

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Addressing terrorism challenges

Professor Beverley Raphael from the Disaster, Response and Resilience Research Group is examining communication methods with the community that may be used in the event of a major emergency involving CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) incidents. This research is funded through grants provided through the Research Support for National Security program, which is managed by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

'In the event of a mass emergency or terrorism situation, it is vital that government agencies are able to identify the key issues and communicate appropriately with the public,' explains Professor Raphael. 'Specifically in the case of CBRNE emergency situations, strong community communication strategies must be put into place to provide essential information and safety messages to the public. Previous consultation work with several emergency services and agencies has shown the need for the development of an evidence-based communication strategy'.

In order to develop a communication strategy, a baseline of community perceptions will be established of chemical incident, biological threats and agents, the unlikely possibility of a radiological or nuclear incident. This will be done via a survey to be conducted with NSW Health and the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO). This survey will also examine how people believe that they would respond should such an event occur. The findings from the survey will enable the creation of a "risk communication module", where alternative communication strategies for CBRNE will be tested, including "real-world" scenarios, built in consultation with key National and State response organisations, and community focus-groups.



The outcome of this research will be a more comprehensive understanding of the expected public responses to a variety of emergency situations and threats. With a focus on public communication, the research aims to optimise understanding and responses of members of the public in emergency situations so as to assist emergency responders should such incidents occur. This research may also contribute to emergency management communication and response initiatives.

Project Title: Addressing challenges of CBRNE terrorism

Funding has been set at: \$497,671

Contact Details: disaster@uws.edu.au

<http://www.uws.edu.au/drr>

March 2010