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**Committee**       **Environment**  
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## Community Survey into Emergency Preparedness

### 1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the outcome of the community preparedness survey that was carried out in May 2004.

### 2. Background

One of the targets under 'Safety and Hazards' of the Council's Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP), is "70% of organisations and households have an emergency plan and survival supplies by the year 2013".

Peter Glen Research was commissioned to carry out a baseline survey to determine the current levels of preparedness in the Region. A telephone survey was undertaken using a randomly selected sample of 500 residents (16 years and older) of the greater Wellington region.

The following seven questions were asked:

1. What do you think are the *major* hazards that may affect your region? Are there any other 'major hazards' that may affect your region?
2. How well informed do you think you are about the major hazards that could affect your region?
3. How well prepared do you think your household is for a major civil defence emergency?
4. Does your household currently have any of the following items that are specifically intended for use in a major emergency...?
5. In your opinion, for approximately what period of time could your household remain self-sufficient in a major civil defence emergency, by using your emergency supplies?

6. Thinking about a major civil defence emergency, who do you think is mainly responsible for you in the initial stages of the emergency? Anyone else?
7. If you had to get help after a major civil defence emergency, who would you approach? Anyone else?

### **3. Findings**

#### **3.1 Awareness of major hazards**

Respondents were able to recall, on average, 2.6 major hazards that may affect their region. Earthquakes and floods (87% and 76% respectively) were clearly the major hazards most top-of-mind, but a wide range of other potential hazards (slip, fire, tsunami, storm, terrorism, power blackout) were also identified.

#### **3.2 Extent to which respondents consider themselves informed**

Sixty-nine percent of residents in the greater Wellington area consider themselves 'very' or 'quite' well informed about the major hazards that could affect their region. Younger residents, in the 16 to 29 years age group, generally considered themselves less well informed than older residents.

#### **3.3 Level of preparedness for a major civil defence emergency**

Fifty-six percent of residents described their level of preparedness for a major emergency as 'good' or better. Again, the result varied by age group, for example: 66% of the 50+ years group gauged themselves as 'good' or better. Women (60%) also considered themselves a little more prepared than men (52%).

#### **3.4 Items that households currently have for use in an emergency**

Over 60% of respondents claimed that they had supplies that are specifically intended for use in a major emergency. These supplies include: emergency food (61%), emergency water (68%), other emergency supplies and equipment (e.g. torch, batteries, radio, emergency cooker, first aid, medicines, clothing) (69%) and an emergency plan (31%).

Again, women and the older age groups appear to be more prepared, with a greater percentage of these groups having an emergency plan for their household.

Sixty-eight percent of respondents claimed to have emergency water stored. Approximately half the households included in the survey had up to 20 litres of water for use in an emergency. Only 29% had more than the recommended minimum amount stored.

### 3.5 Period of time that households estimate they could remain self-sufficient

The estimates varied widely, as summarised below:

- 1 day or less (9%)
- 2 days (9%)
- 3 days (19%)
- 4-6 days (20%)
- 7 days (21%) - and more than a week (22%).

It is significant to note that 82% regard themselves as self-sufficient for three days or longer.

### 3.6 Perception of responsibilities

The majority of residents (76%) consider that they would need to be responsible for themselves in the initial stage of a major civil defence emergency. However, many respondents also named other organisations that would be responsible. The main organisations were Civil Defence (53%), Emergency Services (31%) and Local Councils (41%).

## 4. Conclusion

Peter Glen concluded his report as follows:

*“The results have shown that residents in the greater Wellington area recognise a number of potential hazards that could lead to a major Civil Defence emergency. Earthquakes and floods were most frequently recalled, although slips, fires, tidal waves and major storms were also mentioned by many people.*

*69% of residents consider themselves to be well informed about the potential hazards, but only 56% consider their level of preparedness as ‘good’ or better.*

*Approximately two-thirds of all householders claim to have food, water and other supplies specifically for use in a major emergency. However, only 31% of residents consider they have an emergency plan”.*

The report highlights that just over half of the residents in the Wellington Region are well prepared for looking after themselves in a major emergency event. However, the following are areas of concern:

- Inadequate quantity of emergency water stored
- Low number of households with emergency plans

Greater Wellington will use the information from the survey to plan further education and to benchmark for future surveys to see if behaviour changes.

## **5. Communications**

The 'Community Survey into Emergency Preparedness' report was made available to all the territorial authorities in the Region.

A news release was prepared and made available to the media on 20 July 2004. Numerous enquiries followed the media releases.

## **6. Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Committee:*

- 1. receives the report; and*
- 2. notes the contents.*

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