

The Floods of February 2004

By Chandrika Kumaran, Communications Manager

For many New Zealanders February 2004, in the summer that never was, will be remembered for its wet, wild extreme weather which resulted in one of the worst flooding disasters in at least the last twenty years. Intense rainfall and gale force winds from 15 – 23 February affected the lower North Island and the top of the South Island – in particular the regions of Taranaki, Manawatu-Wanganui, Marlborough, Wellington, and the Hawkes Bay. The river peak of the Manawatu River was the second largest on record, the largest being recorded in 1902. The peak of the Rangitikei was the third largest on record since 1897. The MetService on the 16th was reporting sustained winds well over 100 km/hr affecting a number of regions. And just as people were thinking the worst was over, there was further extreme weather that hit on 28 February affecting parts of Northland, Auckland, Coromandel, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, King Country, and Taranaki.

The flooding caused hundreds of people to be evacuated from their homes (with just over 2000 people evacuated at the height of the event), farmers lost sheep and cattle stock, many rivers breached their banks and considerable areas of farmland were inundated by silt and floodwaters. There was also significant damage to infrastructure with damage to roads and bridges, and rail services disrupted as well. In addition, there were telecommunication, power, gas and water supply outages to tens of thousands of people. Remarkably no lives were lost as a direct result of the event.

A winter storm in summer

According to Warren Gray from the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) what we got was a winter storm in summer.

"However, unlike a wintertime low, this system occurred when air and seas were warmest, leading to a more vigorous storm that produced two-day rainfall totals of up to 300 mm in some of the worst-affected regions".

Traditionally, February is usually the warmest and driest time of year for many parts of the North Island. But February 2004 was one for the record books.

"The monthly rainfall was four to six times typical February amounts from the Waikato to Wellington, and also in the Wairarapa. It was the windiest month over the North Island since monitoring started in 1941." [Source NIWA]

NIWA's monthly climate summaries report that a total of 30 monthly



Intense rainfall, roughly 40mm in 40 minutes, caused the Waitohi River to rage through Alexander's Holiday Park near Picton. Concerns over the possible breach of the town's main dam caused the declaration of a civil defence emergency at 13:30 on 17 February 2004. Around 1000 residents and businesses were evacuated, water supply was affected, and sewage systems were damaged.

historical rainfall records were swept aside in February.

"It was a month of climate extremes, with seven heavy rainfall and at least three damaging high wind events. The reason for the exceptional climate pattern was an unusually high number of depressions ("lows") to the south of the South Island, which often intensified as they passed over New Zealand. This pattern produced the strongest westerlies in over 60 years of records for February over the North Island, and southwesterlies over the South Island. More than 1000 mm was recorded in the Tararua Ranges for the month."

The Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management activated the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) in Wellington at 0530 on 16 February in Wellington to monitor the situation and provide support to the affected regions as needed.

By the end of the second day on 17 Feb, civil defence emergency declarations were in place for:

- Rangitikei District
- Manawatu District
- South Taranaki District
- Manawatu-Wanganui Region
- Marlborough Region





Dedication and Commitment

I want to express my admiration and respect for everyone who played a role in this recent flood event – both where things went right and where things were difficult. The community saw dedication and commitment and of course there were things that went wrong. But they were then dealt with, and mostly the community is left with a sense that it was well supported.

This was a large and extended regional event. It was characterised by four main weather events in 15 days. It was rurally focussed with farmers and small communities being heavily impacted. It was the biggest disaster event in New Zealand in the past 20 years, and in order of magnitude bigger than anything we have experienced in recent times.

It was also the first event to be managed through the new CDEM Group structure. The coordination inherent in the Group arrangements was clearly evident and this was mirrored in the national arrangements, which were put in place to coordinate the government support of the event. This was the new environment with agencies doing their job supporting community self help.

The Group process worked well. It allowed an appropriate focus at the local/district level while providing for an overview of the regional picture. At the district level, the focus was on response activity. At the regional level the CDEM Group became the focal point for coordination of:

- Information
- Assessment of impacts
- Regional resources
- Government agency support

The role of the Regional Council in coordinating this function was fundamental and the contribution of a wide range of agencies made it possible.

At the National level, the Ministry, with MAF and other government agencies, was:

- Coordinating the dissemination of information
- Providing advice to Ministers
- Developing support packages
- Coordinating government agency support

Even at this point there are a number of lessons to be taken.

1. At both the Regional level and the National level, the coordinated response took an energy and momentum of its own – organisations within it developed quickly, organisations outside it struggled to keep up. This momentum allowed support to be quickly placed across a wide range of communities. It also allowed the management of the event to keep abreast of the demands of the media.

2. The demands for information were insatiable. The management of information was fundamental to successful coordination and to developing appropriate support responses. Most information was collected at least three times, and much of it the first time round was unfocussed. If we can rationalise that for future events we have a huge avenue for improving focus both in response and recovery.

3. The systems and arrangements in place coped with this event but they would be stretched by a national level event.

As we now continue with the Recovery activity and embark on a range of debriefs at all levels it is essential that the myriad of lessons to be taken are identified and applied in our continuing development. We will be undertaking a review of the event and will report on that in June.

This event was a big test of the new arrangements and provides a strong incentive to continue to improve and develop our arrangements.

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National Civil Defence Emergency Management Strategy

The publication of the National Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Strategy, the document that outlines the Crown's priorities for civil defence emergency management, has been completed. The development of the Strategy has been taking place over the past five years, and provides an encompassing strategic direction for the CDEM sector.

The three main purposes of the Strategy are:

- It will provide direction to those involved in civil defence emergency management
- It will send the message that civil defence emergency management is a multi-agency responsibility
- It will provide a means to coordinate the many different roles and functions of government by defining common goals, interests, and priorities

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act came into effect on 1 December 2002 and required the Minister of Civil Defence to prepare a Strategy, and to undertake public notification and consultation, within one year of the date of commencement of the Act (s33). The Strategy must be reviewed within ten years and must be available at all times.

In anticipation of the new Act, preparation of the Strategy began in 1999 with the formation of a Ministry group to establish an appropriate framework and focus. Consultation has included ongoing communication with CDEM officers, local government, specific communities, and with the public.



A large number of agencies, groups, and people have devoted their time and hard work to making the Strategy a strong and robust document that will provide the sector with a clear framework for the future. This strategy would not have been meaningful if not for their input.

However, as the new CDEM arrangements are still in the early stages of development, the Ministry will deliver a National Strategy Progress Report in 2006, to serve as a review. This review is not expected to change the Strategy's vision, and the goals and objectives are expected to remain for periods longer than five years. The targets and actions will be amended with further performance measures developed by the monitoring and evaluation programme.

From 2006 onwards, the Ministry will produce 3 year National Strategy Progress Reports that will report on how well the Crown is achieving its vision and goals.

The Strategy has been distributed to stakeholders and educational institutions throughout New Zealand, and can also be found on the Ministry's website www.civildefence.govt.nz.

Manager Policy



Margaret Niven was welcomed to the Ministry as Manager Policy on 29 March 2004.

She has a wealth of public sector experience and her roles have involved strategic and operational policy and planning. She has worked for New Zealand Customs, New Zealand Defence Force, Early Childhood Development and the State Services Commission. Margaret has a degree in Geography from Victoria University.

In her role as Manager Policy, Margaret's initial challenge will be on the continued implementation of the new civil defence emergency legislation and the National CDEM Strategy. This work will benefit from the lessons learned from the reviews of the recent flooding events and the Policy Unit will consider ways they can be used to enhance current arrangements. She is looking forward to discussions with the groups involved in the implementation at central and local government level and also to meeting key stakeholders.

Margaret lives with her husband on a deer farm in Ohariu Valley and is interested in travelling and exploring new places. She has two adult children and enjoys her menagerie of animals.

Ministry appoints Recovery Support Facilitator

David Oughton was appointed to the role of Recovery Support Facilitator in February 2004. David works with the Director of Civil Defence John Norton in supporting the main recovery activities, following the flood events of February. He is based in the Ministry's Wellington office.

The role has been developed to oversee coordination of government input into regional recovery activity and will ensure that central government agencies are being



proactive in identifying the issues and needs of the areas affected by the storm.

"The role will ensure that matters of concern for local authorities, brought to our attention by the local Emergency Management Advisors, are considered and attended by the appropriate bodies", says David. Working in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and

Forestry, the MCDEM's recovery team, and local committees, David will address rural,

infrastructure and welfare/social support issues. It is anticipated that the position will be active for a period of three months.

David served as the Secretary of the Ministry of Justice for nine years and Deputy for eight years. He also acted as the Chief Administration Officer for the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research for four years. He has recently been involved in a New Zealand overseas aid project in Samoa to provide institutional strength for the Samoan Ministry of Justice.



February Floods ... continued from page 1

Throughout the event people from a range of agencies worked tirelessly. In particular emergency services, civil defence and council maintenance crews, and the various utility providers worked around the clock to repair damaged roads and bridges, and restore disrupted services.

Region declares emergency

A state of civil defence emergency was declared for the Manawatu-Wanganui Region by Horizons Regional Council Chairman Chris Lester on 17 February to better coordinate response and recovery efforts regionally. The Manawatu-Wanganui region includes the city of Palmerston North and the Manawatu, Rangitikei, Tararua, Horowhenua, Ruapehu and Wanganui districts, and part of Stratford District.

"Declaring a regional state of emergency will aid the response to the widespread flood event. Other reasons for deciding to declare a state of regional emergency include the ability to pool and coordinate regional resources, especially when they are needed in many areas," Mr Lester said.

Horizons activated their group emergency operations centre in Palmerston North to:

- Coordinate media communications
- Source and coordinate external resources
- Liaise with national agencies and central government
- Respond to issues requested and raised by the local councils

For the region's civil defence emergency manager Mark Harrison, the first challenge for that week was getting to the emergency operations centre in Palmerston North from his home on the edge of Feilding. Overnight flooding on the Sunday night caused road closures in Feilding and with the Aorangi bridge closed Mark could not get into the city. He reported to the Manawatu District's emergency operations centre which had relocated to the Feilding Fire Station on Sunday evening when their Council premises were affected by flooding.

Mark eventually made it into the Manawatu-Wanganui Group Emergency Operations Centre in Palmerston North on the Tuesday and carried on his role as Incident Controller. The Group declaration was made late on Tuesday to better coordinate the resources for the area. The centre ran two shifts around the clock till midnight on 23 February with support from council staff from within the region and from outside. In addition a number of the Ministry's emergency

management advisors were also on hand to assist with impact assessment and to meet the huge demand for information during the week.

"The offers of support and the actual assistance that we got from the districts and regions and the various agencies from outside the region was just incredible and was certainly appreciated," said Mark. "For many of the regional council staff dealing with an event of this magnitude was new but they just got stuck into it and did an amazing job. As a team building exercise, it was just invaluable."

"I would also like to acknowledge the work that was done by the affected districts who were looking after each of their own areas while providing the support that was needed for the Group to be effective," said Mark.



Damage Estimates for Manawatu-Wanganui

- At the height of the event it was estimated that around 2300 people had been evacuated from their homes in the Manawatu-Wanganui region. On 23 Feb, there were still 750 evacuees in the region.
- 400 dwellings were affected with 550 people still out of their homes
- About half the regions roads (about 9300 km) were closed during the event. The Manawatu Gorge is still closed.
- There was damage to more than twenty bridges
- Group recovery costs are estimated at:
 - 160-180 million for rural sector
 - 120 million for roads and council infrastructure



Rapid moving water, carrying large amounts of debris, overwhelmed many homes in the township of Feilding. Housing was damaged throughout the Manawatu – Wanganui region.



The haunting remains of a destroyed farm gate. Porangahau, in the Central Hawke's Bay, became isolated and many residents' properties were devastated by February's storm. Thirty people had to be evacuated from the township in total darkness of the early morning on 16 February 2004.



National Emergency Operations Centre Activated

By David Coetzee, Emergency Management Planner

The first indication of an abnormal event unfolding came through for the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (MCDEM) at approximately 2100 on Sunday 15 February when our Emergency Management Advisor (EMA) for the Lower North Island reported rising rivers and possible problems from Wanganui.

Confirmation of the heavy rain was obtained from MetService and MCDEM's Readiness Manager requested the EMA to monitor the situation closely. At 0100 on 16 February MCDEM's Duty Officer received a request from the Manawatu Civil Defence Officer, via the Police Communications Centre, for NZ Defence resources to be mobilised for assistance in Feilding. Upon confirmation of the request, the Duty Officer "actioned" the request through the HQ Joint Forces New Zealand. The EMA for the Lower North Island was subsequently dispatched to the Rangitikei and Manawatu areas.

Based on the EMA's reports, a decision was made to activate the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) in Wellington. The activation started at 0530 and MCDEM staff were directed to report to the NEOC. Due to road closures on SH2 some staff could not initially get into the city and offered their assistance at the Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt City operation centres.

By 0800 on 16 February the Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, Public Information and Administration desks were fully functional. MCDEM's Wellington staff were rostered on day and night shifts while the regional staff were dispatched and rostered to the affected areas. These staff proved to be vital links between the Operations desk in the NEOC and the affected Emergency Operations Centres (EOC's) throughout the activation.

With MCDEM's limited personnel resources, the event was also a good opportunity to test informal back-up arrangements with a range of agencies. Offers from the NZ Fire Service, Wellington City Emergency Management Office and the Ministry of Health to provide additional staffing were gratefully accepted to resource in particular the Logistics desk. By mid-morning on the 16th the NEOC had also established direct links with key agencies such as Telecom, power companies Powerco and Natural Gas Corporation, Transit NZ, Tranzrail, Ministry of Social Development (National Welfare Coordination Group) and MetService.

Besides keeping the intelligence reporting accurate and current by issuing frequent Situation Reports, the Planning/Intelligence desk also dealt with the preparation of regular Ministerial briefings and the development of urgent Cabinet Papers. To complement the resources on this desk support came from the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) who released an ex-MCDEM policy analyst to serve in the NEOC. Staff from the

Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences (GNS) also responded to assist with GIS mapping of impact areas to support intelligence reports.

The Public Information Management desk called upon Communications staff from the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) to deal with national and international media requests. Regular media summaries of the event were issued at a national level complementing regional initiatives, and interview requests particularly from radio and television were well coordinated. The information was also disseminated to all CDEM offices and information offered on the Ministry website.

DIA's Information and Facilities Unit also proved invaluable in dedicating staff to assist with IT support issues.

The NEOC activation officially ended on the afternoon of 26 February 2004. It was reactivated early on Sunday 29 February as a result of new flooding overnight, and heavy rain warnings linked to extra-tropical Cyclone Ivy. This activation ended on 1 March when it was clear that the threat had passed.

Overall the national operations centre stood up well to the demands posed by the event. The debriefs of the event that the Ministry is undertaking will ensure that key issues are identified and improvements implemented as needed. The support provided by the wide range of agencies during this activation can also be singled out as a successful and powerful demonstration of our shared commitment to the multi-agency approach to emergencies in New Zealand.



Patangata Bridge, Central Hawke's Bay with the Tuki Tuki River in flood. The HB Today paper ran a story about some tourists who were caught by the bridge and spent a night in a tree! The couple and a dog just made it out after camping beside the river. Photo courtesy of Central Hawke's Bay District Council.



February 2004 Floods

Photo Story by Shawn Hollister, Communications Advisor photos courtesy of Horizons, Environment Waikato, Central Hawkes Bay District Council, Taupo Civil Defence Rescue and Keith Evans, Emergency Management Planner.

The \$7 million Fitzroy Bend protection stopbank in Palmerston North proved to be money well spent on reduction. The town's investment neutralized a potentially devastating flood.



The swift moving floodwaters overwhelmed several bridges and stopbanks across the affected regions. Four bridges were destroyed, and 21 were seriously damaged in Manawatu-Wanganui alone. This is a photo of the stopbank at Whirikino near Foxton. Photo courtesy of Horowhenua District Council.



TOP AND BELOW LEFT: Run off from the Rangitikei River hit the small town of Tangimoana hard, leaving many homes and roads damaged. The floodwaters left huge deposits of silt and debris, damaging large portions of the Manawatu-Wanganui region.



Farms throughout Manawatu-Wanganui were devastated by the storm with damage to crops and stock. Structures and crops were lost to the raging waters.



February 2004 Floods



The Minister of Civil Defence Hon George Hawkins and Director of the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management John Norton take the opportunity to visit with members of the community and the local media during a visit to Feilding on 16 February 2004.



The Moutoa sluice gates (also known as the Floodgates) are situated 5 km from Feilding, stopping flooding water from the Manawatu River along a floodway. The floodway is a concrete-lined channel that stops banks on either side. The excess floodwater travels along the floodway to the sea at a rate of 3000 m³ of water per second.

The Moutoa floodgates were open twice during the February 2004 floods, the first time on 29 February. This was a unique incident as the gates on average are closed for most of the year.

Clearing the mud in Waitotara required heavy machinery. Many residents returning to their homes were greeted by thick layers of silt and debris, making clean up efforts highly difficult.



As the floodwaters rose, many roads began to wash out, leaving residents stranded.





from Shannon and were completed in 1962 to divert 10 km long and 600m wide and it is protected by high gates to rejoin the river at Whirokino. These gates can divert

the first time in the early part of the flooding and second time only open every eighteen months.

making transportation difficult and highly dangerous.



Located at the mouth of the Rangitikei River, the towns of Tangimoana and the smaller Scotts Ferry were both affected by the February floods. The French SPOT-5 satellite took this false colour image on 9 March 2004. The red colours indicate healthy vegetation, the dark areas are forest, and the very light colouring shows bare ground including silts deposited by the floodwaters.



Damage to infrastructure, like this urban road, was intense in the town of Feilding. State Highway 3 through the Manawatu Gorge suffered severe damage from landslides and remains closed. On 16 February 2004, following concerns over potential damage to the local council buildings, the Manawatu District Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was forced to relocate to the Feilding fire station.



February 2004 Floods

A thick layer of sediment coats the roads in Feilding. During the floods, the route between Feilding and Palmerston North became impassable, stranding many of the town's residents. Half the region's roads (roughly 9,300 kilometres) were closed. Rail lines and bridges were also severely affected by the storms. During the storms, the main rail trunk line through the Manawatu-Wanganui region was inactive, the Whangaehu Bridge was closed and the line between Marton and Whareroa was detoured.



Taupo Civil Defence Rescue teams work quickly to stop the damage caused by floodwater. The team is seen here stacking sand bags and pumping water out of flooded paddocks.

A child walks through floodwaters in Moera, Lower Hutt. Health and Safety officials warn against coming into contact with floodwater that may contain sewerage and other pollutants. In the Wellington region flooding was mainly confined to the Lower Hutt area causing numerous evacuations, landslides, major road closures and temporary isolation of Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt, Wainuiomata and Eastbourne. Water supply contamination was experienced in South Wairarapa. There were over 500 people evacuated from their homes in the Wellington region.



Preparing Civil Defence Emergency Expenditure Response Claims

By Lynda Angus, Manager Capability

Following recent flooding events several councils are preparing claims for reimbursement of emergency expenditure. Councils are advised to refer to the following background documents:

Claims for Response expenditure

- The National Civil Defence Plan, Annex C to Part 1 Response, "Emergency Expenditure: Procedure For Response Claims"
- "Preparing Civil Defence Emergency Expenditure Response Claims", published March 2000. To be found on www.civildefence.govt.nz, Publications & documents, Information Series

Claims for Recovery expenditure

- The National Civil Defence Plan, S.19 (e) of Part Two Recovery Plan, "Restoration of Other Local Authority Assets"

The document, "Preparing Civil Defence Emergency Expenditure Response Claims", March 2000, details:

- Category A (Evacuation Expenditure) & B (Subsidy for Other CDEE) claims
- Requirements for claim applications, ie record keeping and documentation
- Claim Processing, ie role of the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management

The information contained in this document was altered and updated in June 2003 by a Government decision to include Category B costs with recovery costs in calculating thresholds and the amount to be reimbursed. This was notified to Councils by letter in June 2003.

The letter advised Councils of financial assistance they may be eligible for after an event or disaster. It stated that prior to July 03 the Government, via the Ministry:

- fully reimbursed councils for the costs of caring for displaced people (Category A – response costs)

- reimbursed councils for 2/3 of their "other response costs" (Category B – response costs) above a threshold calculated as 0.01% of the net rateable capital value of the area within the council's jurisdiction
- reimbursed councils for 60% of the cost of repairing essential council infrastructure (recovery costs) above a threshold. The threshold is 0.0075% of a district's net capital value and 0.002% of a region's. This is sometimes referred to as s.19(e) assistance.

The Government in June 2003 reviewed whether this was the most appropriate way to assist councils to meet response costs. It concluded that the above situation, where "other response" and "recovery" costs each have to meet a separate threshold was an unnecessary barrier for councils seeking financial assistance from Government. Government therefore agreed that councils could include "other response costs" in their recovery claims. This means that the council has only to meet the single "recovery" threshold.

Two other recent policy decisions are relevant, and will apply in all future events:

- Cat A & B claims are not linked to a declaration
- Helicopter food drops to isolated homes can be included as Cat A costs.

A further policy decision has been made by the Director of the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management for the February 2004 emergency event only. Cat A funding may be extended as follows :

- (a) external temporary contract staff brought in to manage Cat A activity for the council will be considered for funding, (not including normally employed council staff working in operational centres, nor staff from other local authorities) and
- (b) external temporary contract staff contracted to fill-in for staff who were allocated to Cat A work, may be considered for funding.

CDEM Group formation has occurred since the publication of the Claims document, March 2000. Claims are still made on behalf of individual councils (and using their thresholds) but CDEM Groups are expected to coordinate and compile these claims into a single document where more than one authority has been affected.

Claims for Category A & B and 19(e) recovery will be processed by the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management. The contact point in the Ministry for these claims are the Ministry's regional Emergency Management Advisors.

- John Titmus, Auckland
- Bernie Rush and Keith Evans, Wellington
- John Lovell, Christchurch

Government measures for the February 2004 flood emergency extend beyond those managed via MCDEM and the National Plan. Queries regarding other funding criteria need to be made to the relevant department.



Clean up crews use heavy machinery to remove the massive amounts of silt and debris left by the floodwaters.

National CDEM Plan – building and testing

By Peter Wood, Emergency Management Planner

The national responsibilities for readiness, response and recovery tasks and the procedures to be used during and after an emergency are outlined in the National Civil Defence Plan (National CD Plan) that operates under the transitional arrangements of the CDEM Act 2002. The Act requires a new National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan (National CDEM Plan) to be in place by December 2005. Three events have occurred this year that are important in the development of the National CDEM Plan: the initial meeting of the National CDEM Plan Working Group; the initial trialling of an electronic publishing system; and most importantly, the experience of a multi-regional scale emergency that followed the storms of February 2004.

The National CDEM Plan Working Group met for the first time in January, for a day at the National Crisis Management Centre in Wellington. The Working Group is made up of representatives from the CDEM Groups of Auckland, Waikato, Manawatu-Wanganui (absent), Wellington, and Canterbury, as well as the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the NZ Fire Service, NZ Police, the Ministry of Health, the NZ Defence Force, the National Lifelines Co-ordinating Committee, and the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (MCDEM).

Each representative variously presented an outline of their organisation's arrangements, perspectives, and expectations while MCDEM staff presented on initiatives in:

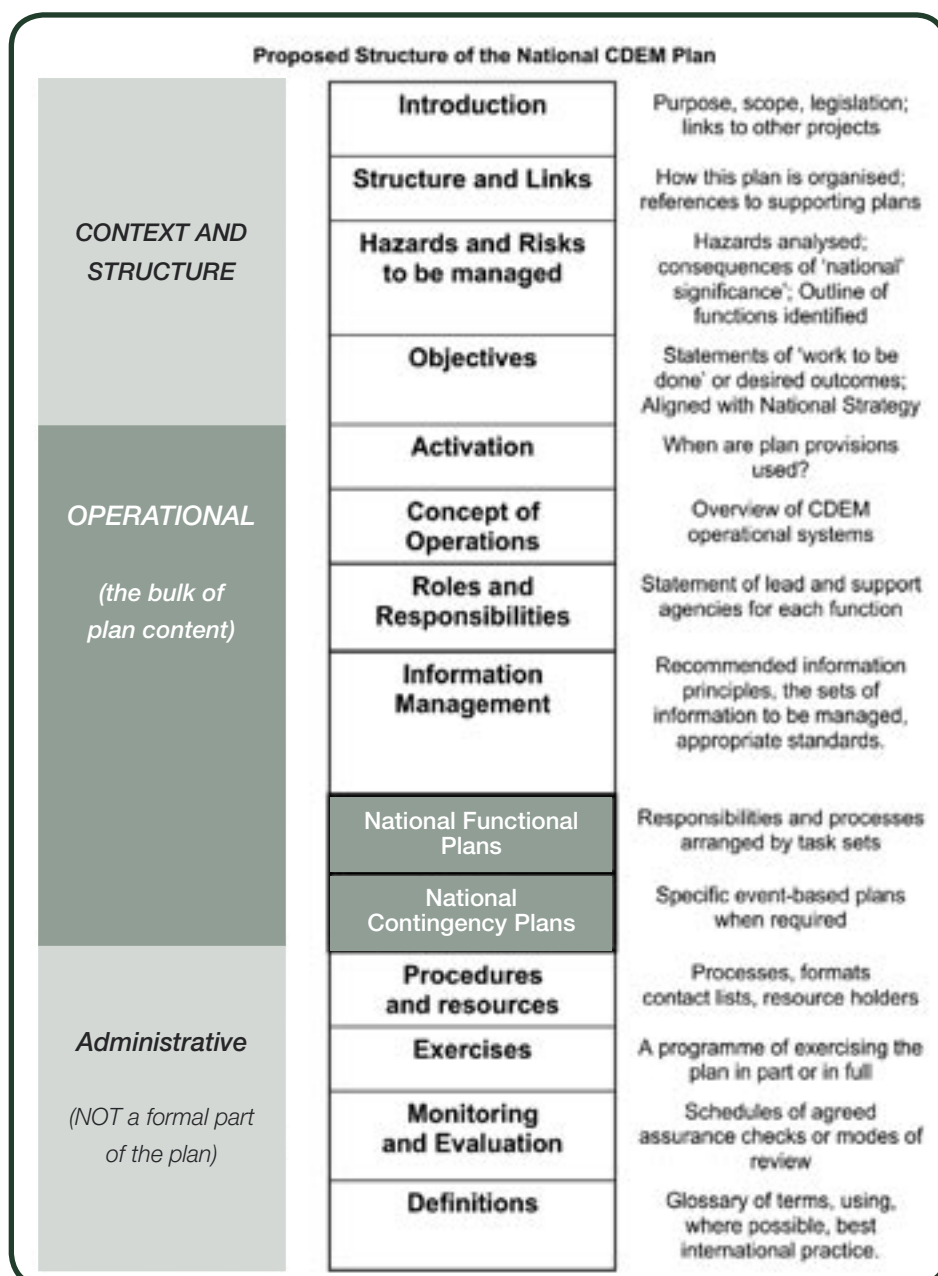
- cluster developments to aid inputs into the national planning process
- recovery strategies
- hazard-risk assessment developments that are to aid identification of nationally significant hazard-risk consequences and corresponding functions.

Electronic managing and publishing of the National CDEM Plan includes managing the content files and printing and electronic publishing. A trial has started with the existing National CD Plan being translated from an electronic archive copy into another, hyperlinked, form. From the latter several outputs can be generated, including the necessary printed form and also several electronic variants for a range of display devices. The results of the trial will be presented to the next Working Group meeting and will also be made available as a report, likely to be summarised in the next Impact.

Testing the National CDEM Plan occurred through February 2004, in the response to the consequences of the storms and in the ongoing recovery. This has been a major test of the national CD plan (and other) arrangements, including a new CDEM Group plan, local and regional declarations, the Domestic and External Security Committee (DESC) meetings

presided over by the Prime Minister and also the related Officials Domestic and External Security Committee (ODESC) arrangements. Lessons for the new National CDEM Plan are sought and will emerge from the many local, group, and national debriefings that are ongoing. At the time of writing it has been reported that the current National CD Plan facilitated dealing with the matters covered by the Plan - while those issues that emerged but had not been covered in the Plan took greater effort and time to resolve. Perhaps that underlines the point of planning.

Contributions or submissions regarding the development of the National CDEM Plan can be made at anytime via a member of the Working Group (contact details available at www.civildefence.govt.nz/Readiness and Response or through peter.wood@dia.govt.nz. The formal publication of a draft and call for public submissions are required by the CDEM Act 2002 and these are planned for mid-2004.





Project RAPID Launched

The task of enhancing the current response capability within Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups is no easy feat.

- How do you develop this capability consistently with other groups to ensure interoperability?
- How will the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (MCDEM) support these initiatives across the groups?

Response And Preparedness In Disasters (RAPID), a new project managed by the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management, aims to provide answers to these difficult questions.

The Ministry, along with support from a Project Advisory Group made up of representatives from Local Government, NZ Fire Service, will drive the programme. The project's aim will be to enhance the response capability of CDEM Groups to emergencies. Through project RAPID, MCDEM will provide national leadership and will facilitate the further development of community emergency response.

Project RAPID is a risk-based approach to providing a wide and flexible range of training modules and guidelines to best meet local needs. It encourages the cross training of existing resources, rather than the establishment of new, specific teams.

The goal of this three-year project is to:

Enhance capability to manage emergencies by nationally leading and facilitating the further development of community emergency response within Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups.

Over the next three years, project RAPID will aim to identify training needs, design and pilot national training packages, provide recognised guidelines, and provide linkages with other agencies and with legislation. This will supply emergency management practitioners with a national level of endorsement, resources, and standards.

More information about the project can be found at www.rapid.org.nz

USAR Search Dogs

By Janelle Mackie, Association Coordinator

A prerequisite for Advanced USAR dog certification, the Tertiary Education Programme (TEP), conducted its first block of study over the weekend of 14/15 February at the Christchurch Polytechnic. The programme is aimed at providing handlers with a wide range of additional skills, focused on the health and wellbeing of their dogs. Basic certified handlers throughout the country were invited to attend.

The course director, Terry Marler, a tutor at Otago Polytechnic, provided instruction on the basics of dog husbandry, nutrition, vaccinations, and practical clinical examination. The course examined the potential implications of international deployment of the dogs, such as the need for heart worm and rabies vaccination.

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Update on the Recovery Symposium

12-13 July 2004

**Napier War Memorial Conference Centre,
Napier Hawkes Bay**

Planning for the Recovery Symposium is well underway. Focused on providing a unique opportunity for professionals with a role in recovery to discuss and debate the multifaceted aspects of recovery, the Symposium will go beyond the physical aspects of recovery considered immediately following a disaster. For information on registering for the Symposium, visit www.civildefence.govt.nz

Student Grants

The Ministry is offering grants for New Zealand students to attend the Recovery Symposium. Candidates must be postgraduate students whose work relates to the theme and focus of the Symposium, whose expertise may ultimately benefit New Zealand, and who the Ministry believe would gain from attending.

We ask that interested students fill out the Student Grant Application Form, available at www.civildefence.govt.nz, attach a paragraph on why they would benefit from attending the Symposium, and forward it to the Ministry by 23 April 2004. Successful applications will be advised by 30 April 2004.

National Artwork Competition

To help increase awareness of recovery, the Symposium will include an artwork competition for New Zealand secondary school students aged 15-19. Artists will be given the opportunity to express their understanding of **"What recovery from a disaster means for New Zealanders."**

The top ten finalists will have their artwork displayed at the Symposium. In addition, the winning artist will receive a \$500.00 cash prize, and their work will be used in special publications following completion of the Symposium.

Details of entry, information about acceptable artwork mediums and the competition's terms and conditions can be found at www.civildefence.govt.nz

Obituary: Bob Priest

Robert Mackintosh Priest spent his entire working life in environmental protection. He was Regional Civil Defence Controller for the Waikato for many years. A feature in the Waikato Times in January 1999 following the two cyclones which hit the Region said he "didn't know why" he had the job. Those who worked with him at these times certainly did know. He was also instrumental in running the response to the big flood on the Waikato River in 1998. Bob set the standard in what civil defence is all about – people looking after people.

Bob retired from Environment Waikato in February last year, and was then appointed as a Commissioner to the Environment Court.

"I don't really have ambitions. I have a goal. That's to see as many people as possible use the land, but making sure it's there for people who come along later."

He is survived by his wife Denise, daughter Helen and son Andrew.



Bob Priest, Environment Commissioner and former Deputy Chief Executive and Regional Civil Defence Controller, Environment Waikato. 1940 – 2004.

Exercise PEGASUS 04

By Charlie Higgins, UN-OCHA

Planning is proceeding for Exercise PEGASUS 2004, which will be based on the scenario of a major earthquake in the South Island, affecting the regions covered by the Canterbury, Marlborough, and Nelson/Tasman CDEM Groups.

The exercise will take place from Friday 17 to Sunday 19 September at locations in and around Christchurch, in the Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) of these three CDEM Groups, and at the National Crisis Management Centre in Wellington. The aim is to train and test participants in a number of critical emergency response areas and, just as importantly, to practise the interaction of all personnel and organisations concerned, in order to achieve effective integration of their actions on the exercise.

A second Exercise PEGASUS planning meeting was held on 27 January, and the basic outline of the six exercise strands plus the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Refresher Course have been agreed. The meeting also involved Mr. Arjun Katoch, Chief of UN-OCHA's Field Coordination Support Section that operates the UNDAC Team and is also the Secretariat for INSARAG, the International (urban) Search and Rescue Advisory Group.

Arjun's visit was the opportunity to discuss UN-OCHA's requirements for the UNDAC Refresher Course that New Zealand will be hosting over the three days prior to the exercise (Monday 13 to Thursday 16 September), in which the UNDAC Pacific Team will participate.

[Charlie Higgins is a staff member of UN-OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) and was recently on a temporary attachment with the Ministry to put in place the planning process and design the systems to support the exercise.]

Details of the exercise will be made available on www.civildefence.govt.nz

Ian Craig Fund

By Lynda Angus, Chairperson USAR Steering Committee

The Ian Craig Training Development Fund is administered by the National USAR Steering Committee. The fund fosters volunteer rescue expertise and excellence in New Zealand. A panel from the Steering Committee met recently to consider applications to the fund. Three proposals have been selected for funding for the 03/04 financial year. It is appropriate that all the successful applicants worked very closely with Ian Craig in various aspects of rescue.

The three projects are:

- James Thompson and Shailer Hart to go to the USA to complete a five-day course on confined space entry and rescue and to visit three USAR Taskforces. James and Shailer are both volunteers in two rescue teams in Christchurch: the RATS, a Civil Defence team which works with Environment Canterbury and NZFS and secondly, as volunteer technicians on the USAR Taskforce 2, based in Christchurch.
- Steve Glassey to undertake a swiftwater rescue course relating to Personal Water Craft and an advanced rope rescue training programme in the USA. Steve currently leads the development of New Zealand's volunteer swiftwater rescue and provides significant support to volunteer rescue teams around the country, again as a volunteer.
- Ross Knauer, a paramedic volunteer with USAR Taskforce 2, who has in his own time provided advice to the USAR Steering Committee on the development of the paramedic capability and who worked with Ian Craig on the early development of our voluntary search dog capability, to study veterinary care for USAR search dogs.

The Steering Committee and the Ministry congratulate the successful applicants and look forward to the reports from the individuals following their various activities.

USAR Search Dogs ... continued from page 13

The Sunday afternoon session, entitled "Dogs under Duress," was led by local veterinarian, Dr Kirsten Roberts, who is preparing for her 3rd year as a vet on the Iditarod 1600km cross-Alaska sled dog race. As one of 36 vets caring for the 1,500-1,600 dogs that participate in the annual Arctic event, Kirsten has vast experience looking after dog's health under extreme and adverse conditions. While this type of event is different to the types of activities carried out by dogs within USAR and LSAR, many of the basic principles remain similar. The session provided important information about being aware of temperature changes within dogs, consideration of more regular snacks when working, stress diarrhoea and some practical paw and pad maintenance and repair tips.

The next block of the course will take place in Palmerston North in June, and participants, both K-9 and human, are looking forward to continuing with the educational process.

Email searchdogs@usar.govt.nz



The dog is Kahley. Human in the picture is Shane Briggs

Canterbury Rural Fire EOC

By Jon Mitchell, ECAN

The foresight of decision-makers involved in emergency management planning in Canterbury over the past few years came into its own in response to the rural fire threat to Canterbury in late January this year. The Environment Canterbury/CDEM Group Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was used as the location for a Regional Rural Fire EOC.

Plans for regional, multi-agency coordination of major or multiple rural fires began in early January, after a series of increasingly extreme fires, continued hot, windy dry weather, and worsening fire risks. The Canterbury West Coast Rural Fire Coordinating Committee decided to establish an EOC and develop a plan for its operation at a multi-agency meeting on 7 January.

Specialist Fire Behaviour and Public Information Units Established

Fire Behaviour and Public Information units were set up within the EOC, and remained in place until the end of the extreme fire season, which was predicted by NIWA to continue until at least late March.

The Rural Fire Operational Plan provides for 5 levels of activation:

1. Fires managed by local rural fire authorities
2. Prohibited Fire Season benchmarks met regionally. Weather and fire behaviour monitoring, and public information programme activated.

3. Incident(s) require regional coordination of resources. EOC Response Coordinator activates multi-agency coordination EOC to necessary level.
4. Regional Rural Fire Emergency declared. Significant resources required from out of region. EOC managed by NRFA.
5. Civil Defence Emergency Declared. EOC controlled by local or regional Civil Defence Controller. Necessary in response to significant evacuation or other welfare issues, critical infrastructure threatened or damaged, etc. Major urban fires not covered by Forest and Rural Fires Act.

An interesting twist in the early stages of the EOC activation was the heavy rain on the main divide on Saturday the 10th, resulting in both fire and flood management teams working alongside each other in the EOC until the flood hazard had passed.

Gaining experience in the process of activating the EOC for real for the first time, particularly the initial event appreciation and Public Information roles, was extremely valuable for all involved. None of the individual agencies have the facilities or support services to provide for the level of multi-agency regional coordination of resources or responses that the purpose-built Group EOC offers.

The EOC was stood down on 30 Jan, once some quality rain set in.

Valuable lessons learnt from the establishment of the EOC are now informing the development of the operational component of the Canterbury CDEM Group Plan.

Focus on Recovery: A Holistic Framework for Recovery

By Sarah Norman,
Emergency Management Planner

The Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (MCDEM) has made a commitment to set a direction for recovery under Goal 4 of the National CDEM Strategy "To enhance New Zealand's capability to recover from disasters".

From the National CDEM Strategy a programme of work in recovery has been identified. As part of this programme of work a framework has been developed through an initial consultation with a small number of CDEM stakeholders. The discussion document which was sent out for consultation with the wider CDEM Sector on 18 March 2004 is called 'Focus on Recovery: A Holistic Framework for Recovery' and outlines the context and the direction of future work for recovery.

'Focus on Recovery' complements the National CDEM Strategy by providing Principles and Concepts of Recovery Management. These form the basis of a holistic framework for recovery. It also provides a direction for the envisaged work programme to achieve Goal 4 of the National CDEM Strategy, which includes planning and activation implications for all organisations involved in Recovery Management.

Focus on Recovery is a discussion document, which is a precursor to the Recovery Symposium (July 2004) and is intended to inform the future development of a framework for recovery and guideline on recovery practice in New Zealand. This document is a work in progress and is not a statement of government policy. Focus on Recovery consultation submissions may be forwarded to Sarah Norman before 18 August 2004 at the following email address or at P.O. Box 2359, Wellington.

Aspects of these planning and activation implications are developed within the updated MCDEM Information Series document - Recovery Planning: Information for CDEM Groups (disseminated on 30 March 2004). In addition, the nationally significant aspects of recovery are being documented in the new National CDEM Plan that MCDEM is responsible for completing with stakeholders. The development of other documents and the revision of recovery training will be influenced by the development of the above documents.

If you require additional copies of either document, please email sarah.norman@dia.govt.nz



Waikato's Leap Day Event

By Linda Thompson,
Environment Waikato

The Waikato joined the lower half of the North Island's on-going flood on what's become known locally as the "Leap Day Event".

Significant rainfall across much of the North Island from February 27 to February 29 led to flooding in many parts of the Waikato, particularly Turangi, Otorohanga and low-lying areas next to the lower Waipa and Waikato Rivers.

The catchment was already soggy from extreme rainfall in Lake Taupo, Waikato and Waipa River catchments. Rainfall totals in many places were 3-4 times above February normal.

Lake Taupo was already close to maximum control level from Manawatu's event and rose another 22 cm during the Leap Day event – still below the 1998 record of 357.49 metres. The Taupo Control Gates had been fully open for about three weeks and stayed open to push water through the system.

At the peak, inflows into the Waikato hydro system (including lake Taupo outflows) reached around 1000 cumecs. The Tongariro River at Turangi rose close to 1958 levels, a 50-year event. At Otorohanga, the Waipa River rose a metre above the 1998 flood level, very similar to the 1958 flood event making it a 100-year event.

About 90 Turangi residents were evacuated and about 15 homes are uninhabitable from sewage contamination. Another 15 homes were evacuated at Oroutua next to the Tauranga Taupo River. Some farms have had as much as 50 acres under water and Federated Farmers distributed hay. About 30 families near Whatawhata were isolated by the Waipa River and the Waitomo caves were closed.



Southern Otorohanga in the Waikato. Ponding caused by unexpected overflow of the catchment behind and in the foreground Otorohanga Primary School and grounds underwater.

Otorohanga Primary School and many surrounding houses were flooded up to the top of some windowsills. Some businesses were also inundated, including the ReadMix Concrete site. Road damage and closures were extensive across some parts of the Otorohanga, Waikato, and Waitomo Districts and many local roads will remain closed for weeks.

Road repairs will likely exceed \$350,000, with up to 30 roads damaged or closed. There were numerous slips across the King Country and some seepage behind some of the lower Waikato River stopbanks. Private stopbanks protecting valuable maize crops and farmland were protected by sandbags and topping up.



Taupo Civil Defence Rescue crews in Turangi drove through large amounts of standing water to offer support to people in need. Along with rescue efforts, Civil Defence crews helped residents with sand bagging, clean up tasks, and disposing of standing water with pumping machinery.



Many homes in rural areas of Manawatu Wanganui were overcome by floodwater. Many of the region's farmers lost large numbers of their stock, estimated at over 1,200 animals overcome by the floodwater. The recovery costs for the region's rural is estimated to be \$160 - \$180 million.



See story on page 1 and inside pages.

February 2004 Floods