

Emergency Management Department Report

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1. Communications

A group comprising local authorities, emergency services, lifeline utilities, and hospitals, work very well together to carry out weekly testing of the Regional Communications System. All the equipment is in a well-maintained and functional condition. The repeaters at Mt.Climie, Normandale and Colonial Knob have been upgraded to provide extra capability on voice and fax frequencies, as well as an additional capability by including the Lifelines groups and the emergency services (ES 164) on our system. More value and sophistication were also added by upgrading the frequency-filter system. We are in the process of having some necessary maintenance (repairs and paintwork) done on the building at Mt.Climie.

We are working with the Landcare Division (Regional Park Rangers) to test several radio systems in the Orongorongo Valley and Wainuiomata. If Landcare should decide to buy into our system, the outcome will be one of additional capability for us (more eyes and ears as well as 4WD vehicles out in the field to support us in a major disaster) and enhanced safety for their rangers.

2. Emergency Management Group (EMG)

In 1995 the Government undertook a major review of Civil Defence. The review found that the current Civil Defence Act was limited in scope, with a particular emphasis on response. The review recommended establishing intervention as a key means of mitigating hazards and their risks.

It advocated that local authorities, the emergency services, public agencies, and lifeline utilities collaborate to achieve improved comprehensive emergency management (risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery). Together these organisations will form an Emergency Management Group, servicing the Wellington Region.

New legislation is to be introduced in 2000, the purpose of which is to improve community resilience and continuity through risk management and comprehensive, integrated emergency management. The Minister already gave his support to the Emergency Management Bill and the Bill was accorded to the Cabinet in January for prioritisation.

In Wellington, senior officers from the local authorities, emergency services and key public agencies have been meeting regularly over the past 18 months to give shape to an Emergency Management Group for the Wellington Region. The majority of these organisations has now approved the concept and is waiting for its implementation.

The EMG is set to assume responsibility for regional civil defence arrangements early this year. Current plans and response procedures will remain in place while new arrangements are bedded down and tested. We already commenced planning the upgrade of major EOC's to achieve greater consistency and capability, and training in the new arrangements has commenced locally as well as in conjunction with the Ministry for Emergency Management.

Drafting of a new Emergency Management Plan (EMP) for the region will commence soon, concurrent with a process to scope the ability of emergency services, hospitals and health providers, the volunteer sector and private sector organisations to provide extraordinary resources and services in the event of a major incident. Preliminary work has also been undertaken to establish what resources this region may require from its neighbours in an emergency, and how Wellington can assist the rest of the country through mutual aid agreements.

Discussions with the Ministry for Emergency management regarding the "Future of Emergency Management Groups" early in December, outlined the direction that the Government is intended to take with EMG's and 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
- It will be mandatory for all local authorities to belong to an EMG, and the political body of the EMG will establish voting and funding measures.
- EMG's 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.

The challenge that we are working on is to establish the framework, structures and mechanisms to ensure a resilient community and to ensure 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 us to reinforce change in focus and to provide a common framework for planning, a co-ordinated response for major disasters and to support the functioning of local Civil Defence operations.

As a collective, we acknowledged 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.

3. **Y2K**

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 have 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.

All tasks were executed successfully and we did not experience any problems at all. The advantage that we got from the Y2K-event, was that we were able to test all our systems and our working relationships with all the agencies involved.

4. **Representative Visits**

- We are still working on the "Logistics Contingency Plan to Support the Wellington Region" as well as a New Zealand-wide Logistics Plan. In this regard we are also working very close with the Territorial Local Authorities in the Region, the NZ Society for Earthquake Engineers, the Insurance Council and the Ministry for Emergency Management.
- We are much involved with the non-structural options part of the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan. We are working with the Hutt- Councils in developing measures to reduce risks on the floodplain and to put strategies into place to enhance response and recovery actions during a flooding event.
- The Department was invited by the Presbyterian Support of Wellington to investigate measures on how to make their offices earthquake-safe. The request was handled successfully.
- We met with the Treasury Department a couple of times to explain the Wellington Regional Council's role in emergency management and the Civil Defence-role that they will have to play during an event.

5. **General**

- Sixteen Special Weather Bulletins were received from the Met services since the last Environment Committee meeting on 2 December 1999. They were all for Heavy Rain and Strong Wind. All the involved agencies were notified and no problems were experienced.
- The following Earthquake reports were received from IGNS:

- 23 November – Murchison (3.8)
- 24 November – Castlepoint (4.6)
- 01 December – Putaruru (4.1)
- 07 December – Opotiki (5.2)
- 09 December – Stratford (3.6)
- 09 December – Foxton (4.5)
- 13 December – Rotorua (4.9)
- 20 December – Nelson (5.1)
- 21 December – Foxton (4.1)
- 22 December – Te Anau (5.3)
- 23 December – White Island (3.7)
- 24 December – Opotiki (3.7)
- 27 December – Amberley (4.2)
- 29 December – Blenheim (3.6)
- 30 December – Levin (3.6)
- 01 January – Ross (3.9)
- 01 January – Nihaka (3.7)
- 02 January – Wanganui (3.7)
- 05 January – Whakatane (4.5)
- 10 January – Porirua (3.9)
- 12 January – Tirau (3.5)
- 22 January – Waikanae (3.9)