Emergency Management Department
Activities undertaken in the period July to December 1999

Introduction

In the last six months most of our time has been spent on activities involving work on the Emergency Management Group (EMG), planning for the Year 2000 (Y2K), developing a Logistics Contingency plan for the Wellington Region, and training and meeting with the relevant groups in emergency management. 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

Emergency Management Group

On 4 December 1998, a presentation was made to the Chief Executive Officers regarding the progress achieved in establishing the Emergency Management Group. The Chief Executive Officers requested Steven McArthur, Hutt City Council, and Dr Jane Bradbury, WRC, take responsibility for adding value to the proposal by incorporating additions and sharpening some of the focus in the document.

An "Explanatory Document" was prepared and a number of meetings held to discuss the various roles and responsibilities of the different role players. The document was made available to the Territorial Local Authorities in August for ratification. All but two Councils have responded positively so far. The intention is still to have the inaugural meeting of the EMG in the early part of 2000.

Discussions regarding the "Future of Emergency Management Groups" early in December, outlined the direction that the Government is intending to take on EMG's and with the proposed Emergency Management legislation. Some of the more interesting intentions include:

- Emergency Declarations will only be made by elected representatives (will specify Mayors).
- What was being called the regional strategy will now be called the "Emergency Management Group Plan" for the EMG. This will have a 5 year period and should include three parts: Strategic (objectives, hazards), Response/Recovery, and Administrative (funding, procedural arrangements etc).
- The EMG plan should be linked to other policies e.g. RPS, RMA implications
- The EMG will be a joint committee (it will be mandatory for all local authorities to belong to an EMG, voting and funding to be established by the EMG, one Council will not be able to discharge the EMG as in the Local Government Act 1974).
- EMGs must be established within 12 months of the Bill being enacted, although the Ministry encourages forming EMG's now. The Ministry also envisages the enactment in 2000.
- There will be a requirement to have a servicing authority and Emergency Management Office for administrative and other agreed functions of the EMG.

Our challenge for the region is to establish the framework, structures and mechanisms that will ensure our community is resilient and that we can effectively manage the social and economic risks of our hazardscape.

In the past year we have progressed with the identification of hazards, risks and related consequences, we analysed and established priorities for action, developed emergency management plans based on the 4 R's, and evaluated and implemented co-operative arrangements in anticipation of EMG's to be established under the new legislation.

We are continuously working as a collective in the region to establish our EMG as soon as possible. That will ensure we can reinforce the change in focus, and will provide a common framework for planning, a co-ordinated response for major disasters and support the functioning of local Civil Defence operations.

As a collective, we acknowledge that emergency management is vital for good social and economic performance. Emergency management is good business, it is common sense and much can and should be done now. We don't have to wait for new legislation to make a start and we should take ownership of the proposed outcomes and work co-operatively to make progress.

The EMG differs from the present structure in that accountability and responsibility are at a shared level with all involved local authorities (collective decision making). Responsibilities are also broader (*all hazards* and property are now included in the definition of emergency), and there is more interaction with other sectors and also within our own sector. Structurally the EMG provides more co-ordination and co-operation as well as more resource sharing. Operationally there will be more joint planning and enhanced service arrangements

The EMG advantages over current Civil Defence arrangements include efficiency gains through reduced duplication of administration and services and the development of common planning approaches. There will also be greater opportunities for enhancing, developing and applying emergency management expertise, and closer day-to-day working relationships among EMG partners. The EMG will provide a more robust platform to address national emergency management capability, and it will provide clarity about required outcomes (through planning) and flexibility about how to achieve those outcomes.

3.   **Year 2000 (Y2K)**

In terms of regional preparedness for Y2K, we have been working collaboratively with other territorial authorities in the Wellington Region to prepare the community for the Y2K issue. Our staff has also been working closely with other groups, including the Ministry of Emergency Management and Civil Defence, the Emergency Services, the Lifelines Groups, the Insurance Council, the Earthquake Commission and other agencies. Y2K provided the opportunity to upgrade and test all our systems, to test our Corporate Emergency Plan and to test our ability to work on a co-ordinated basis with all the other agencies. Apart from the advantage that nothing went wrong, we obtained valuable experience on how to manage a big incident.

As part of our internal strategy, we were planning and preparing for potential disruptions of the delivery of services such as electricity, water, gas, sewage, communications, electronic financial transactions, transportation, and health care. We did that by preparing the community of what to expect, what to prepare, what to do when things go wrong, and where to go to get help. To that effect we have developed an advertisement that was published in the Yellow Pages (Wairarapa in July and the rest of the region in October), and we have also provided other necessary guidelines, posters, checklists, media releases and appeared on radio

and TV well ahead of time. As part of our "Y2K-awareness week" we successfully displayed the Mobile Headquarters at various sites in Wellington, Upper Hutt, Masterton, Carterton and Martinborough. At least 3000 people visited the displays which also provided information on other hazards e.g. earthquakes, floods, storms, etc.

The Wellington Regional Council's "Regional Headquarters" in the basement of the Beehive was utilised as the Regional Monitoring Centre and was activated on the 31 December 1999. Emergency Management staff and volunteers manned the Centre as well as the Communications room at Marshall House from where the Council's Executive Team operated. The Council's Mobile Headquarters was activated at the Mabey Road Depot to allow direct communications between "Water supply" and the Beehive and Marshall House.
We worked very closely with the Utility-providers (through the Wellington Lifelines Group) and the emergency services (through the Emergency Services Co-ordinating Committees) to ensure an effective partnership. . The following organisations reported to the Regional Monitoring Centre: Marlborough District Council, CentrePort, South Wairarapa District Council, Wellington City Council, Wellington Emergency Management Office, United Networks, Wellington Regional Council (Bulk water, Harbours), Porirua City Council, Masterton District Council, Wellington Free Ambulance, Orion Gas, Hutt City Council, Powerco, Saturn Communications, Kapiti Coast District Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Wellington Airport, Carterton District Council and the Wellington and Hutt hospitals.

The Y2K-problem could have created a special demand for communications. The normal communications systems might have been unable to meet the demands, or might have failed completely or partially. It was essential to ensure that the best use was made of present communication resources and that viable alternative systems were readily available. The WRC communications system (regional radio network) was used in the Regional Monitoring Centre (Beehive) and was also available as a backup communications system in case the emergency services (111-agencies) system failed. To this effect we had the radio network upgraded to allow for an additional emergency services channel as well as a separate channel for the lifelines group. The capability was also enhanced with the introduction of an additional radio-fax channel, a better filter system and a more sophisticated battery back-up system at all the repeater sites.

We experienced no problems at the Regional Monitoring Centre or with any of our participants. The change from 1999 to 2000 went without a hitch.

4.   Inter group Relations

It is of great importance for us to work very closely and co-operatively with all organisations and individuals involved in Comprehensive Emergency Management. A great part of our work and time is spent ensuring that this will happen. For the period July to December 1999, we attended more than 130 meetings and had proactive dealings on emergency management with almost 400 people (an average of 22 external meetings per month attended by an average of 18 representatives each). These included meetings with local authorities, lifelines groups, emergency services, hospitals, communications providers, Government departments, Massey University, and special committees on rural fire, ports, Insurance Council, EQC, earthquake engineers, hazardous substances, oil pollution, private enterprise, etc.

5.   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, and ourselves able and

motivated through dedicated and suitable emergency management training. We are committed to train 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, media, advanced first aid, and basic rescue. A total of 22 volunteer staff were trained.

In order to further enhance our knowledge and skills, we attended various external courses, workshops, seminars, and training sessions on co-ordinated incident management, Y2K management, Future of EMG's, geological hazards (IGNS and NIWA), and non-structural options for the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan.

6. Regional Emergency Management Headquarters and Communication

Infrastructure Maintenance

Inspections of all sites have been conducted on a regular basis to ensure all equipment is maintained in a state of functionality. These sites are located in the Beehive, 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 being maintained on an ongoing basis to ensure that we always have the latest updated contact information and operating procedures available.

Communication Tests

Formal communications tests between the Regional Operation Centres (Beehive, Marshall House, our vehicle and the Mobile Headquarters) and the territorial local authorities, Beacon Hill signal station, Wellington Police, Wellington Hospital and our maintenance contractor (Access Telecom) have taken place every week. This determines the capability and the effectiveness of the communication system.

7. Emergency Management Exercises

This department has been involved in several exercises, which indicated our readiness and effectiveness of handling emergencies, namely:

- Two Local Authority Exercises (Porirua City and Wellington City)
- Exercise "South Sea" took place at the Wellington International airport on 24 November 1999. The objectives set for the Exercise were met successfully.
  The aim of the exercise was to practice the Co-ordinated Incident Management System (CIMS), Emergency Services response to an aircraft crash in the sea and the roles that other agencies have to play in such an event.
- Project "Phoenix". We are still making good progress on the combined exercise ("Project Phoenix") between Auckland and Wellington Regional Councils. We are working together on issues like lifelines, governance, rescue/recovery, health and welfare, economics, and logistics. We had a couple of meetings at a regional level to plan and develop a logistics contingency plan for the Wellington Region in particular and for the

rest of the country in general. In this regard we also worked closely with the Ministry for Emergency Management, the NZ Defence Force and Massey University.

8.   Administration and Technology

Response 98 Database

Following several proposals and recommendations from us, the suppliers (RMD) decided to upgrade our system free of charge. The upgrade brought a huge advantage about and the database is now much more user-friendly.

The system is maintained and updated with data on a regular basis with the result that the Department can function more effectively. A huge amount of data has already been entered into the system (details of approximately 600 persons and more than 250 different equipment/services categories). We have investigated the "Logistics" part of the database (it is still in its development stage) and we envisage incorporating that into the system during 2000.

Approval of Civil Defence Plans

The Department of Emergency Management reviewed and reported to Council the following Local Authority Civil Defence Plans to be approved:

- Upper Hutt (22 July 1999)
- Wellington Regional Council (9 September 1999)
- Wellington City Council (21 October 1999)
- Masterton District Council (Amendments – 2 December 1999)
- Carterton District Council (2 December1999)
- Kapiti Coast District Council (extension to 30 June 2000 approved on 2 December 1999)

9.   Hazard Related Activities

The Emergency Management Department has been involved with additional hazard related activities, including:
- commenting on natural hazard aspects of district plans,
- consultation on natural hazard aspects of resource consenting,
- providing information and maps concerning earthquake hazard to members of the public,

- liasing with emergency managers from outside organisations,
- responding to public queries regarding zoning of land based on geological hazard,
- attending conferences on geophysics, hazard, and risk management.

Warnings/Events

Eleven earthquakes were recorded in the Wellington Region over the past six months, the largest being 4.6 Richter. The earthquakes recorded by IGNS were:

> 1999 July 9 - Paraparaumu (4.2)
> 1999 August 1 – Otaki (3.3)
> 1999 August 21 – Wellington (4.5)
> 1999 September 22 – Otaki (4.3)
> 1999 October 4 – Wellington (3.4)
> 1999 October 9 – Paraparaumu (3.9)
> 1999 October 11 – Porirua (3.4)
> 1999 October 11 – Porirua (3.70
> 1999 October31 – Porirua (3.8)
> 1999 November 4 – Paraparaumu (3.8)
> 1999 November 24 – Castle Point (4.6)

IGNS also recorded 54 other earthquakes in the country ranging between 2.5 and 6.3.

The world experienced more than the usual number of major earthquakes in 1999 (>22) and deaths caused by them were double the annual average. About 18 major earthquakes (magnitude 7.0 to 7.9) and one great quake (8.0 or higher) hit the world in a typical year.

A total of 21 weather warnings were received and promulgated. Of these 9 were for strong wind and 20 for heavy rain. This Department informed all involved. No problems were experienced.