This 25-page Twitter summary from an #ACEM19 session, *Readiness, Reaction and Recovery: The Emergency Medicine Response to Events of Community Violence*, was prepared for the Croakey Conference News Service in December 2019.

It compiles a Twitter thread by Amy Coopes, and tweets from other conference participants sent on 20 November, 2019.

Amy Coopes (@coopesdetat)

Will be tweeting from this session through to afternoon tea, sharing experiences of the mass casualty events in Port Arthur, Christchurch and Sri Lanka (Easter bombings) #ACEM19
This is a safe space, says Tony Lawler. This session will evoke feelings, thoughts and memories #ACEM19

Tony Lawler relating his first day on medical rotation as an intern, when a 'Code Brown' was declared. April 28, 1996, the day of the Port Arthur shootings #ACEM19

Our first speaker will be Bryan Walpole, on the events of that day #ACEM19
The coloured codes had only been in operation in the hospital for just a few weeks, this was the first Code Brown, says Lawler. They actually thought it was another drill, they had had one a week prior #ACEM19

Walpole says they cleared the ED within 20 minutes. All Cat 1s came on helicopter, bus came in with Cat 3s #ACEM19

Because it was a Sunday afternoon, fortuitously, the med ward was quite empty, and because the events happened during handover nurses could stay. By coincidence EMST course had been on in Hobart that day, so many surgeons around #ACEM19
Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
When Martin Bryant came in the next day there was a huge police presence and world's media on the doorstep. Director of the ED treated him, and he was sent to the burns unit. Backlash against the hospital for treating him, so they set up a burns unit in the prison #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
A planeload of replacement staff was flown in to stand down the entire ED afterwards, very important to their recovery, Waipole says #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
Now hearing from two Christchurch ED doctors on the events there earlier this year #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
Dominic Fleischer - there are many things that happened right in front of me that I don't remember and some things I remember far too well #ACEM19
Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
Usually there are 1-2 minor gunshot injuries/month & 1-2 serious ones per year in Christchurch. In less than 1 hour we saw 25 years worth of gunshot wounds in our hospital says Fleischer. One patient died in ED & one 48 days later in the ICU. 92 children lost a parent #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
First sign something had happened was two men running across Hagley Park with lacerated hands from breaking windows to escape from the mosque. They warned there would be more to come, triage nurse didn't believe them at first. 4 minutes later, 5 critically injured arrived #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
Armed police with weapons pointed and drawn swarmed the ED. 49 patients seen in 45 mins, most critically injured #ACEM19
Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
Fleischer said it was so noisy in the ED that day his ears hurt, and not from patients but staff. Because it happened so close to the hospital (2 mins away) no warning, no pre-hospital triage #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
There was a tsunami of patients and of staff, word of mouth within minutes brought doctors and nurses from all over town #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
One of the first patients to arrive was a 4yo girl. Aorta and IVC slashed by a gunshot to the abdomen, she was also shot in the test. Arrested for 14 minutes #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
Fleischer talking about specialists coming to the bedside to help, radiology scanning and hand-reporting at the bedside, blood bank coming to the ED, 180 units of blood used #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
Fleischer says the 2011 earthquake definitely had a role galvanising the hospital into a cohesive team. People worked really well together. Referral by hand signal #ACEM19
Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replies to @coopesdetat
Fleischer says one of the memories that will stay with him forever was watching a surgeon sitting holding the hand of a critically injured man shot in the back of the head, neck, as he drew his last breath #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replies to @coopesdetat
It was a day of contradictions. I saw the very worst that people can do, and the very best of working as a team. From the patients, only gratitude #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replies to @coopesdetat
Kate Stanbridge from Christchurch up next #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replies to @coopesdetat
Stanbridge trained part time and spent the other half with the NZDF - important context #ACEM19
Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
Even now I feel and felt guilty frustrated sad for not being there that day says Stanbridge. Had to go home to her sick baby. But I also felt relieved, having seen such carnage on deployment in Afghanistan #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
It's still unimaginable to most but there was an underlying feeling of unity and support. Most staff exposed that day to things they had never and probably will never see again, without any warning or time to prepare #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
All staff out of ED by 4pm but police lockdown lasted til 7pm so there was an imposed debrief period - reportedly very valuable for all #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
Support for staff is ongoing. We recognise that PTSD can take 4-7 years to manifest so we need an open door says Stanbridge. Get to know your colleagues on a good day so you can support them on a bad one #ACEM19
Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
This day will be with me forever, says Stanbridge through tears. We are all in this together. Remember to look after your colleagues, your friends and most importantly yourselves #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
The auditorium breaks out into a spontaneous waiata Te Aroha #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
Now hearing from Hasitha Gunasekera on the Easter bombings in Sri Lanka #ACEM19
Mass casualty events are not unusual in says Gunasekera #ACEM19

Triage categories, Sri Lanka style #ACEM19
Lack of field triaging, private vehicles bringing in patients major challenge. Surge of patients who hadn't been assessed prior to arrival #ACEM19

Rumours that the hospital was going to be next hit kept everybody on edge. 'I can't tell you how worried I was' says Gunasekera #ACEM19

Took some time for mass triage to be established, dead bodies piling up in the resus area and chaos of staff piling in #ACEM19

Lack of leadership and experience was a real issue for the first 30 minutes #ACEM19
Good control of patient flow within 3 hours, then patients started coming in from Negambo #ACEM19

Lessons #ACEM19

- Secondary screening and ward rounds to dispatch patients by teams led by surgeons
- An adult with chest trauma... IC2 tube 1.5L of blood on insertion of IC2 tube... Clamped and took for emergency thoracoscopy... SURVIVED
- Findings: Injury to left subclavian artery
- By about 3 hours the observation wards were cleared and some patients were transferred to general surgical wards, orthopaedic wards

- No of presentations to talk: 32/7
- Transfer out: 15/22
- Deaths on admission: 33
- Deaths after admission: 11
- ICU Patients: 40
- ICU Admissions: 28
- Majority F3

- Lessons to learn
  - Mass casualty injury: less organised mass injury
  - Lack of crowd-controlling measures
  - Too many staff without specified responsibilities, randomly attending patients
  - Little medical intervention, less CPR (but all done with good intentions)
Despite the challenges many lives were saved #ACEM19

By virtue of our profession we are at the vanguard of social change says Lawler. We witness the best and worst of humanity #ACEM19
You can have the most detailed plan but it all comes down to relationships - departmental heads knowing each other by face and name, meeting regularly, says Fleischer #ACEM19

Lawler asks the panel if we cae for oursleves enough. Stanbridge says we do it better than we used to, but need to do more. People need to find the protective things, the things that fill your bucket #ACEM19

Walpole says teamwork is a real issue in an era of locums, agency nurses, particularly outside metro centres. If you don't know one another and haven't practiced the plans then what good are the plans? #ACEM19

A GP who was one of the first responders on the scene at Port Arthur talking about debriefing being most useful when done with colleagues as opposed to shipped in counsellors #ACEM19

The anaesthetists and radiologists, the pharmacist, were actually the ones who suffered the most after Christchurch because they work alone and didn't have the same opportunity to debrief with a colleague #ACEM19
Tweets by other #ACEM19 participants

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
NZ question on advice for advocates pushing for gun reform after Christchurch and what @acemonline's role is #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
President @johnubonn says strongly for controls and the College's role is to advocate strongly, which it has been and will continue to do #ACEM19

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Replying to @coopesdetat
Lawler says we are a trusted profession and should be pushing to make our countries and our world better #ACEM19

ACEM @acemonline · Nov 20
Readiness, reaction and recovery getting underway in the concert hall! Come to hear about the emergency medicine response to events of community violence.
#acem19 #acemvolunteers
Professor Tony Lawler taking a moment earlier, before anyone arrives to this next session. The chair for afternoon session: "Readiness, Reaction and Recovery- The Emergency Medicine Response to Events of Community Violence." Presenters next photo.

Readiness, Reaction, Recovery. Tony Lawler’s first day on the job was the day of the Port Arthur massacre in 1996. Middle. #ACEM19
Geoff Couser @GeoffCouser · Nov 20
@orionthesailor takes the stage talking about gun law reform in the wake of Port Arthur at #ACEM19 @acemonline Chaired by Tony Lawler - who was on his first day in the ED that day...

10 days after the Port Arthur massacre uniform firearm laws were passed in Australia. It took only TEN DAYS after a mass shooting to ban all semi-automatic rifles, all semi-automatic + pump-action shotguns, enact a robust system of licensing. I’ll just leave that here. #ACEM19

Hearing @DrALawler talk about the backlash that the hospital received due to treating Martin Bryant (abuse, bomb threats) is confronting. One of the hardest and best things about EM is the duty to provide equitable care to all through the door, regardless of who they are. #ACEM19
PresidentACEM @johnubonn · Nov 20
We are still dragging the chain 8 months after the Christchurch massacre in changing gun laws in NZ. Enough is enough! #ACEM19
@acemonline

Kimberly Humphrey 🍃 @drhumki · Nov 20
10 days after the Port Arthur massacre uniform firearm laws were passed in Australia. It took only TEN DAYS after a mass shooting to ban all semi-automatic rifles, all semi-automatic + pump-action shotguns, enact a robust system of licensing. I’ll just leave that here. #ACEM19
Show this thread

PresidentACEM @johnubonn · Nov 20
Dominic Fleischer with his moving account of the Christchurch massacre - such human cost. What teamwork in the response. Kia kaha #ACEM19 @acemonline
Charlotte Durand @char_durand · Nov 20

‘One of the surgeons ran into the department and said “who is in charge?” I turned around and said “I am.” Shortly after, the patients began to arrive...’

Powerful recollection of the #Christchurch shooting from those on the floor at the time.

#ACEM19
49 patients in 45 minutes. All Cat 1. Dominic Fleischer shares the devastating details of the Christchurch shooting. #ACEM19 #acemvolunteers

Melanie Rule @rulesrule1 · Nov 20
Dominic Fleischer shares reflections on being in the ED on the day of the Christchurch shootings. #ACEM19 “Patients arrived rapidly and not all by EMS. We saw 3 weeks worth of major trauma within an hour. Everyone came to help - we needed crowd control for staff not patients 1/2

Show this thread

Charlotte Durand @char_durand · Nov 20
“Radiology read scans before the patients returned to the department, the blood came via plane, inpatient teams came to offer their help, sonographers came to scan at the bedside, patients went straight to theatre. The length of stay was 15-45 minutes.” #ACEM19 #Christchurch
**ACEM @acemonline · Nov 20**
FACEM Kate Stanbridge recounts her experience of the Christchurch shootings. ‘Get to know your colleagues on a good day so you can support them on bad ones.’ #ACEM19

**Charlotte Durand @char_durand · Nov 20**
The ED tracking screen had 50 “UNKNOWN, UNKNOWN” category 1’s on it for days afterward. We saw it every time we logged in... Powerful and brave reflection from Dr Kate Stanbridge on the days after the #Christchurch events. Not many dry eyes left after this one 😢 #ACEM19

**Amy Coopes🔗 @coopesdetat · Nov 20**
Armed police with weapons pointed and drawn swarmed the ED. 49 patients seen in 45 mins, most critically injured #ACEM19

**PresidentACEM @johnubonn · Nov 20**
Kate Stanbridge #ACEM19 gives a moving talk, suggests getting to know your colleagues on a good day so you can help them on a bad day.. then an utterly moving expression of mother guilt vs survivor guilt. Kia kaha Kate. @acemonline
Kimberly Humphrey @drhumki · Nov 20
Replying to @johnubonn and @acemonline
That was beautiful Kate, thank you. Many of us have experienced the pull between the needs of our children and the needs of our work (and never feeling completely enough at either), but never to this magnitude. Thank you for everything you do, at work and home. #ACEM19

ACEM @acemonline · Nov 20
"Social support is the best predictor of psychological outcomes" - Dr Kate Stanbridge recounts the aftermath of the tragic Christchurch massacre.
#acem19 #acemvolunteers

ACEM @acemonline · Nov 20
Emotional discussion about the consequences for health care professionals after dealing with disasters.
‘Look out for your friends, your colleagues, and perhaps most importantly, yourself’
Dr Kate Stanbridge
#ACEM19 #acemvolunteers

PresidentACEM @johnubonn · Nov 20
Compassion. Compassion for your patients, your colleagues, and yourself. #ACEM19

ACEM @acemonline · Nov 20
Emotional discussion about the consequences for health care professionals after dealing with disasters.
‘Look out for your friends, your colleagues, and perhaps most importantly, yourself’
Dr Kate Stanbridge
#ACEM19 #acemvolunteers
Charlotte Durand @char_durand · Nov 20

‘Most casualties came via family private vehicles. Lack of field triage was a major challenge. We were worried the hospital was a target.’
Dr Gunasekera speaking about his experience in the Sri-Lankan bombings #ACEM19 #disastermedicine

Charlotte Durand @char_durand · Nov 20

Lessons learned from the Sri-Lankan tragedy as presented by Dr Gunasekera #ACEM19 #DisasterMedicine #MassCasualty
Dr Hasitha Gunasekera presents the tragic story of the April 19 bombings in Sri Lanka, hundreds of lives senselessly lost but an amazing response in a country where Emergency Medicine is still emerging as a speciality. Respect. #ACEM19 @JudkinsSimon
ACEM @acemonline · Nov 20
‘Find the things that protect you, the things that fill up your bucket’ Kate Stanbridge on looking after yourself as an Emergency physician.
#acem19 #acemvolunteers

Kimberly Humphrey @drhumki · Nov 20
Really getting to know the members of our ED (and hospital) team before a crisis hits has been a very valuable lesson from this panel - and provides so many benefits even if the crisis never happens. Get to know one another better #ACEM19 @acemonline

Amy Coopes @coopesdetat · Nov 20
Walpole says teamwork is a real issue in an era of locums, agency nurses, particularly outside metro centres. If you don't know one another and haven't practiced the plans then what good are the plans? #ACEM19
Show this thread

Kimberly Humphrey @drhumki · Nov 20
Kate Stanbridge offering a valuable perspective on how lucky we are in EM to be part of a team- those who found it hardest in Christchurch were the ‘sole practitioners’ - anaesthetists, radiologists, etc. We need to look out for team members outside of our profession too. #ACEM19

Kimberly Humphrey @drhumki · Nov 20
@johnubonn strongly advocating on behalf of @acemonline for stronger gun control in NZ. Watch out for more in this space from ACEM.
#ACEM19 #thisisourlane

Charlotte Durand @char_durand · Nov 20
In ED you don’t have to look far to find a colleague who has been through similar horrors...we must think about our colleagues who practice in isolation, or usually in less chaos. The anaesthetists, the radiologists, the pharmacists. The ED team goes far beyond our walls.
#ACEM19

ENDS