

# Briefing for the Minister of Civil Defence

Resilient New Zealand

## Contents

3	Foreword
5	Sector Overview
6	Strategic and Legislative Framework
7	Minister’s Role
9	The ministry’s Role
10	Key Issues and Themes for the next Three Years
12	Key Stakeholders



# Vote: Emergency Management

---

## Foreword

New Zealand is a hazardous place to live. Its landforms have been moulded by the combined effects of earthquakes, floods and volcanoes.

Sitting within these landforms are settlements, infrastructures and land uses to support the cities and communities we live in. Inevitably these arrangements result in vulnerabilities to hazards – whether natural or man made – which can result in disasters. Regular flooding and periodic events of regional or national significance are a fact of life for New Zealand.

The focus of the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management over the next three years will be on implementing a new civil defence emergency management environment for the management of hazards and disasters. A key element of this will be the enactment of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Bill currently awaiting passage through Parliament.

Over the past 13 years, a series of reviews have been undertaken into the civil defence arrangements in New Zealand. All have concluded these arrangements are inadequate in their ability to co-ordinate resources in a major event.

Following the major economic reforms of the 1980s the capacity of central and local government agencies to commit resources in responding to disasters was severely compromised and a different basis for co-ordinating these events was called for.

In July 1999 the Ministry was formed to define and implement arrangements to explicitly address hazards and vulnerabilities in our communities and to prepare for and manage the impacts of disasters.

The arrangements provide for the integration of local authorities and response agencies into regional groups for emergency management planning purposes, and require key agencies and utility organisations to be capable during and after events.

Implementation is dependent on enactment of the Bill. There is a high degree of support for the new environment but most agencies are waiting for the legislation before putting improved arrangements in place. The significant risk this represents should be considered when decisions are made on the priority to be given to the new legislation.

The Ministry is a semi-autonomous body formed in July 1999 within the Department of Internal Affairs. The Secretary of Civil Defence (who is the Secretary of Internal Affairs) is responsible for the administration of the Civil Defence Act 1983 and is the employer of the Director of Civil Defence who heads the Ministry.

Under the current Act, the Director is responsible for advising the Minister on operational matters relating to civil defence, and is accountable through the Secretary to the Minister for all policy matters. The Secretary is ultimately accountable for the Ministry under the Public Finance Act 1989 and State Sector Act 1988.

This briefing is designed to give an overview of the civil defence emergency management sector and the services and activities of the Ministry.



John Norton  
Director of Civil Defence  
Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management



Christopher Blake  
Chief Executive  
Department of Internal Affairs  
Secretary of Civil Defence

# 1. Sector Overview: Emergency Management

A primary responsibility of the government is ensuring the security, safety and welfare of New Zealand citizens and communities. The challenge facing the civil defence emergency management sector is to establish the framework, structures and mechanisms that will ensure New Zealand communities are resilient and can effectively manage and reduce their social and economic risks in the New Zealand hazardscape.

To enable the government's interests to be fulfilled, civil defence emergency management involves co-ordination and integration within and between sectors, implementation of strategic approaches to reduce hazards and risks, and appropriate legislation. The Ministry is co-ordinating this approach to ensure that New Zealand's civil defence emergency management obligations are effectively managed.

New Zealand's developed economy and highly dynamic physical environment are subject to a wide variety of hazards. The natural hazard that most often leads to a community-wide emergency is flooding with annual costs in the region of \$15 million; potentially the most dangerous is earthquake; and the most under-rated is volcanic eruption. Other significant natural hazards include snow, wind, landslide, coastal erosion, storm and tsunami.

The last major disaster in New Zealand was the 1931 Napier earthquake. However, the scientific evidence in New Zealand's main hazard areas points to a more compelling risk than has previously been understood. Indicative events that could result in a national emergency include a major earthquake on the Alpine Fault, a major volcanic eruption and a major earthquake impacting on Wellington. The approximate probabilities of these events occurring are: A major Wellington earthquake – 10% chance in the next 50 years, a major earthquake along the Alpine Fault – 70% chance in the next 20 years, a major volcanic eruption affecting Auckland – 10% chance in the next 50 years. The impacts of these events would be significant, for example a major Wellington earthquake could result in up to 530 fatalities and property damage of up to \$7 billion.

It is characteristic that emergency and disaster planning in the past has not occupied a high place in the priorities of many decision makers. Plans have lacked explicitness and the expectation has existed that others would assume responsibility in the event of major emergencies. There has been a view of disasters as "acts of God" which cannot be mitigated.

The Ministry is tasked with changing this paradigm and has made significant progress over the past three years. The draft legislation has been prepared and sets the platform for reducing risk over time and for significantly increasing the effectiveness of disaster planning, co-ordination and management in New Zealand.

## 2. Strategic and Legislative Framework: Emergency Management

The Civil Defence Act 1983 is currently the key statute for implementing civil defence emergency management in New Zealand. However, a new civil defence emergency management framework is contained in the Civil Defence Emergency Management Bill. The Bill seeks to reduce the potential impacts of disasters, improve the co-ordination of day-to-day handling of local emergencies and incidents, and enhance our ability to cope with a major emergency.

The Bill is intended to give legislative effect to the new civil defence emergency management principles through reducing community disruption and economic costs of hazards and risks, and achieving greater effectiveness and efficiency through the integration of relevant disciplines. The following key principles are reflected in the Bill:

- improve and promote the sustainable management of hazards in a way that contributes to the social, economic, cultural, and environmental well-being and safety of the public and the protection of property
- encourage and enable communities to achieve acceptable levels of risk by: identifying, assessing, and managing risks; consulting and communicating about risks; identifying and implementing cost-effective risk reduction; and monitoring and reviewing the process
- provide for planning and preparation for emergencies, and for response and recovery in the event of an emergency
- require local authorities to co-ordinate, through regional groups, planning, programmes, and activities related to civil defence emergency management across the areas of reduction, readiness, response, and recovery, and encourage co-operation and joint action within those regional groups
- provide a basis for the integration of national and local civil defence emergency management planning and activity through the alignment of local planning with a national strategy and national plan
- encourage the co-ordination of emergency management, planning, and activities related to civil defence emergency management across the wide range of agencies and organisations preventing or managing emergencies in New Zealand.

### 3. Minister's Role: Emergency Management

Under the Civil Defence Act 1983, your most important powers are:

- the declaration of a state of national civil defence emergency over all or part of the country (s.50). A national emergency is likely to be declared if the measures necessary to manage the emergency are substantially beyond the resources of local authorities. This power has not been used to date. For smaller events, local authorities are able to make regional and local emergency declarations
- the Minister's general power of direction (s.73). The Minister may direct local authorities or persons defined under the Act to perform or cease any function defined in the Act, if a state of civil defence emergency is in force, or if the Minister considers an imminent threat requiring an emergency declaration exists. This power has not been used to date.

The Act further empowers you to:

- recommend to the Governor-General regulations for such matters as are necessary to secure public safety and safeguard the interests of the public during a civil defence emergency (s.79)
- appoint a Disaster Recovery Co-ordinator to co-ordinate central government recovery efforts in a disaster area during and after a state of civil defence emergency (s.69)
- appoint members of the National Civil Defence Committee (s.19). The Committee is responsible to the Minister for the planning and preparations needed to maintain effective civil defence
- appoint planning committees on the recommendation of the National Civil Defence Committee and appoint chairpersons to those committees (s.21)
- approve all National Civil Defence Plans (s.22) – on recommendation from the National Civil Defence Committee
- adjudicate and rule in any dispute between a Civil Defence Commissioner and a regional council over any amendment or approval of a regional civil defence plan (s.24). This power has not been used to date
- adjudicate and rule in any dispute between a regional council and a territorial authority over any amendment or approval of a local civil defence plan (s.35). This power has not been used to date.

Once a civil defence emergency has been declared at a local, regional or national level, you:

- sit on the Domestic and External Security Committee meetings, provide briefings to Cabinet and Parliament, and act as the government's representative in the disaster area
- approve levels of emergency response expenditure reimbursement to local authorities.

## Domestic and External Security Co-ordination

The Domestic and External Security Co-ordination System (DESC) and related officials' committees have a civil defence emergency management role in relation to government oversight and co-ordination of the "whole-of-government" interest for national level emergencies and for other post-emergency co-ordination.

DESC Ministers include the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers with responsibility for police, defence, fire service and civil defence. Ministers with other responsibilities (e.g. biosecurity, health, foreign affairs, fisheries) may also join the committee if the issue of concern warrants it. These arrangements have, post the events of September 11 2001, been adopted as the model for handling all major national crises and circumstances affecting national security.

## Officials Domestic External Security Co-ordination (emergency)

ODESC(e) is the officials' committee that provides advice to DESC Ministers in the event of a national emergency. Chaired by the Chief Executive of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, ODESC(e) is responsible for:

- overseeing arrangements for crisis management associated with a national level emergency in New Zealand
- co-ordination of government departments in addressing whole-of-government interests in emergency response and recovery.

## 4. The Ministry's Role: Emergency Management

The Ministry's functions include:

- providing overarching civil defence emergency management policy advice, overseeing and co-ordinating purchase and audit functions
- ensuring the establishment of structures throughout New Zealand to give effect to the goals and objectives of the government
- managing central government response and recovery functions for large scale events that are beyond the capacity of local authorities
- liaising with the civil defence emergency management sector.

The Ministry covers these roles through three key business units:

- Policy – providing policy advice to the Minister – Manager: Peter Davey
- Capability – supports the sector in building capability – Manager: Lynda Angus
- Readiness – managing the National Plan and National Emergency Operations Centre – Manager: Mike O'Leary.

Specific roles of the Ministry include:

### Response and Recovery

The Ministry has responsibility for the management of emergency response and recovery assistance. In general, this applies to large-scale events that are beyond the capacity of local authorities or special policy cases. In undertaking the recovery function, the Ministry aims to ensure that future risk to the government and communities affected is reduced through provision for the most appropriate long-term solution.

### National Emergency Operations Centre

The Ministry operates the National Emergency Operations Centre, in the Beehive basement, which is the government's command centre in the event of a major emergency or security threat. The NEOC is used to collect, collate and disseminate information, and to co-ordinate government support in a national emergency event. These arrangements are being reviewed as part of the development of the National Crisis Management Centre.

### Professional Development

The Ministry has introduced a Professional Development Strategy to meet the professional development needs of the sector. The strategy is aimed at identifying and standardising common sets of competencies, and co-ordinating and aligning education/training programme development and delivery.



## International Liaison

Strong links have been established with Australia, the Pacific Islands and the United States.

- the Ministry has a Memorandum of Understanding with Emergency Management Australia (EMA) that seeks to ensure that emergency management plans, systems, services and policy developments are compatible and mutually supportive. The aim is to assist either country in an emergency beyond the capabilities of that country's resources
- the Ministry is an observer on the Australian National Emergency Management Committee and aims to become more actively involved
- the Ministry has committed to assisting the South Pacific Geoscience Commission and its Disaster Management Unit, which acts as the regional disaster management co-ordination centre for 15 Pacific Island countries
- the Ministry is actively involved with the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, an informal network of disaster response organisations that focus specifically on Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)
- New Zealand supports the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination team, a stand-by team of disaster management professionals. This is a joint initiative with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

## 5. Key Issues And Themes for the Next Three Years: Emergency Management

### The Civil Defence Emergency Management Bill

There are risks associated with the existing civil defence legislative framework that cannot be resolved by administrative means. The prompt enactment of this legislation is necessary to ensure that New Zealand's capability to deal with a major disaster is not diminished further.

The Bill will repeal and replace the Civil Defence Act 1983. It is fundamental to the success of civil defence emergency management reforms. It creates a robust and effective civil defence emergency management environment by supporting and encouraging co-ordinated and integrated civil defence emergency management throughout New Zealand.

In December 2000, the Bill was introduced to the House and referred to the Government Administration Select Committee for consideration. The Committee reported back to the House in June 2001. The Bill was awaiting a second reading when the last Parliament ended.

### National Civil Defence Emergency Management Strategy

Under the proposed new legislation, the Minister would produce a National Civil Defence Emergency Management Strategy to provide strategic direction for civil defence emergency management. This area is a key priority for the Ministry and progress is well advanced. It is expected that the Ministry will be in a position to recommend to the Minister the release of a draft strategy for public consultation as soon as the Civil Defence Emergency Management Bill is enacted.

## National Crisis Management Centre

In response to the events of September 11 2001, generic arrangements for the management of all major crises and circumstances affecting national security have been established based on the Domestic and External Security Co-ordination (DESC) model.

A National Crisis Management Centre is being established in the Beehive sub-basement. Representatives from NZ Police, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Health and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, are now focusing on the immediate need to upgrade communications and information management systems. The Ministry is co-ordinating this. A report to Cabinet is expected later this year.

## Government Purchase of Civil Defence Emergency Management Capability

There is an opportunity to ensure better efficiencies and alignment in government purchase of emergency services and to ensure sustainable funding levels for delivery of civil defence emergency management. The government's civil defence emergency management capability is delivered through a number of mechanisms in addition to Vote: Emergency Management. For example, weather and hazard warning information, fire service policy and delivery, and defence and police force resources for civil emergencies are all delivered through a variety of other purchase arrangements.

## Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

The Ministry is building New Zealand's USAR capability. USAR focuses on locating and rescuing people trapped following a major structural collapse. A multi-agency steering committee was established in 2000 to co-ordinate the USAR project. Its membership includes the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, NZ Fire Service, NZ Police, NZ Ambulance Board, and Local Government New Zealand. Its primary goals are to establish and equip three specialist USAR teams based on the NZ Fire service and develop strong general rescue capability through the regional CDEM groupings.

## 6. Key Stakeholders: Emergency Management

The two core components of New Zealand's civil defence emergency management sector are central government and local authorities. In addition, there are two other groups of stakeholders that play a vital role in effective emergency management; the emergency services and lifeline utilities.

- Central Government – There are three groupings of central government agencies which relate to the CDEM sector. These are: the response agencies including those in health, welfare, border control and transport; the core central government agencies with a role in “whole of government” issues; and other government agencies as providers of services.
- Local Authorities - regional, city and district councils - play an important role in delivering emergency management services at the community level. Under the Civil Defence Act 1983, local authorities have specific emergency planning responsibilities and access to extraordinary powers during a declared emergency. In addition, many other local authority activities and responsibilities contribute to civil defence emergency management outcomes. These include matters such as resource management, enforcement of the New Zealand Building Code and public health legislation, river management and management of lifeline utility systems (e.g., roading, water supplies, sewage and waste disposal).
- Emergency Services - including Police, Fire Service, Rural Fire Authorities and ambulance services. Their primary role is in the response and recovery phases of an event. However, they are increasingly getting involved with civil defence emergency management planning, particularly at the local authority level.
- Lifeline Utilities - Lifeline utilities can be defined as essential services such as electricity, gas, water, transport and telecommunications. The economic viability of communities and of the nation as a whole, depends upon the continued operation of lifeline utilities. The Ministry is a key player in the National Lifelines Co-ordination project, which is designed to provide sustainable management of utilities in disasters. At the local level, local authorities are also actively fostering links with key utilities to ensure that their emergency management planning is integrated.