

# Emergency Media and Public Affairs Conference

By Vanessa Bartholomew

The Emergency Media and Public Affairs Conference in May connected executives, academics, industry leaders, practitioners and professionals of media and communications to share insights and canvass solutions.

With the sponsorship of Emergency Management Australia (EMA) and Emergency Management Victoria (EMV), EMPA produced a showcase of keynote speakers, workshops and panel discussions, punctuated with opportunities to meet and connect with others.

This year's focus of convergence between community engagement and disaster communications saw participants treated to thought-provoking and entertaining content, which has created meaningful change on a variety of scales.

Highlights of the event included presentations from international keynote speakers Chief Wrangler Desiree Matel-Anderson from the Field Innovation Team, Bob Jensen from DC-based Strat3, Head of UNICEF Communications Pacific Alice Clements, and Kaila Colbin from Christchurch's Ministry of Awesome.

Alternative perspectives that challenged normative theories were presented by EMA Director-General Mark Crossweller, EMV Commissioner Craig Lapsley, and the Queensland University of Technology Centre for Emergency and Disaster Management's Adjunct

Professor David Parsons. Subjects included exponential technologies, neuropsychology, mythology and the power of narrative.

Of particular note was the workshop on 'The Power of Storytelling'. This remained a prominent discussion topic throughout the conference.

Many Australian achievements were featured, with special mention to Gaven Morris on behalf of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Christine Shaw on the success of the Wye River evacuations, Lucy Bell on the advances in social media integration in EMV, and Barbara Ryan on her research at the University of Southern Queensland, updating the statistics around the prominence in public communications in post-disaster reviews.

The EMPA conference provides a symposium for collaboration to promote sharing of expertise and resources, to develop resilience, both in operations and communities.

As a not-for-profit organisation, EMPA channels all residual funds into research that promotes sharing of lessons identified.

Next year's EMPA conference will be sponsored by EMA and will be held in Sydney.



Barbara Ryan



Bob Jensen



Attendee participation is encouraged in the conference.