

New Books

Crisis Control: Preventing & Managing Corporate Crises

by Ross Campbell

Published by Prentice Hall Australia Pty Ltd
ISBN 0 7248 00115

Reading Ross Campbell's publication *Crisis Control*, proves to be an educative and entertaining experience. Especially prepared for decision makers, *Crisis Control: Preventing & managing corporate crisis*, contains that fine balance of essential information needed to plan for your organisations coming crisis, with the right balance of case studies to keep the reader involved.

As Ross himself acknowledges, no single book on crisis management can provide the 'ultimate response plan'. Each crisis will bring its own set of 'unknowns' and 'unintended' possibilities. For organisations, a crisis is a dynamic event that can change within seconds. What appears to be the right decision at a moment of time, can, within a few seconds, become the wrong decision. That is the nature of a crisis.

This publication is required reading for corporate decision-makers. Ross Campbell's case studies provide the reader with a real focus on what can happen. These case studies become as fresh in our mind, as they were at the time they occurred.

Briefly, we revisit some of the more important Australian and International crisis and disaster events that have occurred over the last several years.

The importance of this publication for corporate decision-makers can be illustrated by the recent Herron pharmaceutical's crisis. The Herron pharmaceutical crisis, which occurred just a few short weeks ago, involved major product recalls as the company struggled to put together an action plan that would help it survive. The Herron company's crisis has been paralleled on many occasions and will no doubt occur for other companies over time. Who can predict such a crisis?

Had the corporate office bearers of the Herron company read and understood Ross Campbell's publication, our news headlines may have looked a lot different.

Crisis Control is a well written publication that leads us through an understanding of the crisis event. It provides corporate decision makers with a number of diagnostic tools to assist them assess their exposures and goes on to give practical and up-to-date advice on how to plan for and manage a crisis event. The publication goes further, it discusses the 'Post-Incident' review process and how such a review can provide the necessary feed-back loop to ensure that the lessons learned are not wasted.

If you are looking for a tailor made crisis management plan to apply to your organisation, you will not find it here. Nor should you. Every crisis is different and every organisation faces different exposures. However, if you are looking for a publication that provides you with a clear understanding of how a crisis event can affect your organisation and lay before you concepts, ideas and case studies, then this is the publication for you. Corporate decision-makers will find all the 'tools' required for planning the introduction of their crisis control plan in Ross Campbell's publication, *Crisis Control*. Guidance is also provided on how to rehearse the crisis control management plan and how to draw out and learn from the essential lessons that can be found from such an exercise.

Understanding the requirements of the crisis management planning process is a must for all business managers today. This publication goes a long way to providing that understanding.

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Disaster Risk Management

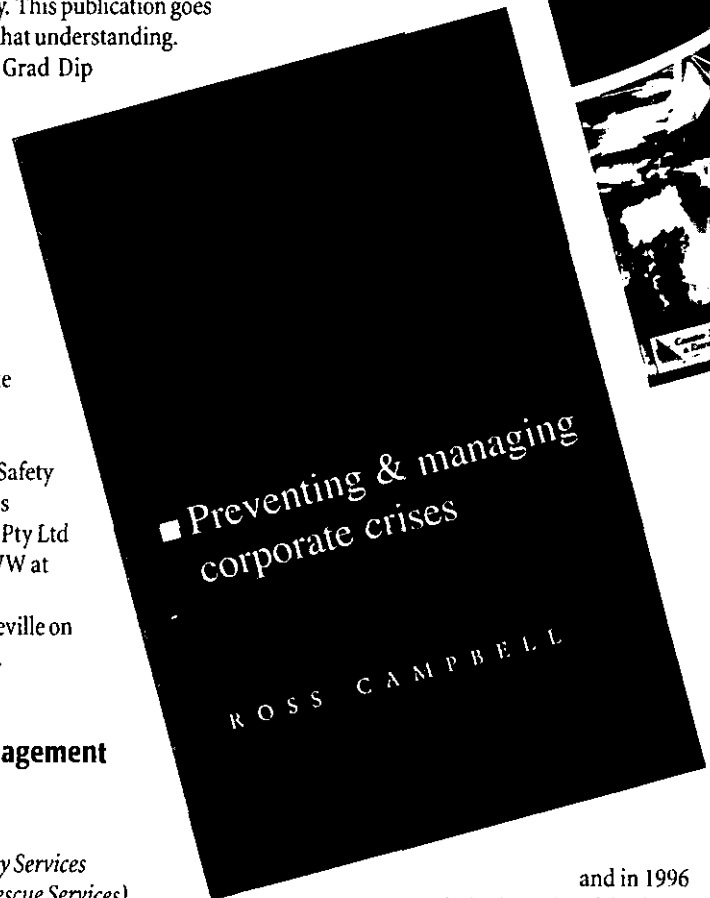
by Alice Zamecka and
Graham Buchanan

Department of Emergency Services
(Counter Disaster and Rescue Services)
Kedron Park Queensland, 1999.

In November 1995, Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand jointly published a new risk management standard (AS/NZS 4360 - Risk Management). The standard defined risk management as 'the systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the task of identifying, analysing, assessing, treating and monitoring risk'. Recognising that many industry sectors had developed their own usages and terms in relation to the management of risk,

the two standards authorities sought to rationalise these various approaches to meet growing government and industry demands for auditable technical risk assessments for public safety and 'duty of care' reasons, in a context of increasing concern over legal liability legislation.

At the time, the Australian emergency management 'industry' was working collaboratively towards the establishment of national competency standards,



and in 1996 the 'industry' peak body, the National Emergency Management Committee, endorsed the concepts and processes of the new risk management standard for application in emergency management. *Guidelines for Emergency Risk Management*, based on the standard, were developed over the next few years and subsequently endorsed by the national committee's National Emergency Management Executive Group in March 1999.

Within a federal system and given the primary

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responsibility of the Australian States and Territories for plans and programs for 'the protection and preservation of lives and property' of their citizens, the consultative processes for the development and endorsement of national guidelines in such areas

authority for dealing with such events in Queensland is the *State Counter Disaster Act 1975-78*, but it is noteworthy that the definition of *disaster risk management* in the present work is effectively identical with the definition of *emergency risk management* in the most recent version of the national *Guidelines*.

Now for the work itself. The authors point out that, although 'contingency, disaster and emergency planning' is recognised in the risk management standard itself as a field of application for the standard, the standard itself is essentially generic in nature and needs adaptation for disaster risk management purposes. The standard is directed towards the risk management needs of organisations, and defines *risk* as the chance (measured in terms of consequence and likelihood) of something happening that will have an impact on organisational objectives. Disaster risk management is concerned with communities, and both the *Guidelines* and this publication define *risk* in this context as 'a concept used to describe the likelihood of harmful consequences arising from the interaction of hazards, community and the environment'.

In consequence, while *Disaster Risk Management* in its treatment of the process in managing risks to community safety adheres closely

to the risk management process sequence and to the general approach taken in the standard itself, this publication deals at length with the risk management issues which arise from this 'interaction of hazards, community and the environment'. In identifying methods for dealing with such interaction issues, the publication draws widely on recent studies in fields such as community vulnerability, risk communication, risk information management (including the use of geographic information systems) and community planning.

Being designed, as its authors note, 'to be of assistance in helping the practical disaster planner to successfully deal with the complexities of disaster risk management', *Disaster Risk Management* is replete with examples and helpful hints for those planners at community level. Of particular value is a lengthy section (Appendix B) dealing with disaster risk management documentation and containing pro forma and sample register and recording formats; while a number of these owe something to similar

'indicative' formats in the risk management standard itself, they of course go much further in dealing with specific community safety aspects.

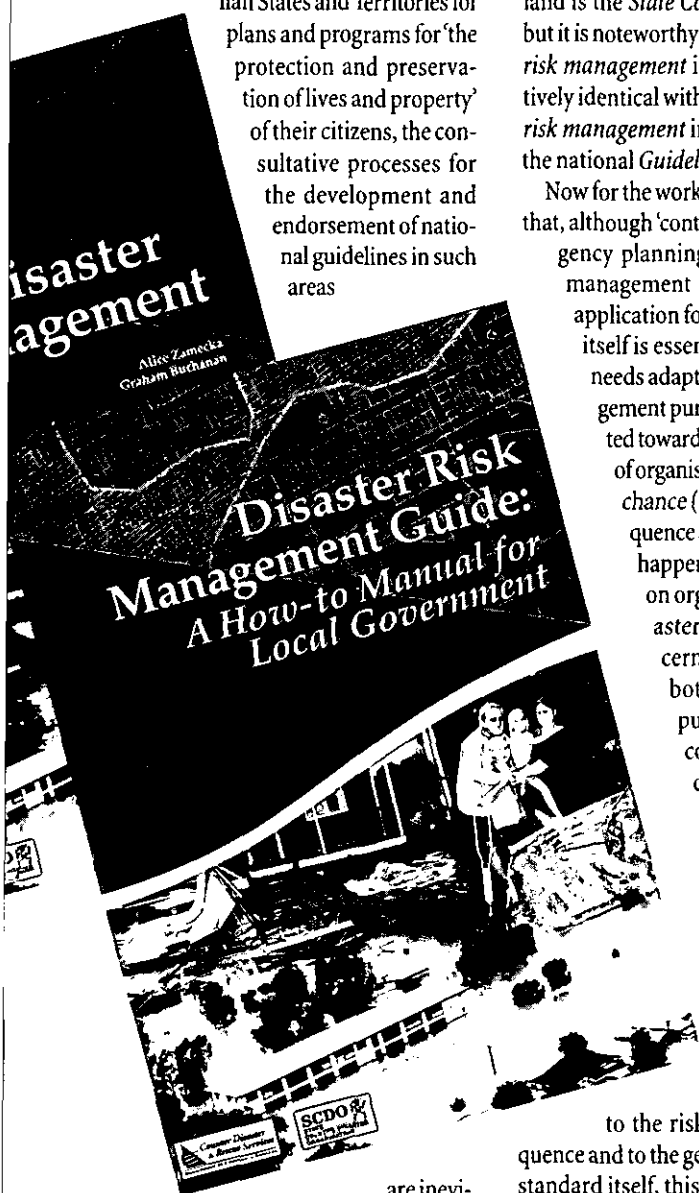
The book is attractively produced, and while having particular application in the Queensland context is just as relevant for use by emergency managers and local government authorities in other jurisdictions. It is ground-breaking as the first practical emergency risk management text available to the general public, and while it is bound to be overtaken to some extent by other publications—Emergency Management Australia and the States have just produced an 'Emergency Risk Management Applications Guide' as the first part of a series to support the uptake of emergency risk management in Australia. There is, however, one issue in the application of risk management processes in emergency/disaster management which emergency managers in Australia will need to address, and that concerns responsibility for the treatment of identified community safety risks.

The risk management standard makes clear that in any organisation the tasks of defining organisational risk management policy and ensuring commitment to and implementation of that policy are the responsibility of the organisation's management—the organisation's designated 'risk manager' usually has a staff relationship with management proper. Who, in any community, bears responsibility for defining community safety risk management policy and ensuring commitment to and implementation of that policy, and what is the relationship of the 'emergency manager' to that authority? Do similar responsibilities and relationships exist at regional, State/Territory and national levels, and how should these be addressed and defined?

Disaster Risk Management comes close to addressing this issue at local government level, but until responsibilities and preferred treatments in the management of community safety risks at all levels can be clarified the role of the emergency manager will remain unclear and the community is likely to be less safe. The Queensland Department of Emergency Services has also published a companion *Disaster Risk Management Guide: A How-To Manual for Local Government*.

The Reference book is priced at A\$85.00 and the How to Manual A\$45.00. The complete set is priced at A\$130.00. Copies can be ordered by cheque only from the Disaster Policy & Research Unit, Department of Emergency Service, GPO Box 1425, Brisbane QLD 4001.

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are inevitably complex and time-consuming. While the new *Guidelines* were under development, a number of authorities undertook studies which sought to apply the standard itself and progressive drafts of the *Guidelines* in various planning and training projects. The Queensland Department of Emergency Services was one such, and *Disaster Risk Management*, by two senior staff members of the Department, is the product of such studies and continued research.

A word on terminology—while the term *emergency management* is in general use in Australia in referring to policies, administrative arrangements and operational activities to deal with all types of events disruptive to the community, Queensland continues to use the term *disaster management* for managing events at the 'top end' of the spectrum of such events. This comes about because the primary legislative