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Stakeholder Needs Analysis Project - Summary

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

1.1 Objectives/Purpose

The objectives of the project were to meet or make contact with our stakeholders in the Region, to find out their hazard and emergency management information needs and if we are currently meeting these. Firstly, we wanted to find out whether our stakeholders were aware of the role that Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) plays in providing information such as reports, maps and fact sheets. We were also interested to see if our information is presented in a useful format and is studied at an appropriate scale.

The project was also to find out:

- If relevant information is reaching appropriate stakeholders; and
- If there are any 'information gaps' that the stakeholders could identify.

The feedback that we received will help us to formulate future work and research programmes and help with the way we format and market our information.

1.2 Background

During the last decade, GWRC has established a good understanding of the natural and technological hazards that affect the greater Wellington Region. The focus is now shifting to the **application** of the technical knowledge that we have and making it more 'user-friendly', understandable and accessible to all of our stakeholders.

This project is also seen as an opportunity to build and strengthen relationships with the information users and to demonstrate that their views are important to us and for shaping our research directions for the future.

2. The Process

The project was tackled in three phases.

1. Discussions with the Territorial Authorities (TA's), including emergency management, consents, engineering and planning staff. Meetings were held at the offices of the each of the TA's.

2. The workshops for key stakeholders were held at GWRC and were facilitated by GWRC staff. The agenda included some introductory presentations on the project and what information is currently held at GWRC. Discussions were held in the form of break-out groups with time for a feedback session.

3. Community surveys were undertaken by UMR Research and involved a Region-wide telephone survey and two focus groups.

3. Territorial Authorities

Discussions were held with Wellington City Council, Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Porirua City Council, Kapiti Coast District Council, and the three Wairarapa District Councils.

The main points raised were:

3.1 Situation/Problems

- Region-wide scoping projects (and related topics/hazards) have been covered/exhausted.
- It is almost impossible to use this information in District Plans as a higher level of detail is needed. Districts want:
  - 'Lines on maps'
  - Property-scale data
  - Defensible science with accepted, consistent methodologies behind the reports in order to stand up in Environment Court.
- Some information about hazards is presented in LIMs (Land Information Memoranda), but many TA's are reluctant to do even this given the absence of the factors mentioned above.
- Most of the hazard information is currently used for non-statutory measures such as public education via the emergency management officers.
- Some of the TA's expressed a slight reluctance at receiving the information as it then meant that there was an onus on them to 'do something about it'.

3.2 Format/applicability of our information

- Most TA's found the information useful in a non-statutory way and most of the emergency management officers mentioned that they used the information contained in the reports for either public education or in their planning (e.g. the wildfire season at UHCC).
- Information that is provided in a GIS format is most useful, especially for planners, who tend to use this information most often. The ability to see hazard information in a visual format was very important to many – and GIS achieves this.
- Hazard reports tend to be something that people read and refer to every once in a while. While it would be most efficient to provide information in a format that is easily disseminated to the public and provides a dual function of giving information to the TA (e.g. the 'Fresh' publication from the GWRC Water Group), this is not always possible. Scientific reports, for example, would require condensing and simplifying to be useful for two quite different audiences.

3.3 Suggested Solutions

- Public education and non-statutory measures are probably the most effective ways to get hazard information out into the public arena.
- To get hazard information into statutory documents – LIMs more frequently, and ultimately into District Plans - there is a need to start concentrating on specific, local hazard studies.
- If the TA's are to participate in and share the costs of this more site specific work, then some planning of budgets and research programmes is required so that the TA's can have time to respond and allocate budget.

4. Key Hazard Professionals

4.1 Utility Services

The main finding of these workshops was that the utility managers had little idea of the hazard information that GWRC (and other hazard information providers) holds and how they could access it. A successful outcome from the workshop was that the utility managers (and others) came away with a better understanding of the hazard information that GWRC holds and how they might be able to get hold of it.

4.1.1 Access

The GWRC website had not been visited by half the utility managers present at the workshop, and only 20% had seen a copy of the six monthly 'Hazards Update' Newsletter. Consequently, there is now a more targeted mailing list for the newsletter. Previously this was sent to CEO's and managers and, as a result, was often not getting to the relevant people (this also highlights internal problems of communication and dissemination).

There was also a suggestion that a specific 'utilities' newsletter be developed, and that an electronic version of both newsletters, instead of a hard copy, would be useful.

4.1.2 Scale

Utility managers require information at all scales, from national to regional to local, right down to property scale information.

4.1.3 Barriers

The barriers identified were not knowing what information is available (this was initially overcome by the information provided at the workshop), how to access the information, not knowing when the information was published (its currency), and not being made aware of new information/research (highlighted above).

4.1.4 Solutions

Knowledge of and access to GWRC's information are central issues, and this was referred to and built on during the workshop. It was suggested (independently by both break-out groups) that there should be a 'single clearing house' or a 'portal' for stakeholders to find hazard information. It was suggested that this be a web-based interface from GWRC's website, with links to other websites as there are other providers of hazard information (e.g. TA's, Crown Research Institutes).

4.2 Emergency Services

4.2.1 Scale/scope

Participants agreed that regional scale information was useful to them. Because they each have different boundaries (Fire, Police, Red Cross, District Health Boards etc), a common regional boundary was useful to work with (the CD Emergency Management Group boundaries are the same and will aid consistency). Regional-scale information is useful to get an overall picture for locating operations, helping with response planning and raising staff awareness. Much of the information that these stakeholders receive is from overseas, and local scale/New Zealand information is also very useful. Smaller scale studies would be useful for business continuity planning.

4.2.2 Descriptive versus visual format

Visual information is the most useful – especially for the tasks that this group is involved with. Written reports are useful for locating specific information, but visual information was used most often. A suggestion was made to include a video or a CD to the collection of resources, and to make such information available in public libraries, along with updated summaries of the information held by GWRC.

4.2.3 Access

Again, the problem of not knowing what information GWRC holds is a big issue, and something that the internet portal idea could potentially overcome. All participants were in favour of this idea, although only half said that they regularly use the internet as a search tool/information source.

Many participants mentioned the importance of maintaining personal contact and forming relationships with key people within organisations. They were pleased that GWRC staff make an effort to invite them to presentations and workshops such as this one, to keep up the personal contact and to keep up to date with any new hazard/emergency management information.

The other form of contact that was highlighted as being the most useful was email. This is because email messages (with appropriate/informative subject headings) are sent directly to the people who are interested in receiving the information (most of the time!). Hard copy information is commonly sent to the highest level in these organisations and often does not filter through to the people that are interested in receiving it – or they get it too late. An example of this is that none of the participants had received a copy of the *Hazards Update Newsletter*. It is important for GWRC to maintain the balance of electronic and personal contact with this group of stakeholders.

4.2.4 Currency

As mentioned above, the preferred method of being kept informed/up to date is via email, with the option of being able to pick up the phone and talk to GWRC staff.

One suggestion was that GWRC reassesses the fault line locations in the Region and that a compulsory review process be introduced for all of the technical information to assess its currency.

4.2.5 Cost

The group felt that if there is a need to cover printing costs then it is appropriate to charge, but on the whole, non-commercial organisations should not have to pay for the information. Consultants should be made to pay as they are seeking to make a commercial gain from the information.

5. Community Surveys

UMR research was contracted to undertake a telephone survey of a sample of the community (500 respondents). The community was separated into six geographic areas - Wairarapa, Upper Hutt, Lower Hutt, Porirua, Kapiti and Wellington City. The questions broadly covered issues of awareness of hazard information and response preparedness.

A second part of the contract will be to conduct two focus group sessions, in order to discuss some of the community hazard issues raised in the telephone survey in more depth.

5.1 Telephone Survey Results

5.1.1 Overall

There is a reasonably low level of knowledge (22%) of the activities undertaken and information provided by GWRC in the area of hazard management and awareness. Of the eleven media and information providers tested, GWRC ranked 9th as an information source for both natural and technological hazards.

When prompted, around two-thirds of respondents claimed to know that GWRC was involved in hazard management and information provision.

However, with the respondents that had an interest in hazards, GWRC ranked third behind local councils (overwhelming first choice) and libraries (narrowly ahead of GWRC) as a source of information.

Despite the low level of respondents being aware of GWRC's role in hazards research, those that had used our information (one fifth of respondents) regarded the information extremely highly.

5.1.2 Knowledge of hazards

Significantly more people had some knowledge of natural hazards (54%) compared with technological hazards (36%).

Kapiti residents had the highest declared knowledge of natural and technological hazards, while Lower Hutt residents had the lowest knowledge levels for both hazard categories.

Earthquakes were regarded as the most significant natural hazard in the Region, in particular by Wellington residents (75% compared with 64% overall).

Understandably, both Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt residents had higher concerns about flooding (45% and 49% respectively compared with 32% overall).

5.1.3 Preparedness

Respondents felt that earthquakes were the hazard that most warranted being prepared for. However, while people were prepared to find out more about the risks, they were not so willing to undertake the physical planning needed to cope with a major event. Storing emergency water, maintaining a survival kit and having an emergency plan in place ranked 3rd, 5th and 7th of the eight preparedness categories surveyed.

For these preparedness activities, those under 30 years of age and people in flatting situations were less inclined to take action (for example, water storage for flatters was 36% compared with 67% overall).

5.1.4 Recommendations of the study

- Ensure hazard information is available at local councils and libraries and inform residents where hazard information is available.
- Consider the use of direct mail, articles in local and community newspapers and local radio to communicate hazard information to the public.
- Continue to provide information on the website and take opportunities to promote the web address on all promotional and information material.
- Build on the high satisfaction with current hazard information and promote its availability more widely.
- Consider additional promotions highlighting the need for hazard preparedness amongst those under 30 and people living in flatting situations.

5.2 Focus Groups

These will take place in late June.