Public comment on draft Tasmanian Disaster Resilience Strategy August/September 2019

Samy Welch

In your view, what needs to be done to improve Tasmania's disaster resilience?
1. Better cross-agency relationships and understanding. Technology that enables agencies to work together and communicate better. Staff mobility between agencies should be encouraged. Break down the silos between state and local government too.
2. Investment in enforcement of existing regulations, including building codes, planning regulations and environmental laws. The value offered by earlier intervention is fewer emergency incidents to manage later. For example, better enforcement of environmental and OH&S laws will lead to fewer industrial site fires. Better enforcement of the building code will avoid inappropriate use of combustible aluminium composite cladding. 3.
3. Clearer communications. Currently there are too many government and agency websites, they all have different 'looks' making user navigation inefficient, and too many pages within each using inconsistent terminology. Approach communications from a 'whole of government' point of view and structure the websites and messages with the user in mind. This will better enable the community to develop their understanding and treatment of risk and therefore their resilience. For example, the Victorian government is streamlining their departments and agencies websites to all look similar. An example of government designing services around life events, drawn from a different field, is New Zealand's 'SmartStart' website where multiple agencies' services are available to community members via one website.
4. Implement a Knowledge Management system to capture, share and track lessons learned from post-event inquiries, reviews, commissions and litigation. Make this information widely available to emergency management professionals and volunteers and freely available to the community.
5. More practical, specific and targeted education campaigns. For example, research shows that Australian community members over-rate their bushfire preparedness but actually leave critical decisions too late. The community clearly understands that bushfires present a serious risk but seemingly lack the specific knowledge about how they should plan and prepare. Another example is the lack of community awareness around Australia's most deadly natural phenomena: extreme heat events.
Which sections of the draft Strategy do you think are the most important for Tasmania's disaster resilience? Why are they important, in your view?
Section 6 'Towards a disaster resilient Tasmania'. As the most specific section of the draft Strategy, these tables are the most helpful part of the document.
Please describe any further areas that you believe should be covered by the Disaster Resilience Strategy
1. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for control agencies, local government, state government, federal government, NGOs and volunteers.
2. Acknowledgement that enforcement of existing laws and regulations significantly contribute to developing community resilience and is an investment in reduced response and recovery costs.
3. Acknowledgement of the particular demographics of Tasmanian society and how this will impact upon and vary the Strategy from other jurisdictions.
4. Acknowledgement of the accessibility needs of disabled and marginalised community members.
Any further comments

This Draft Strategy is a good start down the path. The section under 'why focus on disaster resilience' is important to get buy in from community stakeholders and could do with some research sources being cited in support.

Anonymous member of public

In your view, what needs to be done to improve Tasmania's disaster resilience?	
Mobile phone coverage as barrier to communications	
What needs to be done to improve Tasmania's disaster resilience?	
Mobile phone good coverage for all of Tasmania, in particular in bush or forest areas.	
Which sections of the draft Strategy do you think are the most important for Tasmania's disaster resilience? Why are they important, in your view?	
Communications with public and emegerncy services as without mobile coverage the public and emergency services can't find out where disasters are and cannot contact each other	
Please describe any further areas that you believe should be covered by the Disaster Resilience Strategy	
Emergency services do a fantastic job in TAsmania but if they can't contact the public or other emergency services they end up wasting time trying to contact people via mobile phones which don't have coverage in all areas of Tasmania.	