

## MEDIA RELEASE 07/2011

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### Disaster resilience: IRU research supports better preparation, response and adaptation for future disasters

Last night at Parliament House Canberra, **Mr Jeffrey Bleich US Ambassador to Australia**, launched IRU's latest publication, "**Disaster Resilience: Preparing, responding and adapting**", at a reception highlighting the network's research strengths in this area.

Launching the Brochure Mr Bleich commented, "Domestically Australia and the United States have both experienced significant natural disasters in this year alone, with flooding in Queensland and the U.S. Midwest and South causing loss of life and widespread economic damage.

"You can't prevent disasters, but you can reduce the loss of life and property that result from them and IRU research on disaster resilience is seeking ways to do just that".

The statement brings together a snapshot of cross disciplinary solution based research in disaster resilience, via three broad themes:

- how we prepare for and reduce the potential physical damage
  - emergency response strategies
  - adapting to our changing world
- how we improve our responses when disasters do strike; and
- the psychological impact of disasters on those in disaster areas and those whose job it is to respond to major disasters.

"The IRU universities are working on numerous projects evaluating current disaster strategies developing improved approaches, to ensure we are better prepared for future events", said Professor Ian O'Connor, IRU Chair.

"The IRU covers Australia. IRU universities are in the regions where many of our recent disasters have occurred, placing us well to address this crucial issue. Working from their Australian base, our centres are linked with international associations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Safety Organisation (WSO) and the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM)".

For a copy of the brochure and related posters please visit <http://www.iru.edu.au/our-activities/projects/disaster-resilience.aspx>

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