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Committee **CDEM Group**
Author **Dr Jane Bradbury, Group Recovery Manager**

Recovery Managers' Forum

1. Purpose

To report back to the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (CDEM Group) on a Recovery Managers' workshop that was recently held in Wellington.

2. Background

The Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management organised a workshop for all Recovery Managers on 4-6 October 2005. This was attended by several Recovery Managers (or their representatives) from the Wellington Region, namely from Kapiti Coast District Council, Porirua City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Hutt City Council, South Wairarapa District Council and Greater Wellington.

The Workshop comprised a mixture of presentations and exercises, making it a mix of theory and practice.

Recovery has historically been the neglected "R" of the four "Rs" – reduction, readiness, response and recovery – of emergency management. It was very useful, therefore, to devote some time to the issue of recovery and to hear the experiences of those who have had on-the-ground experience of recovery after a major emergency event. The recovery process from the recent flooding event in Matata was particularly interesting.

3. Lessons learned

The Workshop was a salutary reminder to our Recovery Managers about the situation they could well be facing. The lessons learned were probably different for every attendee. These are the lessons that have stayed firmly in my mind (in no particular order):

- The Recovery Manager position is just as important as the Controller. Controllers may only be in place for a few days whereas Recovery Managers can stay for weeks, months or years.

- Recovery starts with response. The Recovery Manager needs to work alongside the Controller right from the very beginning.
- There needs to be a robust recovery structure in place, including such groups as welfare, rural, economic etc. These should be ready to go should the need arise.
- Recovery is all about priority setting and is both short-term and long-term.
- Recovery has social, economic, environmental implications – we have to recognise them all.
- The reporting requirements to central government are critically important as up to date, accurate information is needed if government resources are to be released. There is the possibility of a recovery facilitator or co-ordinator being appointed by central government to assist in the general recovery, but particularly in reporting
- Financial management is critical – recording expenditure and who did what and why.
- Someone from the Ministry of Civil Defence Emergency should be there to help!
- There is always intense media interest which needs to be handled well. It is not always constructive interest.
- The key task at the beginning is to establish and resource the recovery organisation, develop plans and establish or (hopefully) re-establish relationships and develop the reporting framework.
- The community needs information – immediate and on-going.
- The community needs to see some signs of progress.
- Visits by politicians are time-consuming but necessary – as they result in promises and resources.
- The Recovery Manager’s job is 7 days a week for a long period. It is hard to revert to a normal life
- Recovery Managers will not be able to carry out their normal job for a long period of time.
- Expectations are high – from everyone. Nearly everyone you are dealing with is stressed.
- The end is when solutions are agreed upon and the recovery work is being handled by agencies as “business as usual” – and when funding is secure

- Recovery will almost always mean change. Things are not going back to how they were. People and landscapes have changed. We need to think now what we would change. It's no good re-creating the mistakes of the past. Recovery can create opportunities for improvement.

4. Wellington CDEM Group

The Wellington CDEM Group Plan names both Group and Local Controllers and Recovery Managers. In the work programme, the Plan specifies the preparation of a Group Recovery Plan in 2006-07. This was brought forward from the proposed Plan as a result of the Ministry of CDEM's submission. The Ministry considered recovery planning to be one of the most important aspects of emergency management.

Consequently, staff will be thinking about the Group Recovery Plan very soon. They are currently working on the Group Welfare Management Plan which could possibly form part of the Group Recovery Plan.

5. Conclusion

There is still so much work to be done with emergency management in the Region. But, recovery is particularly important. Next year we need to ensure that we have a robust Recovery Plan in place. We need to think, this year, about how we are going to make that happen

6. Recommendation

That the CDEM Group:

1. *receive the report; and*
2. *note the contents.*

Report prepared by:

Dr Jane Bradbury
Group Recovery Manager