

Report 07.624  
Date 13 September 2007  
File Z/1/4/19

Committee Co-ordinating Executive Group (CEG)  
Author Jessica Hare, Greater Wellington

## **2007 Community preparedness survey results**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Co-ordinating Executive Group (CEG) of the results of the recently commissioned Community Survey into Emergency Preparedness.

### **2. Background**

The CDEM Group recognises the importance of gathering information to help gauge progress towards community awareness and preparedness for emergencies.

Since 2004 the Wellington Region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group has commissioned Peter Glen Research to undertake an annual telephone survey (in May) among a random cross-section of residents aged 16 years and over. The purpose of the survey has been to gather information that helps quantify the region's level of preparedness for a major civil defence emergency.

The primary research objectives for this research are:

- To gather information to help quantify progress towards the objectives of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan and target contained in some councils' Long-Term Council Community Plans.
- To obtain an updated measurement of public awareness, attitudes and behaviour relating to their preparedness for a major emergency, against the benchmark results obtained over the last three years.

The research was undertaken among a randomly selected sample of n=1100<sup>1</sup> residents aged 16 years or older who live in the Wellington region. This sample size also enables results to be analysed with a degree of confidence at sub-region level.

### 3. Survey Results

Overall the Wellington region is moving in the right direction and several years of public education programmes to promote awareness and preparedness behaviours have produced very positive results.

Most of the residents are aware of the hazards the region is vulnerable to. They have quite accurate perceptions when comparing the potential risk of one hazard compared to another, with the rankings from residents matching the risk assessment that has been reported in the Wellington Region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan.

Apathy still remains a barrier for those that have not prepared. Those who are easy converted to adopting preparedness behaviours are likely to have already done so, and therefore the more difficult conversions remain. It is important to consider this, and attempt to address the reasons for apathy in future public education strategies.

### 4. Future needs

The survey shows that many residents are apathetic about preparing for a disaster. They do not feel that the risks posed by hazards are specific to them. Therefore, our public information needs to address the potential impacts or consequences for each hazard – and make them real for people. For relatively frequent hazards, e.g. flooding, it is important for us to include information about magnitude and frequency of the events to impress upon people that these hazard events have a high probability of happening in their lifetimes.

The survey also showed that some residents were fatalistic and thought that any preparedness was futile. Therefore, it is essential that we help residents to feel empowered to take action and convince them that they do have a degree of control over the impact of an event on themselves and their family.

The household emergency plan still needs to be promoted as the survey showed that people still did not know that they needed a plan or, had not got round to developing a plan for themselves. Therefore, we need to reiterate the message that events can happen at anytime – and people need to plan for any eventuality.

### 5. Full survey results

A summary of the survey results are attached as **Attachment 1**. The full survey report may be obtained from the Wellington Region CDEM Group Office. Please contact Jessica Hare or Rian van Schalkwyk on 04 384 5708.

---

<sup>1</sup> In 2004 and 2005 the number of resident interviewed was n=500. The sample size was expanded in 2006 and 2007 to allow for analysis by territorial authority.

## **6. Recommendations**

*That CEG:*

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

Report prepared by:

Jessica Hare  
Greater Wellington

**Attachment 1: Full Survey Results**