Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management Media release

31 August 2016, 4.21pm

Exercise Tangaroa only

This information is part of Exercise Tangaroa. There is no tsunami. We are part of a test of New Zealand's arrangements for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a national tsunami impact. For more information to go <http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/exercises/exercisetangaroa2016/>

A state of national emergency has been declared by Minister Nikki Kaye after a 9.2 earthquake struck near the Kermadec Islands.

The Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (MCDEM) has issued a tsunami warning for all New Zealand coastal areas including the Chatham Islands from 1017 hours 31 August 2016.

There have been a significant number of fatalities. Reports suggest multiple fatalities have occurred across the upper North Island.

We are still in the emergency response phase of this event.

Emergency services do not have an estimate of the number of fatalities but the number is expected to be substantial and likely to rise.

More information will come to hand as emergency services continue with their rescue efforts and assessments of impacted communities.

Tsunami activity has been recorded/detected in the following areas as of 3.30pm:

Chatham Islands-Kaingaroa, Chatham Islands-Waitangi, North Cape, Whangarei, Auckland, Mt Maunganui, East Cape, Gisborne, New Plymouth, Napier, Whanganui, Wellington, Nelson, Westport, Greymouth, Lyttelton, Milford Sound, Dunedin, Bluff, Manukau, Tauranga, Raoul Island, Great Barrier Island, Castle Point, Kaikoura and Christchurch.

People in these coastal areas have been advised to evacuate. The first wave activity may not be the most significant.

A series of waves is expected over next 12-24 hours and people should stay away from their homes for 24-48 hours.

Tsunami activity will continue for several hours and the threat must be regarded as real until this warning is cancelled.

What we need you to do:

1. People in coastal areas must evacuate.

2. Stay out of the water (sea, rivers and estuaries, including boating activities) 3. Stay off beaches and shore areas 4. Do not go sightseeing 5. Share this information with family, neighbours and friends. Check on neighbours, particularly elderly.

6. Listen to the radio and/or TV for updates 7. Follow social media for updates: Twitter #ExTang. Facebook: NZGetThru 8. Follow instructions of local civil defence authorities 9. Call 111 for emergencies.

10. Call police on 0800 8786264 for tsunami-related missing persons enquiries.

We have no information on the Marlborough Sounds, Timaru or Stewart Island at this time.

The National Crisis Management Centre (NCMC) has been activated and is coordinating the national response. NCMC is assessing the scale of evacuations and impact and will be issuing updates regularly.

Local responses are being managed by local Civil Defence Emergency Management groups and they are sending out regular media updates.

This is a very serious situation, and we need people to act calmly and follow all advice.

ENDS

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