

Q&A Responses

Day 1 | 1.30pm – Keynote

Lessons from Leading on the UK Resilience Lessons Digest

Lianna Roast (Head of Thought Leadership, United Kingdom Resilience Academy)

Do you have a feedback loop for how these Lessons have been adopted by other agencies to help build the UK capability

Thanks for your question. We always put a QR code for feedback within each Digest, but in truth, we do not always get many returns from that MS Form. The better loop we have discovered is to capture some quick feedback using polls during our webinars, where there is a captive audience. We ask 'have you put lessons from the Digest in to practice' or similar. This indicated that more than 80% have put it into practice. In terms of how they have done that, it is via case study. Greater Manchester shared, for example, that they used the list of transferable lessons on storms to inform their severe weather risk assessment. We published their case study in Digest 2. In sum, it is not easy to know the extent of the impact the Digest has, but indicators are positive when we collect them, and the stories the most helpful in understanding whether it has been helpful.

Have you considered the use of AI in developing your content, analysing your insights etc?

Yes, but we are not actively using it yet. The lessons we analyze have been identified by other organisations - our role is to synthesise them. This means that the lessons data is not consistently structured. That can be an issue, and we have some concerns about losing context should we adopt it prematurely. However, we are looking at how we might use it to support the analysis going forward. We are not actively pursuing the use of AI for content generation. Thanks for your question

Day 1 | 2.30pm - Introducing the Lessons Management Framework

Melanie Guthrie (Hato Hone St John)

Can you give an example of a lesson identified that's made it's way through your new lessons management framework, with a successful outcome?

A number of our lesson identified related to responses to hazard specific events, which has led us to develop hazard response plans that focus proactive response actions to reduce the impacts to service delivery. Another big win for us has been the development of strategic,

Did you align your risk/prioritisation methodology to an existing internal risk management framework or did you come up with your own?

operational and tactical initial action plans to ensure that roles & responsibilities are clear
We linked it to our existing organisational risk register and added a column into the collection template to reference the risk. This has been extremely helpful for us, as has enabled to work with the risk team. We have also embedded a process whereby, if a risk is identified through the lesson's framework, that we will escalate to our audit and risk committee

Did you focus on processes, clinical practices or both? If both, is there one more difficult than the other.

At this stage, the focus is on operational processes, we do touch on the wider treatment process, but do not currently incorporate detailed clinical practice, such as interventions given. In time we would like to incorporate the clinical practice.

Interested in your talk of broad/intuitive headings. Would be great to have some examples of that please

Hi, our broad headings are aimed at grouping observations and developing wider insight to tell a story. Examples include, training, specialist response, escalation. This is particularly helpful where observations can contribute to different insights. From a report perspective, we don't provide the observations, but make them available on request

Melanie - Have you linked your lessons management framework and follow up into the Terms of Reference to your Risk and Audit Committee?

This is currently done through our Operational risk manager who links into the Audit & Risk committee. We have embedded a process to ensure that risks that have been identified through the lessons framework would be escalated to the Audit & Risk committee directly

Please share insights on socialising this within your organisation? How has leadership best supported? How is it being used / integrated across processes?

The socialising was somewhat informal, in that we talked about the development of the framework at every opportunity and the benefits it has. This was more at an operational level and certainly piqued the interest of many. Following approval by the Senior Leadership we are hoping for wider socialisation, alongside a more formal implementation

This sounds very similar to our journey and our process, it's so helpful to hear similar struggles, concepts, ideas and opportunities to consider. What strategies did you use to support senior leadership coming along for the journey?

Thanks Vanessa, please feel to reach out if I can help, happy to share and peer review anything :-)

This was probably the easiest aspect for us, as it was clear that we needed a system to manage multiple priorities. Their support was further embedded with the production of the initial

You identified duplicate actions while implementing. Did it increase management buy-in and support when you identified duplicated efforts and costs?

report, which enabled them to truly see the value add

Absolutely. Our organisation is currently undertaking a piece of work to understand all the projects and workstreams, with the aim to align and refine. From a lessons perspective we can help to inform areas of duplication, and the wider project will help inform us of active projects and associated leads and timeframes

Day 1 | 3.00pm - Exercising Resilience: TfNSW's Lessons Management in Motion

Sanna Verhoef and Chris Jacobson (Transport for NSW)

Any more resources now? Any sharing NSW Transport lessons with other NSW Gov agencies and partners?

Yes, we have some very effective templates that we are sharing across the organisation and are very happy to share externally.

For such a large and complex exercise and real time test did you have issues with capacity

We are very lucky that the Security Crisis and Emergency Management team at TfNSW is such a dynamic team. We are able to shift resources and personnel as required to meet Branch priorities. This exercise had a small but very dedicated team to ensuring its success.

How did you design a scenario that could overcome briefing practices to help them make collaborative decisions in the room using only preparatory briefings?

We dedicated a lot of time to anticipating all possible outcomes of the scenario, including various briefing arrangements. We added these as injects into the scenario or had them ready as contingency should we need them. We used the doctrine that existed at the time to facilitate the activation process and collaborative decision making.

How flexible is the framework to manage restructuring of tfnsw?

Currently we have an interim process which we adapt as required to the changes we are facing as part of the restructure. The new Enterprise Lessons Management Standard will be developed in line with organisational design.

why did your executive invest their time in the exercise

The exercises were actually an executive decision. As activation of this crisis management team is rare, they proactively engaged us, wanting to ensure they understood what would be required and be prepared for this.

Day 1 | 4.00pm - Focusing on our people: lessons management culture and capability building

Sandra Alesiani and Loretta Wingfield (Triple Zero Victoria)

After receiving the grant, did you realize there were additional items you should've included for funding? If so, what were they?

We probably had the opposite problem in that we were over ambitious in what could be delivered in the timeframes! Having the grant funding has been an enormous help in ensuring that delivery stayed on track in the face of competing internal priorities.

Do you use a software platform to record and measure successful outcomes? How do you track and record observations that turn into a successful outcome?

Not yet! But we are in the process of considering options (particularly the possibility of using existing systems) to support this process.

What was the initial internal reaction to the Ashton review? Has that view changed as you implemented your framework and cultural changes?

Oooh, big question! The answer to this will vary depending on the internal stakeholder. Government accepted the recommendations of the Review and I think generally there was acceptance that things needed to change. However, the scrutiny was hard for our people at the time, despite the acknowledgement that it was predominately systems, structures, funding and governance that needed to change. The reform has happened and organisationally we are in a very different place now. From a lessons perspective, the workforce are enthusiastic about having a clear process to share their experience, and identify lessons. They are really committed to ensuring the best possible community outcomes and this is a way to help.

When building the network, did you approach members individually or hold collective EOIs and vet from there?

We requested nominations (with agreement of the nominee) from Executive Directors. It was important for us to know we had people joining the network who had a passion for continuous improvement, and also had the backing of their EDs.

You mentioned that having a strong authorising environment that supported buy-in at all levels of the organisation. Any tips on achieving this?

What has worked for us is having Lessons Management incorporated into organisational priorities at every point possible (strategic plan, corporate plan, culture plan, departmental plans). What gets measured and reported gets leadership attention!

Day 1 | 4.30pm - How changing the focus of the After Action Review process is reaping benefits for international deployment management

Emma Conway (AFAC)

What is AFAC?

You can find out more about AFAC here
<https://www.afac.com.au/>

I'm can relate to that overwhelm of data! What did you specifically use to help collate that information and make sense of it all?

Our deployed member data came in through a survey. This allowed us to find common themes quickly as well as capture specific member experience.

The AARs were supported by note takers so the facilitator was able to focus on the conversation. Those notes were collated at the end of the AAR process and again, common themes were identified.

The common themes became the basis of our overall deployment analysis.

How/is loss of corporate knowledge being addressed to support future deployments. Do members agree this is an issue

I think AFAC member agencies are conscious of the challenges caused by loss of corporate knowledge. There are many impacts to agencies because of staff churn and decisions are continuously being made about prioritisation of staff.

NRSC is working to improve our systems and processes to ensure that when new people do jump into the Resource Sharing roles, we've got clear role statements, readily accessed information and comprehensive inductions, rather than assuming an outgoing staff member has been able to provide a handover.

Do you write Terms of Reference for your AARs? If so, do you write anything specific to reflect the change in how you're approaching AARs?

We didn't have a Terms Of Reference, but we did have very clear instructions to our facilitator about what we wanted to achieve, the areas we wanted to focus on and where we didn't want the conversation to go.

Do you have a monitoring and reporting process for implementation of the recommendations?

We do have a reporting process for the implementation of the recommendations. The National Resource Sharing Centre (NRSC) reports to the Commissioner and Chief Officer Strategic Committee (CCOSC) on our progress. We also collaborate closely with the relevant agencies and AFAC Collaboration Groups to ensure we are getting the best intel on how to proceed, as well as keeping the wider team up to date with how we're going.

Do you use a software platform to record and measure successful outcomes? How do you

Unfortunately, NRSC is still using mostly manual systems. We do use JotForms to conduct

track and record observations that turn into a successful outcome?

surveys which helps collate data for analysis, but the outcomes of the AAR conversations are recorded manually by note takers. At some point, NRSC would love to explore a system that allows members to provide insights as they happen, but it is not something we are able to do at the moment.

Did lessons reveal issues with long term fatigue management for those deployed in back to back fire seasons?

We didn't get specific feedback on that point. It's certainly discussed at an agency level and the international coordinating authorities are very conscious of seasons extending and starting to cross over. At this stage, members are still indicating a willingness to deploy.

How are you supporting the psychological needs of the individuals you deploy during and post-deployments?

During deployment members are supported by two structures. The first is the fire ground management structure where they have team leaders and Incident Management Teams utilising existing support systems. We also establish a deployment management structure. Deployed members are assigned to an AREP who is responsible for monitoring fatigue and wellbeing, and keeping the members linked into their agency support systems through NRSC.

Fire agencies deploy IMT members into hazard contexts without mandate or expertise, when will experienced IMT from other agencies supplement fire deployments?

In an international context, NRSC is only mandated to deploy to support to bushfire. Our international partners provide guidance on what appropriate and equivalent qualification and endorsement looks like.

In a domestic sense, NRSC regularly deploys multi-hazard IMTs to both flood and fire. We work to ensure all agencies have an opportunity to contribute because AFAC member agencies understand that the best way to develop collective capability is to share the opportunities. If there is a specific example that you are referring to, I'm happy to discuss privately.

Day 1 | 5.00pm - Te Ara Ahi: Embedding a continuous improvement approach at Fire and Emergency New Zealand

Darryl Papesch and Cullum Peni-Wesche (Fire and Emergency New Zealand)

Outside of your new legislation, how did you define your triggers? Does the scale or type of lessons activity change with the level of trigger?

Day 2 | 1.15pm - Application of AIDR Lessons Management Approach to the DFES Cultural Fire Program

Presented by Peter Galvin (Department of Fire and Emergency Services, WA)

You spoke to the changes you made between the years for this process. Have you had feedback from First Nations ppl about how these learnings have been used and work beyond the Cultural Fire Program, given you've published the poster you explained.

Such good work! Have you been sharing lessons across the ditch with FENZ or other countries who face similar challenges?

Training staff will often fall back on the learning theories that are taught in their training courses and focus on pedagogy etc. how have you navigated those training purists to remove those types of roadblocks?

Day 2 | 2.15pm - Lessons Management Myths and Legends

Mark Cuthbert

All questions were answered live (refer to Day two recording).

Day 2 | 2.45pm - What's required to move from insights to lessons? Exploring the elements of organisational change

Dr Christine Owen, Dr Tracy Hatton, Jon Mitchell and David Parsons (RRANZ)

Budget is an issue in my agency, do more with less (money, people, etc). Is there something you think we can do to deal with this as an EM sector rather than an individual trying on their own?

Developing and learning lessons is an ongoing process, how can you manage the perception that 'constant change' is necessary to achieve this?

As Tracy said, building coalitions are important. Start small, don't take on the world, get buy in (in verbal support), celebrate small wins, give the top brass the kudos and embarrass them into it 😊. And as Stefan Weir noted – never let the opportunity presented by a good disaster go to waste.

Yes it is, and this is the new normal. We all need to acknowledge that – there is no “unfreeze” “refreeze” possible now as was proposed by older versions of change management. That's why thinking has evolved more along the lines of creating a sense of urgency for particular changes.

However, I believe that building coalitions of like-minded supporters can not only assist in bringing incremental changes to make places

better, but also assist with supporting resilience and mitigating against burnout.

Another way to look at it is that we don't need to manage the perception, we need to embrace it, applaud it and create the culture of a constantly learning and improving organisation.

Thank you for a great preso! Do you have an example of when you've applied this change management methodology with a Lessons Identified, please?

I think the example from Peter Galvin was a really good example of how the people in the agency worked with their governance committee; developed their own workshops and subsequent conversations to both own the observations and insights and then transformed them into an innovative outcome having drawn on their lessons management systems. Again, only possible because someone had their job role as responsible for it—and importantly their manager's support. James Thompson's presentation also illustrated many of the steps (along with how long it can take).

When it comes to organisational learning, how can we increase informal learning and engagement?

I think those conversations as part of engagements in communities of practice are the key. And advocate for a culture that prioritises these activities.

With the recent power outage in Spain (Apr 25), there are some significant lessons identified about preparation and planning. What are your thoughts on implementing Lessons Identified into wargaming and Table Top Activities at a National level?

These can only turn into changes if the various organisational components are in place to support.

Day 2 | 3.15pm - Demonstrating Continuous Improvement Using Real Time Learning Lee Dalglish (Emergency Management Victoria)

All questions were answered live (refer to Day two recording).

Day 2 | 4.15pm - Lessons From 2022 and 2023 NSW Flooding – Improving Service Delivery and Community Preparedness Heather Stuart ESM (NSW State Emergency Service)

How do you capture alignment of your lessons with those from external reviews? If they are the same or similar, how do you track progress reporting for each?

What are the success measures for your recommendations and how do you “complete” them?

How did you approach engaging volunteers to provide observations acknowledging their other personal commitments? Did you also validate your observations/insights back with the vols?

Do you think the severity and rapidity of the floods actually helped to strengthen learning through collective, shared experience in ways that other shorter, isolated emergencies might not produce?

given today's weather map of NSW, are you still under resourced?

How do the lessons managers ensure they are looking after their wellbeing also with all these accumulating review activities.

Do you use a software platform or excel to record and measure successful outcomes? How do you track and record observations that turn into a successful outcome?

Day 2 | 4.45pm - Organisational learning and operational responses in policing: understanding how review processes lead to genuine change.

Superintendent Mark Langhorn (Victoria Police)

You talk about feeling safe in finding problems. Do you think this is more difficult in policing due to the element of court involvement (if we say we did it wrong, we might get a conviction reversal). If so, is there a way to overcome this (asking due to increase in penalties for new legislation)

Thanks, very interesting presentation Mark. A question, do you find doing individual interviews or surveys enables more honest feedback? Or do you think it is dependent on the situation/ group?

How do you incorporate considerations of trauma in asking people to be reflective and actively participate in lessons processes?

Appreciating the significance of the outstanding lessons identified/recommendations, is there resistance from the front line to provide observations/comments? How do you approach

that? Is there anything in particular that you do to build psychological safety?

There have been a number of reviews done and between 2005 and 2023 - it appears changes haven't been made. How do you continually support staff to participate in reviews if they don't see changes made at the operational level?

Do you use a software platform or excel spreadsheet system to record and measure outcomes? How do you record observations, track them and if it is then implemented and is then a successful outcome?

Day 2 | 5.15pm - Building and Leading a culture from learning lessons – a real world case study

Daniel Austin (NSW State Emergency Service)

How do you manage when you're put in the position of responding to other organisations' lack of learning and change (planning decisions etc)?

Lets be honest, the majority of the work of emergency services is because of the decisions of others. One of the arts is understanding where you can influence and what you can't. In some ways, I am a farmer, I plant seeds (ideas), water them (influence) and wait for them to grow. And some days there is a drought, some days its flourish. One of the trick is to make people think it is their idea.

Why was there intense criticism of requesting an afac independent review?

It was to do with a previous culture of avoiding scrutiny unless it was forced upon you, but as I said I had a different view of it and that having the review we controlled the narrative, and it said to government that we were serious about improving

Did the scrutiny in the review process give you a different perspective on how frontline staff respond to reviews?

I'd been the frontline staff with previous reviews such as Wangary 2005, Black Cat Creek 2012, Esperance 2015, so not really. What it did do is give me another leadership challenge. I hadn't been the leader, but I had watch people I respected lead through similar times, so I took some guidance from that.

Was there feedback/lessons communicated to whoever made the decision to strip capability out in the first place? How do you stop it from happening again - particularly if there is a period of relative calm weather

The leadership that stripped out the capabilities were gone, but still in the sector, so saw what we were doing. How do we stop that from reoccurring, its about understanding and promoting your value proposition to the right people within and external to your agency.

Do SES in other states learn from each other?
Or is it siloed?

How do we address the conundrum that - the more demand/incidents we have to respond to, the more funding we get, but actually we want to be reducing risk and having less incidents to respond to? And by 'we' that's all of EM.

What kind of evidence do you need to close recommendations? e.g. project closure reports. And how is this communicated to the public?

Governments / agencies will shed the things that they don't see a value in, or don't align with a direction. Our task is to be agile to ensure that we stay relevant government agnostic / leadership agnostic

Yes they do - there are various forums where the leaders come together and it is always one of the key discussion points, and it has been where the renewed drive for research has come from, to help solve some of the more wicked problems

I could talk to you for hours on this! You are 100% - what's the definition of success? Currently, and for ever, it has been call rates. It's the wrong metric, but as you highlight, it does drive staffing and resourcing profiles. It also drive a reliance culture in the community, rather than a resilience culture

Yes, project closure reports, evidence of a new procedure having been written and implemented, process being changed. The evidence is provided through to the Lessons Team and then to the Lessons Action Panel, so there are multiple layers of sign off to close. We then publish reports periodically. There is some background work going on that may see us reporting twice a year to the Auditor-General who would table it in parliament. With the Government Reports they are reported quarterly through Premiers Dept to Cabinet. No hiding!

Day 3 | 1.05pm - The Journey from Uncertainty to Opportunity: Lessons Management and Positive Risk

Alistair Dawson APM (Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management, Queensland)

Do you think we were ever in the 'complicated' stage? Disaster risk and therefore impacts has always been driven by the interaction of complex systems and structures including for example structural and systemic disadvantage, natural systems and feedbacks? Agree crisis have got more complex though!

What is the top change needed to enable our sector and scientists/researchers to work better together to support learning?

Day 3 | 1.35pm - How Victoria's Inspector-General for Emergency Management is applying a strategic lens to tailor its assurance and continuous improvement methods
Dr Lauren Banting (Office of the Inspector-General for Emergency Management, Victoria)

Excellent presentation! By "the sector" which organisations are included and which, if any, are explicitly excluded by the Victoria IGEM?

Do your interviews and surveys in reviews include other organisation/public users/recipients of services/data/resources/coordination of personnel in the agency or function being studied?

Day 3 | 2.15pm - Beyond After-Action Reviews: The application of Lessons Management methodology to agency-wide operational improvement success.
Andy McQuie (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service)

How have you engaged internal stakeholders to help support your 'systems' project?

Hi, thanks for the question. We've just run a series of internal workshops with targeted stakeholders, who were grouped by type. We talked to boots-on-the-ground staff, fire planners, systems and tech peeps, middle managers, exec., scientists and next week we're doing an external scan and talking with other agencies about their systems.

What is the load like on your team to collect and process regular reporting, update staff facing platforms, and other regular communication methods? What is the average turnaround time for producing AARs and implementing lessons?

Our team of three spend on average only an hour or so each week making sure their webpages are up to date, generating the next tranche of social posts and responding to email requests. The turnaround time on AARs depends a lot on size, complexity, and the availability of those we want to hear from.

What platform is your action tracker used on? Do you use a software platform or excel to record and measure the observations and successful outcomes? How do you track and record observations that turn into a successful outcome?

We currently just use excel spreadsheets to record, communicate, track and report on action progress. Next step is to build the system that automates the linkages back to contributing data.

Day 3 | 2.45pm - Shaping Lessons Learned with Artificial Intelligence

Inspector Bruce Budge (Queensland Fire Department)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/keirinjoyce/>
Keirin and the RAAF have been working on UAV
- unmanned aerial vehicles aka drones - before
the Ukraine/Russian War case study
demonstrated their battlefield relevance for
intel and strike capacities.

What kind of prompts did you use (or would
you use) with a narrative reconstruction?

Are you using open source AI or do you have a
'closed' system

Great presentation on the use of AI during live
learning. In setting up a training or exercise
scenario what does the exercise team structure
look like to facilitate live feed-in of the AI
analysis for the tactical crew to then adapt?

AI learning / training can use historical data to
produce its responses (which can be biased, out
of date, or incomplete). How do you prevent AI
bias reinforcing flawed strategies rather than
improving them?

How do you ask questions or prompts to ensure
AI doesn't fill gaps or hallucinate? Tips and
tricks?

Day 3 | 3.45pm - Leadership Challenges: Influencing Decision-Makers for Continuous Improvement in Emergency Management

Stefan Weir (National Emergency Management Agency, New Zealand)

All questions were answered live (refer to Day three recording).

Day 3 | 4.15pm - Flood Lessons Adoption

James Thompson (Canterbury CDEM Group)

Awesome intelligence preparation for
operations and situational awareness for BAU +
operations work! How much of the COP is
publicly viewable in BAU and response /
recovery?

Have you seen a practical difference from this
work in the latest flood response?

Where does the information from the
Controllers Dashboard come from?

Thank you from Kaipara District Council for staff and the mapping tool. The Intel capture was valuable, and we were grateful! Looking forward to seeing the next step for this tool.