Synopsis of the SA collaborative Aged Care & country Hospital Project
2009 - 2013

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What the project is about and how we began?

Residential Aged Care & Country Hospital; Risk Assessment Review & Planning Activities

History

> Concerns arose following Victorian Bushfires e.g. questions raised to SA Health by individual facilities – especially around evacuation and the ++ hot weather in 2008/9

> Evacuation very challenging for aged care and hospitals. Issues posed to us included:
  - Who do we call – who will help us?
  - Where will we go – how do we get there?
  - How do we get out?
  - Can we come back etc – If not where do we go?

> Gaps identified which needed to be addressed
South Australia (SA) – driest state in driest continent

Temperature trend is on the up – increasing number of days over 35C and 40C

Rainfall less overall – but increased in summer

Implications

- Increasing days >35C and 40C
- Increasing number of fire danger days
Initial steps

> Work group established including:
  - SA Health – (facilitating)
  - Aged Care and Country Hospital service providers
  - State and Commonwealth Aged Care
  - Aged Care Peak body representatives
  - Other agencies including – fire, transport and others as appropriate
Challenges

> The challenges

• Aged Care - complex in its relationships – state v commonwealth
• Recognised considerable work required
• In the event of a bushfire – how rapid will the response be – what else can facilities do to be prepared?

Decision

• Federal funding sought to undertake a formalised project – application successful
• ‘Residential Aged Care & Country Hospital; Risk Assessment Review & Planning Activities Project’ established
  ▪ (2 stages complete – 3rd in progress)
Stage 1

Initial activities:
> Identification of facilities most likely to be at risk of bushfire in SA
  
  • Site risk assessments undertaken to assist facilities to better understand the risk they faced and how to better prepare for a bushfire event
    
    ▪ Over 80 face to face assessments undertaken since commencing the project (in total)
    ▪ All sites received their assessment results with recommendations to assist them to achieve increased resilience and decrease the risk
    ▪ The assessment provided a Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) to indicate if they were or were not advised to shelter in place in the event of a bushfire
Stage 1 - continued

> Emphasis placed on enabling facilities to be able to passively ‘shelter in place’ wherever possible
  • A small number of sites still recognised as not safe to shelter in place

> Early decision making encouraged
  • If evacuation required – go early - it takes time to achieve. Consider:
    ▪ Where to go
    ▪ How to get there
    ▪ Who will help
    ▪ Relatives
    ▪ Patient needs – drugs, records
    ▪ Staff safety
    ▪ Can you come back – of not where to go
Stage 1 - continued

> Geospatial mapping undertaken

> Website development commenced
  - Information – fact sheets
  - Assessment templates
  - Plan outlines

> Federal Department of Social Services - DSS (formerly DoHA) staff integration with SA Dept for Health & Ageing (DfHA)
  - Staff member - embedded into Health Emergency Management team several days a week
  - Development of web site pages
  - Developing greater networking links

> Multi-agency Workshop
Stage 2

2nd round funding application successful

• Assessment of new sites due to changing circumstances – far north SA - increased grass fire risk
• Follow up of previous sites - important to see if ‘BAL’ rating maintained, improved, decreased etc.
• Education & exercising of facilities targeted to evacuation plans
  ▪ EmergoTrain exercises undertaken
  ▪ Transport access/evacuation exercises
• Increased knowledge of ‘who's who’
• DSS continued secondment of staff member x 1 day per week
• Progressive growth of website
• Further workshop
Risk Rating Reassessment Comparison 2011 – 2012

Improvements in Risk Ratings between 2011 & 2012
Stage 3 - Move to an All Hazards Approach
Types of incidents faced in SA

- Bushfire
- Extreme Heat
- Virginia Floods
- Human disease
- Mass casualties
- Act of Terror
Stage 3

> Expansion of Geospatial (GIS) mapping
> Inclusion of additional subject experts e.g.
  • Extreme Weather (including extreme heat)
  • Flood
  • Human disease
  • Earthquake
  • Bushfire continued and internal facility fires
> Involvement with National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG) workshops
> Additional fact sheets and action plans/templates
Outcomes (to date – October 2013)

> Continuous improvement and growing knowledge
> Heightened awareness, improved plans and regular exercising
> Increased resilience and increased ability to appropriately respond to a growing range of hazards
> Demonstrated in actual events
  - Fire in aged care facility January 2013
  - >100 residents evacuated in 7 minutes – no injuries
  - New build - octagonal with multiple exit points
  - Clear leadership structure in place
  - Knowledge of what to do – actual not just factual
> Reassessment has shown that sites have maintained or improved BAL rating
Outcomes

> Better understanding from all perspectives
> New tools e.g. GIS, website – now used routinely as part of day to day business
> Increased integration of state and commonwealth health arrangements for emergencies
> Work will continue in relation to other hazards over the next 12 months
SA Safer Communities Resilience Award by Project Team - 2012