

London First

'Organisational and Community Resilience'

Breakfast briefing – 8 October 2013

Sponsored and Hosted by PwC



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THE ORGANISATIONAL AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE BREAKFAST

Briefing was held on 8 October 2013 and was hosted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

The event was chaired by Richard Sykes, Senior Partner at PwC, and was programmed around a series of short presentations from:

- Dr Robert MacFarlane, Assistant Director, Resilience Training & Doctrine, Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Cabinet Office.
- Alastair McAslan OBE FICPEM, Director, Strathfillan Consultancy, and former Director of the Torrens Resilience Institute, South Australia.

WHAT IS ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE?

Resilience translates into a wide range of activities across many types of organisation and arriving at a simple concept or definition of resilience that can be agreed upon and usefully applied to organisational behaviour and structures has proven difficult. While a number of different definitions of resilience across the spectrum of academic disciplines exist, they differ widely on their use of metrics. Common themes, however, are extractable when attempting to unpack organisational resilience. Organisational resilience plans should consider the following:

- Spotting trouble ahead.
- Preparing for the foreseeable.
- Flexibility and agility when you did not see it coming.
- Sustaining the response to recovery.
- Learning and adaptation.

WHAT MILITATES AGAINST ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE?

- Strategic (in)attention.
- Coherence of resilience activities: While organisations might be highly resilient in one area they may be profoundly weak in their other resilience related activities which leads to silos, gaps, and vulnerabilities.
- Resilience as 'a Maginot Line': Organisations may be resilient when facing threats from one particular direction but when facing risks that emerge from other directions, organisations leave themselves vulnerable.
- Symbolic but not substantive attention.
- Overconfidence and range of biases.
- Integrity and reputation: value generation and values at odds? When the services and/or goods generated by the organisation are at odds with the core company values the dissonance between what an organisation states as it values and what it expresses during times of crisis can have a detrimental effect on organisational resilience.

- Knowledge and bad news – keep it close or tell it loud?

- Interoperability across the whole.

- Wider context and ‘the waterbed problem’: Each organisation operates within a broader network and cannot, in a totally introspective and endogenous way, pursue resilience on its own.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY RESILIENCE?

Generally speaking, there are three main categories of community:

- Communities of location: These are groups which tend to be linked by events such as natural disasters or terrorist attacks, etc.

- Communities of interest: These are networks made up of groups who share mutual interests.

- Communities of circumstance: These are groups of people who find themselves together as a result of a situation or who share common problems.

WHAT DOES A RESILIENT SOCIETY LOOK LIKE?

In order for a community to be resilient to challenges it must possess:

- Physical capital: Provides the means to survive and recover, e.g. levees, high-volume water pumps, home-emergency kits.

- Intellectual capital: Provides the ideas to survive and recover, e.g. planning laws and standards, emergency planning, and local knowledge and information.

- Moral capital: Provides the will to survive and recover, e.g. leadership, a sense of community, and individual resilience.