

# Interaction and Innovation: Australasian Libraries in the Emergency Sector 2009 Conference

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In the current information environment, access to and management of digital information is increasingly important. At the same time, it is essential to collaborate and engage with clients and stakeholders. With this in mind, the theme of the Australasian Libraries In the Emergency Sector (ALIES) 2009 conference was 'Interaction and innovation'. This theme was designed to provide ALIES member librarians with an overview of current and future issues in emergency management, interaction and collaboration, and digital information. The ALIES conference was held 5-9 April 2009, and was attended by 45 representatives from 37 member agencies across Australia and New Zealand.

During the conference, ALIES librarians set out to identify:

- Trends in emergency management – a look at the current and future issues
- Interaction – how to best collaborate and engage with clients and stakeholders
- Digital innovation – strategies for managing and accessing digital information
- Building bridges – how to develop strong partnerships and industry relationships

The following objectives provided a framework for the conference:

- To broaden our focus
- Conduct our Annual General Meeting
- Exchange and gather information and share innovative practices within and between agencies
- Contribute to a better understanding of the resources of other emergency sector libraries by creating improved access to information and people
- Develop strategies for future cooperation between libraries, parent organisations and government bodies involved with emergency management

The conference featured keynote speakers from emergency management, knowledge management and libraries, including: Martin Studdert, AM (Attorney-General's Department), Bruce Esplin (Emergency Services Commissioner, Victoria), Ray Canterford (Bureau of Meteorology), Sue Hutley (Australian Library and Information Association), Peter Schar (South Australia Police), Geoff Dean (Queensland University of Technology) and Frans-Jan Mulschlegel (International Police Expertise Platform, Police Academy of the Netherlands).

So did ALIES members meet the objectives that we set out to achieve? During the five days of the conference, ALIES members: were made aware of trends in emergency management; made decisions on future collaborative actions and resource sharing; agreed to investigate more consortia arrangements; tried and tested new technologies and shared our 'lessons learnt'; formed new committees; recognised the need to position ourselves more prominently as information providers within the emergency management sector; were shown how we contribute to creating resilient communities; and discovered how to access, digitise, disseminate and capture information. The conference was a great opportunity for idea sharing, networking, and professional development. It gave those involved a chance to identify key issues and projects for the next twelve months, and into the future.

For more information on ALIES, or to read the conference papers from the 2009 conference, please visit the ALIES Conference page on the ALIES website at [www.ema.gov.au/alies](http://www.ema.gov.au/alies).