

affects the electricity grid; from equipment failure through extreme weather events to criminal activities. Beyond that, however, is the absolute reliance on imported, liquefied fuels to meet demands. A series of reports commissioned by the NRMA and published in 2014² conclude that Australia imports more than 90 per cent of its liquid fuel needs. Those reports bring together information from a variety of sources to provide a snapshot of food distribution logistics:

- In the face of a significant liquid fuel crisis, and where this is the only shock affecting a community, the estimated stock available from point-of-sale outlets for essential items based on normal purchasing patterns is limited. For example, medical supplies (three days), petrol stations (three days) and chilled and frozen food (seven days).
- In September 2016, the Office of the Chief Economist reported³ that the average holding of diesel oil within Australia was sufficient to cover demand for 17-20 days, and automotive gasoline for 23-27 days.
- The closure of refineries and reduction in onshore stocks of liquid fuels within Australia makes us more susceptible to global shocks and the decisions of oil-producing countries.

² www.mynrma.com.au/about/australias-liquid-fuel-security.htm

³ https://industry.gov.au/Office-of-the-Chief-Economist/Publications/Documents/aps/2016/Australian_Petroleum_Statistics_242_September2016.pdf

While it is important to understand the cascading effects of complex network failures, it is ultimately the impacts that these events have on individuals, communities, businesses and governments that is of fundamental importance.

There is no easy way to solve these complex challenges and we know that individuals, communities, businesses and governments will respond differently, depending on their experiences, their expectations and the context in which an emergency or disaster strikes them.

At a macro level, governments and private providers of critical infrastructure and essential services need to work harder on business continuity planning. They need to pay particular attention to a reliance on other critical systems and services and how the continuity of their business plays a critical role in the continuity of communities and other businesses and services.

In preparation for the next unexpected sequence of natural disasters, criminal acts and global shocks (and the one after that) individually and collectively we need to better imagine what is possible and how we can mitigate against, or adapt to, that reality. It is not a simple task and we will not always get it right. However, when we understand the complexity and we all own the risks that are relevant to us, we will be better able to minimise the impacts of these inevitable events.

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