Community Resilience in the Face of Natural Hazards and Climate Change

Portfolios: Local Government / Civil Defence / Climate Change

On 5 December 2018, the Cabinet Economic Development Committee (DEV):

1. noted that exposure to natural hazards is increasing due to growth in population, property and infrastructure, and that risks to life and assets will also be exacerbated by climate change;

2. noted that:
   2.1 in the absence of an agreed framework, there is no consistent approach to cases where natural hazards cannot be adequately managed by property owners and local authorities;
   2.2 as a result, central government intervention has been sought to address natural hazards at Kaikōura, Awatarariki (Matatā) and Franz Josef;

3. noted that at the May 2018 Local and Central Government Forum, it was agreed that the government would jointly progress work with Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) on community resilience and options to reduce risk to lives and assets, and costs from natural hazard events, including a response to LGNZ’s Local Government Risk Agency proposal;

4. noted that the Department of Internal Affairs is leading a Community Resilience group, comprising the Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, the Treasury, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Land Information New Zealand, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Earthquake Commission and LGNZ, to develop a policy framework and broad options to:
   4.1 manage existing high risk natural hazard areas between central and local government;
   4.2 reduce risk to life and built infrastructure vulnerabilities caused by natural hazards;
   4.3 reduce the impact and exposure to events, including those exacerbated by climate change;
agreed that the work programme will focus on how communities can best be supported to manage risks from natural hazards and adapt to climate change, through agency coordination and development of policy in the following areas:

5.1 information to better support decision making;
5.2 enhanced use of risk assessment;
5.3 alignment and adequacy of regulatory frameworks;
5.4 facilitating adaptive responses by communities;
5.5 insurance markets and risk financing;

noted that:

6.1 this proposed work programme will also progress six recommendations made by the Climate Change Adaptation Technical Working Group;
6.2 the New Zealand Productivity Commission Inquiry into Local Government funding and financing is considering the costs of climate change on local authorities;

noted that the Ministers of the Environment, Local Government, Climate Change, Civil Defence, Finance, Building and Construction, Land Information, Housing and Urban Development, and the Minister Responsible for the Earthquake Commission each have interests in the management of natural hazards and climate change;

agreed that the Minister of Local Government, the Minister of Civil Defence and the Minister for Climate Change convene the Ministers referred to in paragraph 7 above to coordinate and drive the community resilience work and prepare for a discussion with local government at the next Local and Central Government Forum, along with anticipated next steps;

invited the Minister of Local Government, the Minister of Civil Defence and the Minister of Climate Change to report back to DEV by the end of April 2019 with a suggested narrative and broad set of options for discussion with local government at the next Local and Central Government Forum, along with anticipated next steps.

Janine Harvey
Committee Secretary

Hard-copy distribution: (see over)
Present:
Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon Phil Twyford
Hon Dr Megan Woods (Chair)
Hon Andrew Little
Hon David Parker
Hon Iain Lees-Galloway
Hon Jenny Salesa
Hon Damien O’Connor
Hon Shane Jones
Hon Willie Jackson
Hon James Shaw
Hon Julie Anne Genter
Hon Eugenie Sage
Fletcher Tabuteau MP

Officials present from:
Office of the Prime Minister
Officials Committee for DEV

Hard-copy distribution:
Minister of Local Government
Minister of Civil Defence
Minister for Climate Change