

AGENDA ITEM NO: 14	SUBJECT MATTER: Delivering Better Responses to Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies - Government Response to the Technical Advisory Group's Recommendations
REPORT TO: Canterbury CDEM Group Joint Committee	DATE OF MEETING: 7 September 2018
REPORT BY: Bill Bayfield CDEM Co-ordinating Executive Group Chair	

Purpose

To receive the Government response to the Technical Advisory Group's (TAG) Recommendations - Delivering Better Responses to Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies.

Attachment

Delivering Better Responses to Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies - Government Response to the Technical Advisory Group's Recommendations

Report

The Hon Kris Faafoi Minister for Civil Defence announced the Government response to the TAG's report on 30 August 2018.

The Minister provided the following comments:

- *The TAG's work showed that improvements are needed to our emergency response system to clarify, strengthen, modernise and professionalise it, so it performs when needed.*
- *Our response sets out an ambitious and transformative multi-year work programme to improve New Zealand's emergency response system.*
- *We agree with the TAG about having **Fly-in Teams** of professional response personnel to support local responses where they are needed, and improvements in our **national emergency management facility and common operating picture**.*
- *There is some more work needed before Cabinet can make decisions about a **new national emergency management agency**. This is happening and I am hoping to be in a position to update you on this by the end of this year.*
- *If there is no new agency, I still expect the existing agency – MCDEM – to pick up the TAG's **national leadership** recommendations. Although doing some of this, such as regulations for nationally consistent operating structures and process, will depend on resourcing.*
- *Many of the local government stakeholders that I have talked to support the TAG's recommendations for **strengthening the Group approach**, clear lines of accountability to the Group, and having more consistent structures and operating practices. I agree with this.*

- We will start work on **legislative changes** so that councils fully buy-in to Group planning and decisions. Also that emergency management personnel are managed by and accountable to the CDEM Group, not mayors and council chief executives.
- I realise that this loss of local council autonomy over emergency response might not sit well with a small minority of mayors and chief executives. I'm aware that some of the larger metro councils think that they can do more and better on their own.
- I think that the overall benefits of regional coordination and clear lines of accountability to the CDEM Group outweigh any loss of local autonomy.
- As you are members of the Group, your staff will still be heavily involved in the local response. The Mayor will still be the spokesperson. Controllers will still need to work closely with Mayors and chief executives.
- Councils will still lead responses to local incidents – those that don't meet the triggers for coordination as a civil defence emergency or don't require powers under the CDEM Act.
- I also recognise that there may be some costs for some local authorities of transitioning to new organisational structures and meeting national standards. There is still work to do on this, and sequencing and any need to support transition will be factored into that.
- At the heart of the government's response is my vision to ensure that **no matter who or where they are, people should get a consistent standard of care in an emergency.**
- I know that there is some concern about **increased expectations** on local government as a result of nationally consistent standards, where councils have limited funding, particularly in regions and districts with a small ratepayer base.
- The Government's response is about ensuring that existing expectations on local government to provide for effective emergency management are met. I have also heard that local government wants more clarity about the intent of the CDEM Act and certainty about what is required of them.
- I don't want to consider funding related to emergency response until we consider the Productivity Commission's findings into local government funding, due in November 2019.
- Having said that, as the work progresses the door will be open to discuss supporting local authorities who will struggle to meet their share of costs to achieve minimum standards.
- There are some other legislative proposals. These are mainly about ensuring that Controllers at all levels have **clear functions and powers** to coordinate a response in declared states of emergency, and in undeclared emergencies.
- There will also be ongoing **professionalisation** and upskilling of the emergency management workforce by MCDEM and DPMC. Ultimately, we will require people like Controllers, who make key decisions, to be formally qualified to do their roles.
- **Volunteers** will still be able to make their hugely valued contributions though. The system will ensure that they are led or tasked by appropriately qualified people.
- I'm also keen to recognise the part that **iwi and marae** play in emergency management planning and response.

- *I want to work with local government about how we can ensure that iwi are around the planning table, and also that suitable marae are identified and supported to provide the care that people need. DPMC does not have funding for this right now.*
- *I won't go forward with the TAG's recommendations for Mayors to declare a 'major incident' or to declare a state of emergency just to provide 'public confidence'. There are some potential fishhooks with these proposals that may have unintended consequences. There is also not strong support for this across central or local government.*
- *Other proposals to require councils to have better processes to identify when a civil defence emergency is happening, and communicate this with the public, will address issues of public confidence that the TAG raised.*
- *We are also not going to require Mayors to have training to make declarations but, where it is practicable, they will be required to consider the advice of Controllers.*
- *My announcement is a step in the ongoing journey to make our emergency management system better. I look forward to engaging with you further as we continue this important work.*

Five themes in the Government response

Theme	This means better:
Put the safety and wellbeing of people at the heart of the emergency response system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public warnings, particularly for tsunami • Public communication in a response • Identification of welfare needs • Participation of iwi/ Māori and marae
Strengthen the national leadership of the emergency management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight by a national emergency management agency (currently MCDEM). • Stewardship of the emergency management system • National standards to set minimum service levels and ensure operational consistency
Make it clear who is responsible for what nationally and regionally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation to set out functions and responsibilities of local authorities • Authority for Controllers to coordinate emergency response • Decision making and communication about when an incident becomes an emergency and who is in control • Planning how agencies will work together and who will do what, when
Build the capability and capacity of the emergency management workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and accreditation of Controllers. • Capability of those working in CIMS roles • Ability to assist local response efforts through Fly-in Teams • Volunteer capability and capacity
Improve the information and intelligence system that supports decision making in emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis of information into a Common Operating Picture for decision makers • Integration of science advice into emergency responses • National capability through a new or improved national emergency management facility

Recommendation

That the Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee:

1. **receive the Government response to the Technical Advisory Group's Recommendations - Delivering Better Responses to Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies.**