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Professor Galea is the founding director of the Fire Safety Engineering Group (FSEG) of the University of Greenwich in London where he has worked in the area of Computational Fire Engineering (CFE) research since 1986. FSEG are developers of the EXODUS suite of evacuation and crowd dynamics software and the SMARTFIRE fire simulation software. Prof Galea's personal research interests include human behaviour in emergency evacuation situations, crowd dynamics, evacuation and crowd dynamics simulation, fire dynamics and CFD fire simulation.

His aviation based fire and evacuation projects include design and certification analysis for aircraft such as; A380, A340-600, BWB, Mitsubishi Regional Jet, Dash8-400, CS100, CS300 and VIP configured B747 aircraft. Other projects include; a study into human factors issues associated with the evacuation of the WTC, urban-scale evacuation modelling associated with large scale flooding funded by Fujitsu, an evacuation project associated with security bollards funded by CPNI, a Homeland Security project supported by the US DoD to develop a real time evacuation management system for the Pentagon building, and a project to explore improved wayfinding systems for rail stations funded by EU FP7.

He is the author of over 200 academic and professional publications and serves on a number of standards committees concerned with fire and evacuation for organisations such as; IMO, ISO, BSI and the SFPE Task Group on Human Behaviour in Fire. He has served on several major Inquires and legal cases as an expert in fire and evacuation including: the Paddington Rail Crash, the Swiss Air MD11 crash, and the Admiral Duncan Pub bombing.

His aviation related research has won a number of awards including:

- 2011 Royal Aeronautical Society's Bronze Award.
- 2006 Royal Aeronautical Society's Gold Award and George Taylor Prize.
- 2003 Royal Aeronautical Society's Hodgson Prize
- 1999 Royal Aeronautical Society's Hodgson Prize