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Queensland Floods and Cyclone Yasi Critical Incident Management – Findings and Learning's

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Introduction

- Emergencies happen frequently but not all become a Crisis.
- The news keeps us abreast of National and International Crisis like:
 - Black Friday fires in Victoria
 - South East Queensland Floods
 - Earthquakes in Christchurch and Japan
- Not all impact on our operations but the first two did!
- CSIRO managed both emergency situations extremely well and I wish to share these learning's with you!

Background - What it meant for CSIRO?

Queensland Floods

- Over 1000 staff, based across 9 CSIRO sites were located within the impacted area
- Sites were closed across South East Queensland for approximately 1 week. Disruption to the operations of the QCAT Data Centre. The field sites at Belmont and Gatton suffered damage.
- A total of 20 staff either lost their homes or suffered significant damage to their homes

Cyclone Yasi

- Sites were closed across North East Queensland for approximately 1 week as a safety measure.
- Similarly sites reported only minor damage and were re-opened within a week.
- None of our 132 staff based across 4 sites in North Queensland suffered injury with only relatively minor personal property damage reported.

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- Background
- Incident Management
- Emergency Management
- Critical Incident Management
- Business Recovery Management
- Learning's
- Summary



Emergency Management - background

Emergency situations are varied depending upon the industry and geographical location but start with the incident even and can include:

- Multiple injuries/fatalities
- Fire – building and environmental
- Explosion
- Hazardous materials
- Bomb threat/Personal threats
- Flood – natural and industrial
- Hurricane/Tornado
- Earthquake
- Power disruptions
- Communications failure
- Civil disturbance
- Loss of key supplier or customer

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Incident Management

Local Management responsibility

Mainly concerned with the following:

- Identification of incident
- Alarms and awareness
- Immediate local response actions
- Control
- Containment
- Assessment of scope of incident
- Reporting
- Recovery or **————→** Escalation to Emergency status



Emergency Management System

Several layers of control:

1. Prevention and Preparedness

2. Response

3. Control

4. Recovery

5. Or escalation to Enterprise Critical Incident Management Team



Emergency Management

– Prevention and Preparedness

- Emergency Planning
 - Emergency Procedures
 - Emergency Control Organisation
 - Emergency Risk Management
 - Emergency Management Plans
- Facility infrastructure emergency systems
 - Automated detection – alarms (audio/visual)
 - Manual override – push button alarms, Intercom
- Staff training and drills
 - ECO training
 - Emergency awareness in Induction
 - Local team training
 - Managers training

Emergency Management - Response

- Alarms - Activation of Emergency Control Organisation (ECO)
- Mobilisation of ECO (wardens) and local emergency response teams; first aiders, rescue teams etc
- Assessment of situation
- Evacuation of site from danger to safety
- Activation of Emergency Services
- Communications upwards

Emergency Management - Control

- Account for staff, affiliates and others
- Mitigation of harm – where able
- Communications internally
- Emergency Services – Site Status
- Communications upward on situation
- Local control

Emergency Management - Recovery

- Emergency incident contained and controlled
- Return to normal business activities
- Or.....
- Unable to control - issues larger than site control
- Recognition of escalation by ECO to Enterprise level

Critical Incident Management – Enterprise Control

- **People status**
 - Staff status
 - Emergency Services Status Reports
- **Site status**
 - Assessment of site & IT technology condition
 - Approval to clear site
 - Stage 1 Site Clearance Plan Protocols & Checklist
 - Conducted by Site Leaders, HSE & Property Services Staff
 - Approvals of Stage 1 Clearance Plan Protocols submitted to CIMT Manager
- **Communication status**
 - Internal communications
 - External stakeholders
 - Media control

Aims of the Site Clearance Plan Protocol

- Provide a co-ordinated systematic plan for the management of a Site Clearance
- Provide clear instructions to provide safety for those conducting the clearance
- Roles of a Site Clearance team leader and team under a site OIC
- Use of a Site Clearance Plan Checklist for the conduct of a site clearance
- Identification of restricted access areas and hazards for follow up action
- Provision of an approval process that the site may be re-opened or not.

Critical Incident Management - Recovery

Handover of Critical Incident Management to Business Recovery Team (BRT)

- **Controlled Return to sites**

- Stage 2 Site Clearance Plan Protocols & Checklists
 - Controlled by Site Leader (with HSE & Property Staff support)
 - Conducted by selected Business Unit staff under Site Leader (OIC)
 - Reporting of assessment of condition
 - Approvals submitted by Site Leader provided by BRT Manager to return to normal business operations
- Employee Assistance Program on site on site re-opening
 - Promotion of availability

- **Reporting of status and condition reports to CIMT Manager and CEO**

- Business Unit clear up
- Insurance reports by Business Units and Finance Group

What We Did....

Critical Incident Management Activities

HSE

- Provided enterprise Emergency Management Procedures
- Ensured safe evacuation of staff from sites and secured sites via Emergency Control Organisation and line management
- Established a Site Closure and Site Access Protocol
- Established a two stage Site Clearance Plan & Protocol to facilitate safe return to work for Crisis Management Phase and Business Recovery Phase.
- Provided HSE staff to support Site clearances
- Activated and promoted the availability of the Employee Assistance Program to support impacted staff on site and at homes or shelters

What We Did....

Critical Incident Management Activities

- **People**

- Established and maintained contact with all staff within the impacted area
- Categorised staff according to the extent of personal impact (i.e. Category 1 - lost home through to Category 6 – no impact)
- Established a database to record details and history of contact
- Established Case Management Teams to support staff in Categories 1-3
- Established protocols in relation to staff support, leave provisions etc
- Provided immediate funds from the Staff Benevolent Fund

What We Learned.... Enterprise Level

- Executives responsible for implementation of the Critical Incident Management Team – not prepared
- Existing Emergency Management Plans and Business Continuity Plans not regularly reviewed and deficiencies were identified.
- A number of processes and protocols needed to be developed urgently: e.g. Site Access and Stage 1 & 2 Site Clearance Plans and Protocols
- Clear opportunities for improvement of the criteria by which an incident is identified and control escalated invoking the CIMT – delayed (approx 24 hours)
- Inconsistency between staff contact details held in SAP and records held at the local business unit level – including issues related to details of students and visitors

What We Learned..... Local Level

- Local emergency threat/risk identification is critical to aid planning did not address current threats other than Cyclone.
- Importance of communicating to staff about how we will operate in an emergency and what communications they should expect from CSIRO
- Site Emergency Plans need to be reviewed and developed in conjunction with partners, site owners and tenants
- Importance of communicating to staff about how we will operate in an emergency and what communications they should expect from CSIRO
- Where CSIRO is a tenant ensuring representation on the landlord's Emergency Response Committee.
- Adequate provision of back up power generation (Mobile Phones/laptops).

Summary

- Learn from Emergency Situations especially Critical Incidents there are bound to be learning's.
- Good management response needs to be seen and heard - quickly
- The training of executives in Emergency Management training is needed.
- A resilient organisation will quickly establish status and mobilise effectively – we did that!
- An organisation can recover from a critical incident – the better the management the quicker the recovery - we did that!

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Thank you

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