

# 23. Public education and community engagement

**Summary** Raising community awareness of hazards and risks and how the community can prepare and respond when an emergency occurs can reduce the severity of consequences.

**Contents**

The section contents are:

- 23.1 Introduction..... 2
- 23.2 National CDEM public education strategy..... 2
- 23.3 National CDEM public education programme ..... 2
- 23.4 Ongoing research and evaluation..... 3
- 23.5 References and links ..... 4

## 23.1 Introduction

### Part 7

#### Readiness

##### Public education and community engagement

#### 109 Introduction

- (1) *CDEM public education and community engagement aims to—*
  - (a) *build public awareness of New Zealand's hazards and their possible consequences; and*
  - (b) *enable individuals and communities to take the necessary steps to reduce risks and prepare for emergencies; and*
  - (c) *work with other agencies to support and align with each other's strategies and programmes.*
- (2) *Each lead agency is responsible for the development and delivery of public education and community engagement strategies and programmes relating to the hazards and risks it manages.*

## 23.2 National CDEM public education strategy

#### 110 National CDEM public education strategy

*The national CDEM public education strategy provides overall direction for developing and delivering public education programmes to—*

- (a) *increase individual and community awareness of all hazards; and*
- (b) *improve readiness for an emergency; and*
- (c) *increase community awareness, understanding, and participation in CDEM; and*
- (d) *define those programmes that are best co-ordinated and delivered at a national level by the MCDEM; and*
- (e) *identify supporting strategies for programmes delivered by CDEM Groups and local authorities at the CDEM Group and local level.*

#### Reinforcing the message

Public education and heightened awareness will not guarantee actions or behaviours that lead to higher levels of preparedness at home, at work, or across communities. The programme is supported by plans and initiatives that promote actions in communities to reinforce the "Get Ready" message and encourage people to put thoughts into action.

The National Public Education Reference Group, chaired by the Director of CDEM and comprising public education representatives from each of the CDEM Groups, plays a key role in this reinforcement. Strategy, consistent messages, and awareness are created nationally, while community engagement to support the programme happens locally.

## 23.3 National CDEM public education programme

#### 111 National CDEM public education programme

- (1) *The national CDEM public education programme comprises activities that promote the national CDEM public education strategy, including—*
  - (a) *a long-term public education strategy; and*
  - (b) *a national mass-media campaign and supporting resources; and*
  - (c) *a national schools programme; and*
  - (d) *monitoring and evaluation.*
- (2) *Each agency developing public messages about hazards and risks is encouraged to ensure consistency with nationally agreed and supported messages for CDEM.*

*The Way Forward – Strategic Framework for the National CDEM Public Education Programme* (the Public Education Programme) is the national CDEM public education strategy document. It details the thinking behind the current national public education programme and provides the strategic framework in which MCDEM and CDEM Groups will work to improve public awareness, understanding, commitment and preparedness for disasters.

The Public Education Programme consists of:

- ♦ a national media campaign (traditional and social media) and supporting resources – Get Ready Get Thru
- ♦ a national schools programme – ‘What’s The Plan Stan?’
- ♦ additional actions by MCDEM to support and build on these programmes
- ♦ actions undertaken by CDEM Groups at a community level to build on the national programme, and
- ♦ ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

The approach to Public Education is currently under review. The review will look at what the right channels are to reach the right people at the right time. The role of traditional media, social media, advertising, online activity, educational resources, and community engagement will be part of this work. The updated Public Education Strategy is expected to include a specific social media strategy.

## Objectives

The objectives of the National Public Education Programme are:

- ♦ to effectively build public awareness and understanding by individuals and communities of hazards in New Zealand and civil defence emergency management, that ultimately will lead to action towards preparedness
- ♦ to develop a strategic approach that will be regularly monitored, reviewed and tested to ensure it reflects the areas of need
- ♦ to achieve increased levels of awareness and understanding of types of disasters, actions and behaviour changes (i.e. to ensure that all communities are aware of the emergencies that could affect them, and that they will take measures to protect themselves, their families and their livelihoods), and
- ♦ to ensure consistency and effectiveness of messaging.

## A multi-media approach

Successful social change programmes ensure that messages are carried to audiences through a variety of mechanisms, media and means. This means not relying, for example, on television advertising alone, but backing it up with numerous other interventions.

The strategy for the programme uses multi-media supported by a concerted series of communication activities, coordinated resources, events, media opportunities, web and multi-level networking to ensure the programme has a wide reach and to bring a sense of ‘ubiquity’ to the messages.

## 23.4 Ongoing research and evaluation

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MCDEM is required to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes, and assess levels of awareness and preparedness. MCDEM will undertake:

- ♦ qualitative research to better understand and overcome barriers to action and be informed on international best practice for public education programmes, and
- ♦ quantitative benchmark research to monitor and improve effectiveness of public education programmes.

## 23.5 References and links

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### Other sections of the Guide

- ◆ Section 4, General roles and responsibilities
- ◆ Section 5, Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (MCDEM)
- ◆ Section 6, Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups (CDEM Groups)
- ◆ Section 18, Readiness
- ◆ Section 19, Planning
- ◆ Section 20, Capability development
- ◆ Section 21, Exercising and testing
- ◆ Section 22, Monitoring and evaluation
- ◆ Section 24, Response

### Other documents

- ◆ Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (2006) *The Way Forward – Strategic Framework for the National CDEM Public Education Programme 2006-2015* ([www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz) – search for 'national public education programme')
- ◆ Get Ready Get Thru campaign evaluation – annual Colmar Brunton survey results ([www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz) – search for 'research and evaluation')
- ◆ *Report of the 2012 "What's The Plan Stan?" survey of New Zealand primary schools* ([www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz) – search for 'research and evaluation')
- ◆ *Disaster Preparedness Education in Schools: Recommendations for New Zealand and the United States* (2011) ([www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz) – search for 'research and evaluation')
- ◆ [www.getthru.govt.nz](http://www.getthru.govt.nz) (provides practical public education information about what to do before, during and after emergencies)
- ◆ [www.facebook.com/nzgetthru](https://www.facebook.com/nzgetthru) (Facebook page that supports the public education campaign)
- ◆ [www.twitter.com/NZGetThru](https://www.twitter.com/NZGetThru) (Twitter account that supports the public education campaign)
- ◆ [www.whatstheplanstan.govt.nz](http://www.whatstheplanstan.govt.nz) (a teaching resource for primary and intermediate schools)