DECISION MAKING, TEAM MONITORING & ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

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THE PROJECT AIMS TO PROVIDE ENHANCED WAYS OF
- **MAKING DECISIONS IN COMPLEX SITUATIONS**
- **MONITORING TEAMS TO DETECT PROBLEMS**
- **LEARNING FROM OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

Decision Making

Problem
- In EM decisions have to be made in complex, dynamic and demanding situations
- As incidents increase in scale and complexity decision making will become increasingly challenging

Method
- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior staff from 18 agencies
- Policy and procedure documents were analysed.
- A literature review was carried out

Findings
- Decision making occurs in the context of doctrine, policies, procedures and other organisational systems.
- There are two main types of EM decision making
  - 'Type 1' (automatic, heuristic, intuitive)
  - 'Type 2' (conscious, analytical, reasoning and reflective)
- Each type has strengths and weaknesses
- Decision making can be subject to biases which can lead to sub-optimal decisions

Conclusions
- There is a need to identify when it is appropriate to use Type 1 and Type 2 decision making.
- Biases associated with each Type need to be identified and mitigated

Team Monitoring

Problem
- Monitoring teams is important to maintain an effective coordinated response
- There is currently little information about how people at regional and state levels monitor teams

Method
- 11 desktop simulation/semi-structured interviews were conducted
- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior staff from 18 agencies
- A literature review was carried out

Findings
- Only 1 agency had a formal method of monitoring teams
- Some informal methods of identifying team issues could be identified, based on:
  - Information quality
  - Intuition
- Much of the current team monitoring is based on looking at team outputs
- Looking at outputs will not necessarily detect a problem in team functioning
- A number of methods of monitoring teams were identified in the literature
  - mapping team information flow,
  - examining team-based behavioural markers

Conclusions
- There is an opportunity to develop enhanced team monitoring methods
- Team monitoring should include a consideration of team processes (e.g. through team-based behavioural markers)

Organisational Learning

Problem
- Despite efforts, organisational improvements based on learning from experiences can be challenging
- There is a need to capitalise on localised efforts to analyse operational experience and to share these learnings

Method
- Environmental scan with end-user agencies to ascertain what strategies they currently have in place to assess performance following an incident, or season of events.

Findings
- There is considerable activity occurring in agencies to capture lessons that may be learned from after action reviews and post incident review.
- However challenges remain. E.g., the process of assessing previous performance is highly variable; there is high variability in the training provided to assessors and there is limited systematic sharing of learning from evaluations across the sector.

Conclusions
- There is a need to further interrogate the tensions between espoused theories of how emergency management *ought* to be practiced and how it occurs *in theatre*. Without acknowledgement of this difference and the tensions it creates, little may be learned.