

Report 17.90
Date 13 March 2017
File Z/01/04/19

Committee Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (Joint Committee)
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Lifelines update

1. Purpose

To update the Joint Committee on the activities of the Wellington Lifelines Group (WeLG).

2. Context

The CDEM Act expects lifeline utilities to operate to the maximum extent possible following a natural disaster.

In Wellington lifeline utilities provide a high level of service to customers day to day. However, due to our location and geology we are vulnerable to natural events and the services of lifelines will be severely curtailed following a large region wide event.

It is the role of WeLG to identify region wide vulnerabilities, the interventions that will improve the situation and interdependencies between lifelines.

3. Long term approach

WeLG has promoted and received approval from its members and Central Government to complete a regional resilience strategy for lifeline utilities. The strategy involved assessing damage scenarios, looking at interventions and then determining the optimal combination of interventions to ensure the economic return of the metropolitan areas of Wellington. This is a risk reduction investigation. That is, determining what activities should be built prior to an event to limit the impact of an event on lifeline utilities.

The Regional Resilience Strategy is a 2017 project and has been underway for 3 months. The project is funded by central government, local government and lifeline utility members themselves.

4. Short term approach

Following the 14 November 2016 Kaikoura earthquake, the focus of immediate attention was on short term measures around humanitarian benefits.

Central government facilitated a conversation across lifeline utilities to compile a series of lists which might attract immediate central government funding. This has now morphed into a number of budget bids across lifeline utilities. We are aware of bids in transport, water and energy but visibility over the total list is not possible as it is being considered within central government.

Should funding be received, lifeline utilities will then work to ensure any interdependencies are maximised during implementation.

5. Our Customers

Lifeline utilities businesses are about providing services to customers and most emergency services are customers of lifeline utilities. We are working hard to ensure there is open dialogue between lifeline utilities and customers generally.

If a large natural event were to occur tomorrow, then there would be a significant service gap between household resilience and the return of normal service. While mitigated to a degree by the short-term measures listed above, most of the gap will be filled by operational response activities. All lifeline utilities are reviewing their readiness and looking for interdependencies.

A great example of this is the recent offer of the fire service to share yard space for the storage of essential equipment. Fire Service depots are well spread across the region and common stockpiling allows lifelines utilities to ensure they don't duplicate resources.

6. Conclusion

Nevertheless, the most important work that WeLG is undertaking at present is the longer-term regional resilience project. This is being undertaken in partnership with GNS and utilises software models that have been utilised following the Christchurch and Kaikoura events but never been used predictively on the scale we are using them in Wellington. This is ground-breaking work aimed at providing a cache of information that will enable utilities to develop aligned investment business cases that will contribute to the long-term economic viability of Wellington and reduce economic risk to New Zealand.

7. Communication

No further communication is required.

8. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this update.

9. Engagement

Due to its procedural nature, no engagement on this matter has been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

That the CDEM Group:

- 1. **Receives the update.***
- 2. **Notes the content of the update.***

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