

# Organising for Effective Incident Management

Dr Christine Owen (Project leader)  
Department of Education, University of Tasmania  
Christine.Owen@utas.edu.au



Dr Ben Brooks



Dr Greg Hannon



Dr Liaquat Hassain



Prof Christopher Lueg



Prof Douglas Paton

Image not available

Dr Chris Bearman

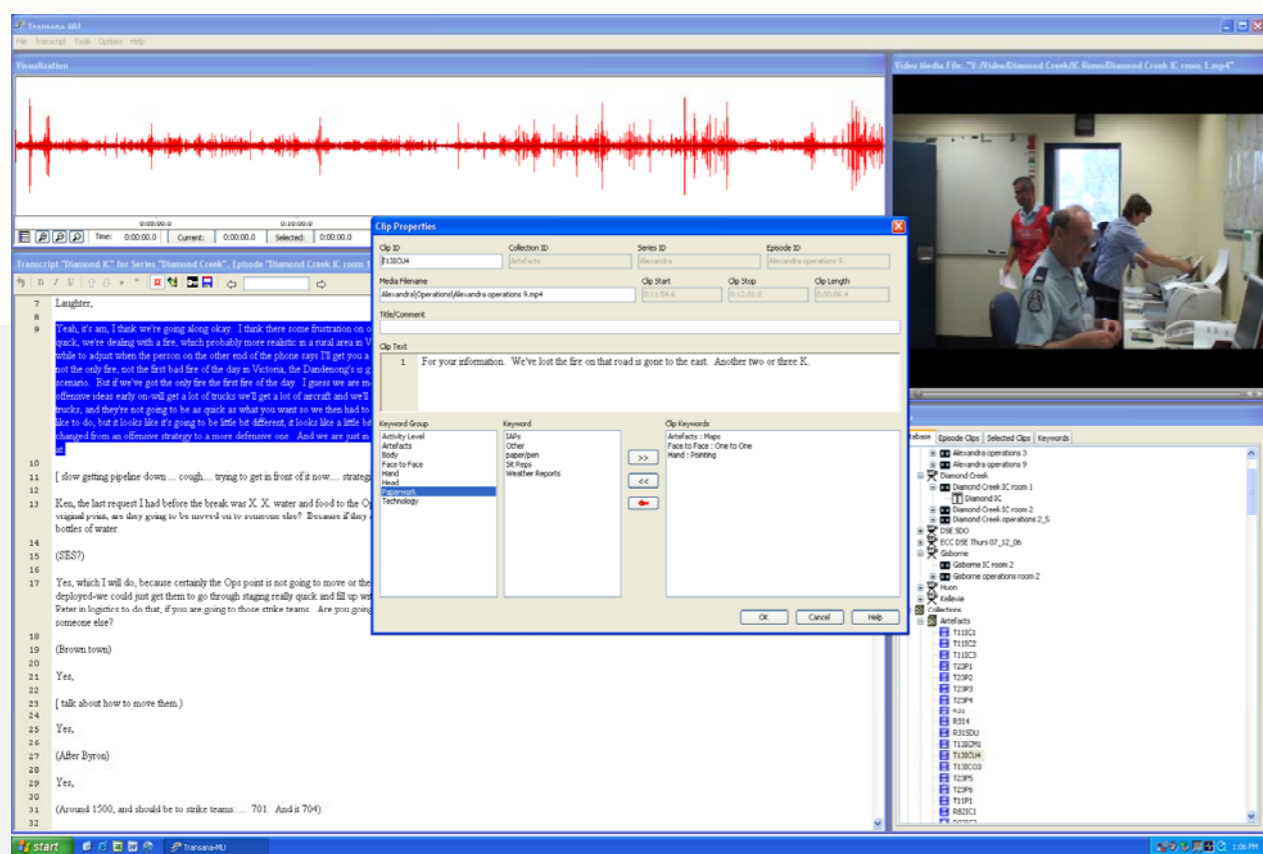
## The problem

Failure in emergency incident management coordination in major events has long been recognised in both the national and the international. In large events breakdowns of information flow, and in particular breakdowns in coordination above the IMT are both common and always problematic.



## The context

The Findings from the Royal Commission indicate a need to look beyond creating new standard operating procedures or adding to existing role responsibilities. They indicate that, despite the good work that has occurred in the past to build a robust inter-service incident management system, in overwhelming events communication and coordination breaks down and fractures.



## Outcomes and expected benefits

- Consequences and losses are minimised due to good decision-making
- Greater responsiveness and improved coordination
- Decisions made withstand scrutiny and investigation due to rigour and robustness of the coordination processes
- Enhanced incident management coordination working arrangements above the IMT
- A unified national approach to training for emergency incident management

## The challenge

To better understand how multi-agency emergency management coordination above the IMT level can be improved in order to reduce the consequences to communities of the emergency event.



## Our overarching research questions

- What are the existing and best practices for Incident Management coordination?
- How does information flow to and from the Incident Controller (IMT) influence the Controllers capacity to develop suitable alternative plans to adjust to emerging conditions?
- How has a lack of shared mental models by key personnel in emergency incident management led to breakdowns in coordination in previous incidents?
- How might we best train and educate personnel in the most effective emergency management coordination above the IMT?
- What social networks of communication best facilitate effective multi-agency coordination?
- What changes are needed to support effective command and control and multi-agency coordination?

## What research methods will we use?

- Desktop analysis of large scale incidents, including data from the Royal Commission and of extreme non-fire emergency events
- Semi-structured and critical method interviews
- Observations/Cognitive Ethnography
- Post-observation interviews
- Simulation including scenario/role play simulation studies as well as experimental simulation
- Organisational Survey
- Workshop



*"The flow of information concerning fires was slow and in some cases nonexistent ...It is obvious that the timely flow of accurate information is critical to effective emergency response. The current lack of clarity about responsibility of information flow should be addressed" (Royal Commission of Inquiry, p.258, 271).*

## Contact



Dr Christine Owen  
Faculty of Education  
University of Tasmania  
Private Bag 66  
HOBART TAS 7001

Ph: +61 3 6226 2555  
Fax: +61 3 6226 7839

[Christine.Owen@utas.edu.au](mailto:Christine.Owen@utas.edu.au)