

# **Briefing for Incoming Minister**

## **Civil Defence**

November 2008

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS



Te Tari Taiwhenua

## **Leadership in Civil Defence**

1. The Department of Internal Affairs provides leadership in civil defence and emergency management through:
  - the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (MCDEM); and
  - the Civil Defence and Emergency Management Policy team in the Regulation and Compliance branch and the communication team in the Business Services Branch.
  
2. The leadership role includes:
  - oversight of the Civil Defence and Emergency Management (CDEM) Act 2002
  - formulation of the National CDEM Strategy
  - strengthening of civil defence and emergency management planning and procedures
  - increasing public awareness and preparedness through the public education programme
  - development of standards and a framework for CDEM training
  - international engagement on CDEM issues
  - management of response and recovery activities at a national level following emergency events.

## **Overview – New Zealand’s Hazardscape**

3. The Civil Defence portfolio is concerned with the management of hazards and their risks to New Zealand communities by providing leadership, guidance and support to the range of agencies involved in the Civil Defence Emergency Management sector.
  
4. New Zealand faces a number of varying natural (meteorological, geological and biological) and man-made (technological and social) hazards. The National Hazardscape report released in September 2007 summarised the seventeen most significant hazards facing New Zealand communities, including their distribution, frequency, possible impacts and how they could be managed

5. New Zealand has experienced a range of events over recent years with the most significant event in the last two decades being the 2004 flooding in the lower North Island. However, New Zealand has not recently experienced a low probability but high consequence event that would lead to significant loss of life and/or property.
6. Modelling based on current understanding of key hazards has assigned to various major events the following estimated probabilities:
  - a 15 per cent chance of a major earthquake affecting Wellington in the next fifty years
  - a 20 per cent chance of a major earthquake on the South Island Alpine Fault in the next twenty years
  - a 30 to 50 per cent chance of an ash-producing eruption from Taranaki in the next fifty years
  - an estimated four per cent chance of a volcanic eruption in Auckland in the next fifty years, although considerable uncertainty surrounds this figure. There is also an estimated additional 3 per cent chance that Auckland may be affected by ash-fall from a major eruption in the central North Island.

#### *Volcanic eruptions*

7. Our understanding of the probabilities of these events and their possible effects is constantly being developed. Volcanic eruption is the most under-estimated threat with economic modelling as part of the recent Exercise Ruauumoko, indicating that an eruption in Auckland could trigger as much as a 14 per cent decline in GDP for New Zealand.

#### *Major earthquakes*

8. One of the most significant hazard scenarios is a major earthquake. EQC estimates that a movement on the Wellington fault would lead to residential property claims of around \$6.2 billion. Estimates place casualties at around 3000-4000, including between 200 and 600 deaths. Awareness of the risk surrounding a South Island Alpine earthquake has increased significantly in recent years.

## *Tsunami*

9. The understanding and focus on the threat posed by tsunami has also expanded greatly in recent years. GNS Science modelling indicates that the possible loss of life from a one in 500-year tsunami is at least of a similar scale to other major events.

## **The Civil Defence Portfolio**

### ***Your role as Minister***

10. As Minister of Civil Defence, your responsibilities are to support the sector in its planning for, response to and recovery from CDEM events. The resources of MCDEM and the other units of the Department of Internal Affairs committed to civil defence emergency management (CDEM Policy and Communications) will support you.
11. Enhancing New Zealand's resilience requires the coordination of effort across the wide range of agencies involved in CDEM. As Minister, you will provide leadership to the key stakeholders in the CDEM sector, including:
  - central government agencies
  - local government
  - welfare agencies
  - lifeline utilities
  - emergency services
  - science and education providers
  - non-government organisations.
12. During and after emergency events your role includes briefing Cabinet about the event and recommending financial assistance, if appropriate, for response and recovery activities.
13. There are no Crown entities or other statutory bodies associated with this portfolio.

***Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002***

14. The structure and arrangements for civil defence emergency management were established in the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (CDEM Act).

The purpose of the Act is to:

- improve and promote the sustainable management of hazards
- encourage and enable communities to achieve acceptable levels of risk
- provide for planning and preparation for civil defence emergencies and for response and recovery in the event of an emergency
- require local authorities to coordinate the areas of reduction, readiness, response and recovery
- provide a basis for the integration of national and local civil defence emergency management planning
- encourage the coordination of civil defence emergency management, planning and activities across the wide range of agencies and organisations preventing or managing emergencies.

15. The CDEM Act provides for:

- a National CDEM Strategy approved by Parliament
- a National CDEM Plan, established by regulation
- CDEM plans prepared by CDEM Groups (a CDEM Group is a consortium made up of the regional council and all territorial authorities within a region)
- guidelines released by the Director Civil Defence Emergency Management.

16. The key statutory powers and duties you have as Minister of Civil Defence are to:

- ensure that a current National CDEM strategy is in effect at all times
- ensure that a National CDEM Plan continues to be in effect at all times
- comment formally on CDEM Group Plans before they are approved and adopted by the group
- declare a state of national emergency or a state of local emergency in particular circumstances, thus giving access to a range of special powers

- direct the Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management, CDEM Groups or any other person to act according to their statutory function.

### ***National CDEM Strategy***

17. A National CDEM Strategy came into force early in 2008. It includes the Crown's vision that New Zealanders understand and act routinely to reduce and avoid the adverse affects of hazards. This vision is encapsulated as "Resilient New Zealand – communities understanding and managing their hazards".

### ***National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan***

18. The first National CDEM Plan under the CDEM Act came into effect on 1 July 2006. The plan sets out how government will manage a national emergency and how it will support CDEM Groups in their management of local emergencies. It addresses significant emergencies that exceed the capacity and resources of local and regional communities and agencies to manage. The plan is a statement of the principles, arrangements and commitments that apply to the management of significant emergencies.
19. The National CDEM Plan is accompanied by the Guide to the National CDEM Plan, a MCDEM publication that provides further operational detail.

### ***CDEM Group Plans***

20. Under the CDEM Act, every regional council was required to unite with the territorial authorities within its region to establish a CDEM Group and prepare a CDEM Group Plan outlining their management of hazards and risks. The Ministry will be publishing a guideline on the development of the second Generation of CDEM Group Plans before the end of 2008, providing greater standardisation for CDEM Groups as they commence a process of redeveloping their plans. CDEM Group functions include hazard risk management, providing resources and providing for emergency response and recovery. The CDEM Groups provide a structure for the planning and coordination of efforts in the region – delivery still takes place at the level of the territorial authorities.

21. Each CDEM Group has a Coordinating Executive Group (CEG) to advise the CDEM Group, implement the CDEM Group's decisions and oversee the development and implementation of the CDEM Group Plan. The CEG consists of representatives of the local authorities, the emergency services, the hospital and health services and other persons that may be co-opted by the CDEM Group.

### ***Management of civil defence emergencies***

22. The Ministry maintains 24/7 monitoring of possible events and a national warning and advisory system linked to that monitoring. It operates 24/7 duty teams in Auckland and Wellington.
23. The CDEM Act and the National CDEM Plan establish the structure for the management of civil defence emergency events. Emergencies are generally managed by local CDEM personnel with routine assistance from government agencies and lifeline utilities in the affected area. The CDEM Group can coordinate the region-wide response to an emergency if the event exceeds either the capacity or geographic boundary of a single territorial authority. Likewise, as Minister, you may declare that a state of national emergency exists over the whole of New Zealand or any particular areas or districts if it appears that the emergency is, or is likely to be, so severe that it is beyond the resources of the CDEM Group or Groups affected.
24. During a civil defence emergency, MCDEM is the lead agency that coordinates the civil defence emergency management necessary at the national level. The Ministry may activate the National Crisis Management Centre, located in the basement of the Beehive building to support local response and facilitate the all-of-government response. The Ministry of Health, the New Zealand Police, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry are the lead agencies responsible for leading management of pandemic, terrorism, and bio-security emergencies respectively.

***Domestic and External Security Co ordination***

25. The Domestic and External Security Coordination (DES) committee of Ministers and related officials' committee have a role in relation to government oversight and coordination of the all-of-government approach. The Officials Domestic External Security Coordination (ODESC) committee provides advice to DES Ministers in the event of a national emergency or an emergency of national significance. As the lead agency in a civil defence emergency, MCDEM provides advice to, and takes strategic direction from, ODESC if the DES system is activated.
26. The level of activation of the National Crisis Management Centre (NCMC) in an event is guided by the scale of the event and the response required. There are four modes:
- i. Monitor – monitoring and assessing incidents that may lead to a state of local emergency. Normally the monitoring is conducted by the MCDEM Duty Team and field staff with the NCMC not being activated.
  - ii. Engage – as above plus activation of the NCMC to collect, analyse and disseminate information, report to government and provide public information.
  - iii. Assist – as above plus the processing and coordinating of requests for support from local and regional organisations.
  - iv. Manage – as above plus the control of the overall response and the coordination of support, including aid from overseas and international liaison.

***Role and structure of MCDEM and other DIA teams committed to CDEM***

27. The Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management consists of four teams: CDEM Development, Operations, CDEM Specialist Services, and Strategic Development and Business Support (see Appendix I). Two other teams work closely with MCDEM – the CDEM policy team in the Regulation and Compliance Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs and a communications team from the Department's strategic communications unit.

28. The CDEM Development Unit supports the enhancement of the CDEM sector building national, regional and local capability. It includes both a national team that assists in the development of guidelines and standards and three regional teams based in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.
29. The Operations Unit plans and prepares for emergency management and manages national level disasters and responses to civil defence emergencies.
30. The CDEM Specialist Services Unit is responsible for research, professional development, hazard risk reduction and the Ministry's international engagement.
31. The Strategic Development and Business Support Unit carries out business planning and organisational improvement and provides administrative support.
32. CDEM Policy provides information and advice to support your decision-making and prepares draft responses to ministerial correspondence and parliamentary questions.
33. The Communications Unit develops and implements MCDEM's communication activities and coordinates the national public education programmes.

## **Major policy and implementation/operational issues**

34. **Strengthening the CDEM framework:** A review of the implementation of the CDEM Framework is underway and will include an assessment of the extent to which the CDEM Act and the subordinate strategic documents – the National CDEM Strategy, the National CDEM Plan and the Guide to the National CDEM Plan – have supported the achievement of the intended goals.
35. **Enhancing CDEM stakeholders' capability:** We are developing a tool that will enable CDEM groups to evaluate their own capability. We are also developing a CDEM competency framework, which will form the basis of training developments for the sector.
36. **Hazard risk reduction:** Our current focus is on working with the sector to address the risks posed by tsunamis.
37. **Capability development:** In September 2008, the first stage of the MCDEM Information Management Programme was approved, including the release of a Request for Information (RFI) from vendors. The programme includes an

overhaul of the information systems in the National Crisis Management Centre and developing the ability to establish a “virtual” emergency operations centre, enabling an alternative centre to be set up at any location if the National Crisis Management Centre became inoperable or should it have to follow government elsewhere.

38. **A public education campaign** was funded in the 2005 Budget with the provision of \$6.1 million over four years and \$1.2 million a year in baseline funding for subsequent years. The programme has two major components: the mass media “Get Ready, Get Thru” advertising, a supporting website in English and eight additional languages, and the schools programme “What’s the Plan Stan?”. Annual surveys show that the campaign has resulted in an increase in the level of preparedness.

Appendix I

## Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management

