaster Salvage Team which is centred in Christchurch. Such regional models are crucial in providing smaller heritage bodies, particularly those running on tight budgets and staffing, the skills, knowledge and security gained from a shared umbrella. ■

# What triggers a business continuity plan?

By Marc Turner, Deputy Chair of the Public Sector Risk Management Associations

One of the most vexed questions for organisations, irrespective of their origin, is “When do I activate my business continuity plan?”

Even when business continuity plans have been developed and, better yet, maintained and exercised, it is generally unclear as to the circumstances when the BCP should be activated. Where there are defined trigger points, the question is often: *when do we escalate, de-escalate and deactivate the BCP?* Many organisations are stretched, stressed and challenged frequently. However, this is all part of doing business and dealing with market uncertainty.

An organisation’s  
tolerance for risk  
will tend to drive  
the urgency to  
respond to events

With events that slowly creep up on you, the question may morph into “When should I have activated my BCP?” followed by “When is this going to be over?”

Business resilience and crisis response is about making decisions and like all things, there are choices to be made which impact on how well placed we are to deal with the situation. It demands some hard and fast decision making, often under very trying circumstances. Part of this is identifying what triggers a business continuity plan (BCP) which is a function of two key concepts: the *event type* and the organisation’s *risk appetite*.

## Event types

There tend to be three types of events: **Sudden Onset Events (SOEs)**, **Slowly Emerging Threats (SETs)**, and **Hybrid Events (Hybrids)**. The latter contain attributes from both SOE and SET.

**SOEs** are those things that happen ... well ... suddenly. The *big bang* events are usually very easy to identify. Press coverage can be sensational and immediate because the impact tends to be incredible and fairly immediate, or a very contracted time frame. Often these types of events will be the ‘holes in the swiss cheese’ which can produce a catastrophic outcome.

**SETs** are far more insidious and are much more difficult to identify and address. They will generally have an originating point inferred through hindsight and reflection long after the event. It may be impossible to conclusively identify a specific, single point of origin for a SET and frequently, there are many contributing factors.

**Hybrid events** can be small step failures that lead to a catastrophic failure. These types of events are far more commonplace and a key challenge is being able to identify these small steps. Early identification provides the best chance of addressing the issue, through prevention, escalation or corrective actions to mitigate the consequences.

## The risk appetite

We have to consider the event types and their consequences. Continuity events tend to have consequences on one or more of the following: *people, physical infrastructure (buildings etc) and systems (IT, information, etc)*.

However, acceptable levels of risk are a matter for the Board or governing body. In organisations displaying mature risk management systems, these levels will be explicit and defined. Elements generally considered include: disruption to operations, financial costs, compliance and risks to systems and people. So pragmatically, continuity event consequences are, or should be, addressed within the tolerances.

This can become even more complex where the organisation is happy to accept higher level of certain types of risks in some areas of the business compared to others. Whilst this would be the subject of an entirely different paper, it does pose the challenge to BC management. An organisation’s tolerance for risk will tend to drive the



urgency with which we respond to events. Tying trigger points for activation (and also more specifically response) can greatly enhance the rigour that is applied to BC management. As a result business resilience is also improved.

## Conclusion

Businesses are not, by themselves learning organisms. They are a shell and the constituent parts that allow them to learn are the people and systems in them. There needs to be flexibility to enable the most appropriate response in light of prevailing circumstances – and our ability to continue to operate. We need information (in a very broad sense) to conduct business, physical infrastructure, a place (or places) to carry on business and a cognisant, willing workforce.

Accepted business risk assessment processes are used as a delimiter for both activation and de-activation of BC plans. These practices can also be applied to escalate and de-escalate the response during an event to recognise that the level of response will generally need to change. In respect that risk management is rigorous but not rigid, applying those processes to business continuity activation and management supports ongoing achievement of corporate objectives.

In short, when we equip our organisations (our people) with clear rules of engagement whilst preserving the necessary flexibility, we empower our own survival and indeed are able to capitalise on relative strength in times of industry crisis.