

Emergency Management Department

Activities undertaken in the period 1 January to 30 June 2001

1. Introduction

In the last six months, the staff of the Emergency Management Department have been preparing and disseminating educational and promotional material (such as the Yellow Pages), meeting with relevant emergency management organisations, preparing for the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (CDEMG), developing a Logistics Contingency Plan (code-named Project Phoenix), and conducting training and exercises for staff and volunteers.

This report provides a summary of these activities under the following headings: roles and responsibilities of the Department, training, regional emergency headquarters and communication, emergency management exercises, administration and technology, and hazard related activities.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (CDEMG)

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Bill (CDEM) will repeal the 1983 Civil Defence Act under which Territorial Authorities and Regional Councils have carried out emergency preparedness, response and recovery activities for their communities. The Bill had its first reading on Tuesday 12 December 2000 and was referred to the Government Administration Select Committee. The Committee called for submissions by 28 February 2001 and reported back to Parliament on 12 June 2001. The Second reading of the Bill is expected to take place before the end of August 2001 and the enactment of the Bill by September/ October 2001.

Since January 2001 the following actions have been taken in preparing for the establishment of the Group:

- Prepared a WRC submission on the CDEM Bill.
- Prepared a timeline of actions that will be employed when the CDEM Act comes into force.
- Prepared draft Terms of References for the CDEM Group committees.
- Defined the interim arrangements that will be required of WRC until the CDEM Group plan is written.
- Drafted a timeline for CDEM Planning activities for the 18 months following the formation of a CDEM Group for the Wellington Region.
- Had discussions with the NZ Police and NZ Fire Service about their involvement in the CDEM Group and planning process.
- Discussed CDEM formation and planning with the Manawatu/Wanganui CDEM Group.

2.2 Rural Fires

The Emergency Management Department staff and facilities were involved in the management of three fires in the period January to March 2001.

(1) Upper Hutt Fires (16 – 21 January 2001)

On 15 January 2001 suspicious fires broke out in exotic forests close to Avro Road (Pinehaven) and Reynolds Bach Drive (Silverstream). The pine plantation forests were ready for harvesting and contained approximately \$1m worth of export timber. A substantial number of residential properties were also under threat, especially in the areas of Avro Road and Wyndham Road. The Principal Rural Fire Officer of Upper Hutt requested the WRC Emergency Management Department to provide assistance in managing these fires.

As part of the Incident Management Team we filled the roles of incident controller, planning and intelligence, logistics, media liaison, information management, etc. A full report on this incident was prepared for the Environment Committee meeting on 22 February 2001.

(2) Makara Road Fire (7 February 2001)

Emergency Management staff attended for eight hours. The WRC Mobile Emergency Operations Centre was used to relay logistics requests, as there was no mobile phone coverage in the area. The Department's role was to manage planning, intelligence, and liaison (information management, media, etc.). Makara Community Hall was set up as an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to field requests and co-ordinate as required. The fire consumed around 10ha of mature pine forest and was started by a malfunction on a pump.

(3) Takarau Gorge Road (28 February and 1 March 2001)

Emergency Management staff attended in excess of 20 hours. WRC staff formed the overnight Incident Management team (planning/intelligence, logistics, operations and liaison) with an Incident Controller from KCDC.

The Mobile EOC was used at the Incident Control Point. It functioned very effectively and the feedback was positive.

The fire burned around 70 hectares of mature pine forest. The cause of the blaze was not determined, but was considered suspicious.

As a result of the team's work with these fires, the Council's Emergency Management staff were invited by the National Rural Fire Authority to serve on its incident response team. Previously, civil defence staff have not been included in rural fire fighting management.

2.3 United Nations Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination (UNDAC) Team:

In February 2001 the New Zealand Government decided to join the UNDAC Team and nominated John Titmus (Emergency Management Advisor, Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management) and Rian van Schalkwyk (Manager, Emergency Management, Wellington Regional Council) to represent New Zealand on the Team.

The UNDAC team was established in 1993 and is a stand-by team of disaster management professionals (140 world-wide) who are nominated and funded by member governments (34), OCHA, UNDP and operational humanitarian United Nations Agencies such as WFP, UNICEF and WHO. Its main purpose is to develop, prepare and maintain stand-by capacity for rapid deployment to sudden-onset emergencies to support the Authorities of the affected country and the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator in carrying out rapid assessments of damage and priority needs, co-ordinating international relief on-site and the managing of information. Members of the UNDAC team are permanently on stand-by to enable rapid deployment (6 to 12 hours) to relief missions following disasters and humanitarian emergencies anywhere in the world.

Our participation in the UNDAC-concept benefits New Zealand as a whole. The knowledge and skills obtained and the international networking provides a platform that enables us to introduce international perspectives, international methodology and international technology into the New Zealand emergency management system. In this regard we already had numerous meetings with emergency services providers and the Territorial Authorities in the Region. UNDAC principles and methodology have also been introduced and used in Project Phoenix.

2.4 **Inter group Relations**

It is important for us to work closely and co-operatively with all organisations and individuals involved in Emergency Management. For the period January to June 2001, we attended 104 meetings and had proactive dealings on emergency management with more than 1400 people. These included meetings with local authorities, lifelines groups, emergency services, hospitals, communications providers, Government departments, and special committees on rural fire, ports, Insurance Council, EQC, earthquake engineers, hazardous substances, oil pollution, private enterprise, etc.

The different committees (regional training, regional publicity, regional strategic planning, and the Project Phoenix Group) have met on several occasions during the last six months. Good progress has been made. Details will be specified further on in this report. Emergency management officers meet on a regular basis with the five Emergency Services Co-ordinating Committees throughout the Region. These include local authorities, emergency services, hospitals, Defence Force, Dept of Corrections, Airport, Lifelines etc. These meetings are working very well and a good partnership has developed with all the role-players.

2.5 **Project Phoenix**

It has been recognised that any severe earthquake in Wellington would have major repercussions for the nation as a whole. Not only is Wellington the seat of Government with a myriad of government departments and overseas embassies, but power from the South Island passes through Wellington on its way north. National business offices are located here and it is the transport connection between both islands. Businesses, financial institutions, the tourist industry, emergency and essential services' operational capability could be severely compromised for some considerable time.

The possibility exists that overseas aid would be channelled through Auckland's air and seaways, requiring mechanisms of co-ordination to be established. An influx of evacuees or casualties may also add to Auckland's perceived responsibility. Project Phoenix has been designed to ensure that a clear and coherent approach to a Wellington situation could be achieved without seriously reducing the contingent capability of Auckland.

The Emergency Managers of the Wellington Region have accepted the challenge and has prepared a scenario for a realistic earthquake to occur on the Wellington Fault in July 2002. This challenge resulted from an initiative by the Auckland Regional Emergency Management Group looking at the logistical requirements to support other regions in major emergencies.

At a meeting held in Auckland on 29 March 2001, the two committees met, together with the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, and decided on a pathway forward. Clear objectives were set at the meeting. This was followed up with a two-day planning conference that took place in Wellington on 20 and 21 June 2001.

The Wellington objectives encompassed the following:

To establish a framework for the identification and supply of critical external resources needed for public safety in a major civil defence emergency.

The sub-objectives included:

- *developing robust processes during the period leading up to the exercise (e.g. processes for information collection and analysis, logistics database analysis, etc.);*
- *establishing a logistics chain of control for the three functional review areas (urban search and rescue, treatment and movement of the injured and the provision of safe water);*
- *establishing a robust communications network; and*
- *defining publicity requirements for the exercise.*

A series of generic questions and checklists have been prepared and distributed to key agencies within the Wellington Region. Each agency needs to carry out an analysis of the external resources they would need in the interests of the safety of their communities. The result of each evaluation will lead to a resource list being provided to the Auckland Region and central Government, both of whom will be tested for their ability to provide the required resources in a timely manner. The exercise has constraints in that it has been deliberately limited to search and rescue, treatment and movement of the injured, and the provision of safe water.

Other regions within New Zealand will be invited to participate in an observer capacity.

3. **Training**

Our long-term performance indicator states:

The Council can demonstrate that it has done all that is reasonably possible to ensure that the Region is ready to cope with a major emergency event.

We are taking all possible steps to keep our volunteer staff able and motivated through dedicated and suitable emergency management training. We are committed to training our volunteers and to equip them with the knowledge and skills to handle any situation effectively during an emergency.

In this regard we have followed our training programme which included training on headquarters operations, co-ordinated incident management, emergency management administration, communications, and the deployment and use of the mobile headquarters. 45 volunteers received training in April/May.

In order to enhance the knowledge and skills of emergency management staff, we attended various external-training sessions. These included Incident Controllers, public information management, co-ordinated incident management, workplace assessment, and non-structural options for the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan. We also attended seminars on emergency management, lifelines, and earthquake hazards. We have also given presentations to various educational groups and businesses organisations interested in Emergency Management.

4. **Regional Emergency Management Headquarters and Communication**

4.1 **Infrastructure Maintenance**

Inspections of all sites have been conducted on a regular basis to ensure all equipment is functional. These sites are located in the Beehive, Regional Council Centre (Wakefield Street), all Local Authorities, Hospitals, Police, Fire Services Command Vehicle, Beacon Hill, Mt. Climie, Colonial Knob, Normandale, Mt. Eringa, and the Mobile Headquarters.

The Duty Officer Service (to ensure 24-hour readiness) is shared by the Manager: Emergency Management and the Emergency Management Officer of the Council. The duty officer's guide is maintained to ensure that it contains the most up to date contact information and operating procedures.

4.2 **Communication Tests**

Formal communication testing between the Regional Operation Centres (Beehive, Regional Council Centre, our vehicle and the Mobile Headquarters), the territorial local authorities, Beacon Hill signal station, Wellington Police, Wellington Hospital and our maintenance contractor (Access Telecom) takes place weekly. This determines the capability and the effectiveness of the communication system.

5. **Emergency Management Exercises**

Since January 2001 this Department has been involved in various exercises, which indicated our readiness and effectiveness in handling emergencies. Taking part in these exercises provides us with the opportunity to get experience in managing emergencies as well as the opportunity to meet and work with staff from different organisations.

- As part of the Department's short-term outputs, the annual emergency management exercise to demonstrate that the Regional Emergency Operations Centre could operate effectively in a major emergency event, was held on 30 April 2001 (Wairarapa) and 3 May 2001 (Wellington) respectively. Volunteer staff (45) were also trained in the roles set out in the Co-ordinated Incident Management System (CIMS).
- On 29 May 2001 we took part in an emergency simulation exercise to test the resources of Anglian Water and Wellington City Council. This was a Wellington City Council driven project as a follow-up to the Black Box spill in Careys Gully in December 2000. We were active participants in the exercise and also filled the role of Marshals. The exercise was given the title "Amber" and the primary objective was to test the integrity of their Emergency Response Plan.
- On 1 June 2001 the Department participated in the Porirua City Council's Emergency Management Exercise. We have been regular participants for two years and fill management roles at their headquarters (controller liaison, planning, operations, logistics, etc.).
- On 6 and 7 June 2001 we participated in the Wellington City Exercise (Exercise Tempest). 16 organisations took part in the exercise and the objectives were as follows:
 - rehearsing the escalation process for a multiple incident emergency into the declaration of an emergency management response;
 - assessing the linkages between Wellington City Council, Wellington Regional Council, Wellington Emergency Management Office (WEMO) and Central Government;
 - identifying actions required to improve the overall response and communication processes; and
 - identifying gaps in resource availability, including human resources, physical resources and infrastructure/ facilities.

6. **Administration and Technology**

6.1 **Radio Communications System**

In view of the establishment of Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups and the broader range of communications that will evolve from these groups, we started a process of investigating the effectiveness and efficiency of our regional emergency radio network. The Council's current emergency network is a very well designed and

robust network with a lot of contingent capability. However, it is also necessary to look at other options such as satellite systems, packet systems (computer driven), etc. A full report on this system will be prepared.

7. Hazard Related Activities

The Emergency Management Department has been involved with hazard related activities, including:

- attending conferences on geophysics, hazards, and risk management;
- providing information and maps concerning earthquake hazard to members of the public;
- liaising with emergency managers from outside organisations;
- responding to public inquiries regarding zoning of land based on geological hazard;
- commenting on natural hazard aspects of district plans; and
- consultation on natural hazard aspects of resource consenting.

7.1 Warnings/Events

97 earthquakes ranging between 3.0 and 7.3 on the Richter Scale occurred in and around New Zealand during the past six months. During this period seven earthquakes were recorded in the Wellington Region, the largest being 4.6 Richter (Porirua, 12 June). The earthquakes felt in Wellington were:

[2001 June 19](#) - 20 km north of Greytown (3.5)

[2001 June 12](#) - 30 km north-west of Porirua (4.6)

[2001 June 3](#) - 230 km south-east of Raoul Island (7.3)

[2001 May 25](#) - 20 km north of Taumarunui (6.2)

[2001 April 10](#) - 60 km west of Paraparaumu (4.2)

[2001 April 5](#) - 50 km north-west of Paraparaumu (3.8)

[2001 April 5](#) - 40 km south-east of Blenheim (4.3)

[2001 April 5](#) - 30 km south-east of Blenheim (5.0)

[2001 April 5](#) - 50 km south-east of Blenheim (4.8)

[2001 April 5](#) - 30 km south-east of Blenheim (4.0)

[2001 March 16](#) - Within 5 km of Upper Hutt (3.2)

[2001 February 6](#) - 10 km south of Featherston (3.4)

[2001 January 14](#) - 10 km east of Wellington (3.4)

In the period January to June 2001 a total of 12 weather warnings were received and promulgated in our Region. Of these six were for strong wind and six for heavy rain. This Department informed all involved. No problems were experienced

Summary of Weather Warnings received from the Metservice since June 1998

Month	Heavy Rain	Strong wind
June 1998	5	
July 1998	1	
August 1998	1	1
September 1998	4	
October 1998	17	
February 1999	3	3
March 1999	7	7
April 1999		1
May 1999	12	6
August 1999	4	4
October 1999	1	
November 1999	11	1
December 1999	6	6
January 2000	5	5
March 2000	4	
April 2000	9	9
June 2000	3	6
July 2000	4	4
August 2000 (Alert)	1	1
September 2000 (Alert)	1	
September 2000	9	3
October 2000	9	8
December 2000	5	
January 2001		3
May 2001	2	3
June 2001	4	