



Severe Weather Science Advisory Panel (SeWSAP)

Terms of Reference

September 2025

1. Purpose

1.1 To enable and facilitate coordination of the Aotearoa New Zealand science system to support the Aotearoa New Zealand emergency management system in managing severe weather risks; and the provision of system-level advice across all 4Rs of emergency management; reduction, readiness, response and recovery.

2. Scope

2.1 The Panel is convened by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), under the authority of the Director of Civil Defence and Emergency Management.

2.2 The role of the panel will not duplicate the role of operational science agencies, unless directed by the Director and/or the National Controller.

2.3 For emergency activations of the Panel, it is envisioned this panel only stands up for extreme and/or highly complex severe weather emergencies, and this may be prior to, during, and after severe weather events.

2.4 This panel is in an establishment phase (June 2025-June 2026); the intention is to consider the addition of additional members as the role of the panel is identified and tested across both science and emergency management systems.

3. Objectives

3.1 Provide a system-level interface and coordination mechanism between the Aotearoa New Zealand science system and Aotearoa New Zealand emergency management system across the 4Rs of emergency management.

3.2 Provide timely, high-quality, system-level science-advice as requested. This may include:

- informing response, readiness and recovery agencies, and
- supporting consistent public messaging.

3.3 Support trans-disciplinary and multi-institutional collaboration within the science system to support the emergency management system for severe weather risks.

3.4 Post-event science coordination: Act as the national focal point to identify, advocate for, prioritise, and coordinate, additional monitoring, science investigations, and data collection for extreme severe weather events that will support:

- short-term science advice, and
- long-term research, where data is perishable.

- 3.5 Support and enable effective, collegial relationships between Aotearoa-based scientists, with expertise in climate, meteorological and hydrological science (hazard, risk, and impact), engineering, social science, Te Ao Māori and critical infrastructure, who are working in the domain of severe weather.
- 3.6 Develop and maintain mechanisms to act as the national focal point for international science liaisons, for use in coordination of response to severe weather.
- 3.7 Assist with establishing national science priorities for response to and recovery from severe weather events.

4. Membership of the SeWSAP

4.1 Membership of the SeWSAP is determined by NEMA, ideally in partnership with relevant severe weather science system leaders. Members will be leading scientists in their field, with demonstrated ability to work effectively and constructively across policy and practice.

4.2 SeWSAP membership will include representatives from:

- National Emergency Management Agency (including Chair, Executive Officer)
- MetService¹
- Earth Sciences New Zealand

4.3 And may include representation from the following:

- New Zealand Universities
- Natural Hazards and Resilience Platform, usually the Director
- Ministry for the Environment
- Regional sector
- Landslide National Advisory Group (LNAG)
- Natural Hazards Commission (NHC)

4.4 And ensuring representation from the following areas of subject matter expertise:

- Te Ao Māori
- Social science
- Engineering

4.5 Panel members will be selected in their individual capacity, and their ability to provide strategic influence and disciplinary expertise. However, consideration will also be given to the representation of specific organisations and sectors, in line with point 1.7 of the Statement of Expectations.

4.6 Final decisions on membership of the SeWSAP are at the discretion of the National Emergency Management Agency.

¹ MetService is a core member of the SeWSAP because it is the official provider of weather advice for Aotearoa New Zealand, and has a statutory obligation to monitor, identify, analyse and issue meteorological hazard information, and provide advice to the National Emergency Management Agency and the CDEM sector.

4.7 Membership of the Establishment Group of the SeWSAP includes:

Name	Organisation	Role
Thomas Wilson	NEMA	Chair
Erica Hardiman	NEMA	Executive Officer
Ashleigh Fromont	NEMA	
Alice Evans	NEMA	
Chris Noble	MetService	
Andrew Tait	Earth Sciences New Zealand (NIWA)	
Graham Leonard	Earth Sciences New Zealand (GNS)	
Richard Smith	Natural Hazards and Resilience Platform	
Tania Gerrard	Earth Sciences New Zealand (GNS)	
Alison Collins	Ministry for the Environment	
Chris Daughney	Te Uru Kahika	
Martin Doyle	Tasman District Council; co-chair of National Flood Warning Steering Group	
Julia Becker	Massey University	

5. Task groups of the SeWSAP

5.1 The SeWSAP may form specialist task groups to progress identified actions or tasks. These task groups will be time-limited, and membership will be decided by SeWSAP panel members. Task groups can include external stakeholders.

5.2 There will be no permanent task groups, and all groups that are established must be time-limited and have a specific activity, task, or action to complete.

5.3 Task groups may operate both during a response to severe weather activity and outside of response.

6. Responsibilities of Members

6.1 A separate Statement of Expectations outlines the responsibilities and qualities of the members of the Panel.

6.2 The Panel will operate on 'best endeavours' basis.

6.3 Panel members are expected to provide science advice as an independent subject matter expert in their relevant field.

6.4 Panel members are expected to represent their agency or sector, and provide the appropriate connection back into that sector and agency; ensuring they clearly indicate if this is distinct from their provision of independent science advice (see 6.3). This connectivity role may involve relaying information between their respective agency and the panel, and as needed, bringing representatives from their agency to provide advice to the panel.

6.5 Members and their organisations will be responsible for their costs of participation in the SeWSAP, including meeting attendance.

7. Meetings

- 7.1 The Chair will encourage free and open discussions. Decisions are by consensus, if possible, and by a majority vote if consensus cannot be reached. The Chair has a casting vote.
- 7.2 Regular meetings will be held at such frequency as agreed by Panel Members. The SeWSAP should meet at least annually.
- 7.3 The Executive Officer and Chair are responsible for setting meeting dates, and decide the (physical and/or virtual) location of meetings.
- 7.4 Members should aim to be present at all meetings, or nominate to the Chair an alternative person to attend in their place.
- 7.5 Additional science capability or organisation representatives can be called upon for discussions, as proposed by SeWSAP members, with agreement from the Chair.

8. Response to severe weather activity

- 8.1 A decision to convene the Panel in response to weather activity, and the way in which it operates, will follow the panel's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP; to be developed as part of Phase 1).
- 8.2 Open sharing of data and information between responding groups is strongly encouraged.
- 8.3 In a State of National Emergency, the National Controller may prioritise requests to SeWSAP through the National Crisis Management Centre.

9. Administration

- 9.1 NEMA will keep a contact list of the Members. The Executive Officer will ensure this remains up to date. Contact details will be checked for accuracy at least annually by the Executive Officer.
- 9.2 NEMA and task group representatives will keep a database with contact details of scientists (including their area(s) of subject matter expertise) who are willing to be involved in a response.
- 9.3 The Chair will provide and maintain access to the SeWSAP online shared workspace within the Emergency Management NZ Instance (EMI) within Microsoft Teams. This will be used as the primary location for sharing information with SeWSAP Members.
- 9.4 The Chair is responsible for distributing meeting minutes to Members.
- 9.5 Any Member may seek clarity and review of the SeWSAP purpose, objectives, roles, and responsibilities. An amendment to the Terms of Reference is to be agreed by all SeWSAP members.
- 9.6 The Terms of Reference and Panel membership will be published on the National Emergency Management Agency website and will be kept up to date by the National Emergency Management Agency.

Appendix 1: Structure and Position of the SeWSAP

