



Wild Weather Teaching Resource Wins National Award

The Li'l Larikkins Natural Hazards Children's Education Program has won the National Significance category award at the Australian Safer Community Awards held in Canberra.

The Australian Safer Communities Awards are sponsored by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, in conjunction with States and Territories, and recognise innovative practices and achievements across the Nation that are making communities safer, stronger, more disaster resilient and better prepared to manage emergency situations.

The Li'l Larikkins program was developed by SES Agencies in partnership with the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC). The program helps children to better understand about storms, cyclones, floods and tsunamis through short, entertaining safety stories. It encourages children aged 5 to 12 years and their families to increase their preparedness for natural hazards.

In November 2010, a national awareness and education campaign of 10 x 30 second safety stories in the form of television commercials was launched to create awareness about being prepared for natural hazards, using characters from the Li'l Larikkins 3D animation series created by the Ettamogah group in Melbourne.

A schools resource kit, delivered in partnership with the Australian Children's Television Foundation, was delivered to every primary school in Australia in March 2011, following an unprecedented level of natural disasters across Australia during the 2010/11 summer including the Queensland and Victorian floods, cyclone Yasi in far north Queensland and bushfires in WA. This heightened level of community awareness of the impacts of natural disasters on the community has contributed to this program gaining high levels of awareness within school communities.

The schools resource (DVD-ROM) incorporates these messages with more than 30 lesson plans and activity sheets, specific background information and a comprehensive listing of additional resource material. It is relevant to the Australian context, engages children in the target group, and meets leading edge teaching and learning practices through the use of smart board technology.

The program, funded through the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) 2010-2011 National Emergency Management Program, complements the work emergency service agencies around Australia undertake in delivering community education, awareness and engagement programs to increase community preparedness for these events.

As the impacts of climate change continue to be felt and natural hazard events become more frequent, an approach based on generational change is going to be required if communities of the future are to become more resilient in being prepared.

These safety messages and the schools resource information will help educate children, giving them age appropriate actions to follow and develop with their families.

The education resource recently won the Best Primary Education Video Resource at the 2011 Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) awards.

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