



**National Emergency
Management Agency**
Te Rākau Whakamarumaru

North Island Severe Weather Event After Action Review

Terms of Reference 11 July 2023

1.1 Background

Auckland Event

1. On Friday, 27 January 2023, the upper North Island experienced widespread and significant flooding caused by heavy rainfall, with Auckland being the most impacted region. Flooding was widespread across the city, with West Auckland and North Shore being the worst affected areas. This event led to four deaths.
2. The Mayor of Auckland City Council declared a state of local emergency for the Auckland region at approximately 9:30 pm on 27 January 2023.
3. Following the event an independent review into Auckland Council's emergency management response over the first 48-hours of this event was commissioned by the Mayor of Auckland City and completed by Bush International Consulting.

Cyclone Gabrielle

4. On Thursday 9 February 2003 the impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle¹ began to be felt across the upper and eastern North Island.
5. The impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle continued to intensify and on 14 February the Minister for Emergency Management declared two States of National Emergency to support the response to Cyclone Gabrielle. The declarations applied to: Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Tairāwhiti, and Hawke's Bay CDEM Group areas, and the Tararua District.
6. It was only the third time in New Zealand history that States of National Emergency have been declared to support the response to an emergency.
7. Cyclone Gabrielle caused widespread damage to impacted areas, including property loss, road closures, collapsed bridges, loss of critical infrastructure such as power. The east coast was particularly badly hit with flooding and winds creating significant damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure in the Hawke's Bay and Tairāwhiti regions. This event led to 11 deaths.

National Emergency Management Agency

8. NEMA's key functions are steward, operator and assurer of the emergency management system.
9. As steward, NEMA provides strategic leadership for risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery activities, and builds emergency management capability and capacity. As operator, it leads or supports the response to and recovery from emergencies while also supporting the operation of the emergency management system. NEMA is developing its assurer capability to provide assurance that the emergency management system is fit for purpose.
10. The combination of the Auckland Weather Event and Cyclone Gabrielle resulted in NEMA activating a prolonged emergency management response. With the National Crisis Management Centre (NCC) being stood up on 27 January 2023, later to transitioning to the

¹ Note that the system had been downgraded to a subtropical low by the time it hit New Zealand

National Crisis Management Centre (NCCM) and being in continuous operation until 22 March 2023. NEMA personnel including Regional Emergency Management Advisors (REMAs) continued to support impacted CDEM Groups past the stand down of the NCCM.

11. The response required an all of organisation effort from NEMA with resources being pulled into both the NCCM and frontline response from across government.
12. NEMA is growing its maturity in conducting after action reviews so that they are more inclusive, joined up at all levels, and have more rigor into the process for identifying actions, so that actions address the underlying causes for long-term benefits.
13. NEMA's role in response to the North Island Severe Weather Event (the combination of the Auckland Weather Event and Cyclone Gabrielle) was complex, prolonged and its impacts were geographically dispersed. Given the scale and scope of the review it was decided to use a project management approach to ensure that the Continuous Improvement Team were well supported and that the review received appropriate senior management oversight.
14. It is expected that the After Action Review will identify strengths as well as areas for improvement in NEMA's response, and this will inform improvements into the organisation's readiness and response systems.
15. The Chief Executive, National Emergency Management Agency, has commissioned this review to enable NEMA's continuous improvement in line with the Purpose of the Review.

1.2 Purpose

16. The purpose of the After Action Review is to ensure that NEMA is ready for future large and potentially catastrophic natural hazard events. To achieve this the Review will:
 - a. Consider the functional capacity of the systems, processes, internal policies, people capability and infrastructure used and/or directed by NEMA to respond to a multi-region North Island Severe Weather Event.
 - b. Identify root causes and lessons to develop practical, actionable steps for improving or sustaining NEMA's existing preparedness and response systems.
 - c. Share lessons from the review with other Emergency Management professionals in the sector to learn from.
 - d. Provide evidence for the development of NEMA's improvement action plan, and operating model, from which evaluation and exercising activities can draw.

1.3 Parties

Sponsor/SRO

17. Chief Executive, National Emergency Management Agency

Chair

18. Director, Civil Defence Emergency Management who is also Deputy Chief Executive, Emergency Management, National Emergency Management Agency

NEMA Staff

19. The Sponsor/SRO expects that NEMA staff involved in the response to the North Island Severe Weather Event contribute to, and are engaged with, the After Action Review process. This includes being free and frank with their observations of how the response was conducted.
20. In return the Sponsor/SRO commits to providing a safe environment where staff can freely express themselves without fear of repercussion.

Other Stakeholders

21. In addition to NEMA staff a number of other organisations have an interest in the Review and the lessons identified. It is expected that they are engaged with as part of the Review. This includes:
 - a. Impacted and supporting CDEM Groups
 - b. EMAT and CDEM surge personnel deployed to impacted regions or assisting in the NCC/NCMC
 - c. Public Service Pool: NCMC Surge Staff
 - d. International surge personnel deployed to impacted regions or deployed to the NCMC
 - e. Agencies with a direct role and responsibility in the response and or who deployed liaison personnel to the NCMC
22. Should it become appropriate the Continuous Improvement Team may speak with other parties in addition to those set out in these terms of reference.

1.4 Scope

Within Scope

23. The Review will focus on NEMA's role and actions in its response to the Auckland Flooding Event and Cyclone Gabrielle and the subsequent States of National Emergency, collectively referred to as the North Island Severe Weather Event, including:
 - a. The events leading up to the decision to activate the NEMA NCC and NEMA's subsequent response operations from 27 January 2023 to 0700 on 28 January 2023 in response to the Auckland Flooding Event.
 - b. NCC and NCMC functions, supporting response activities and decision making, planning for early recovery, or surge support from other agencies who supported the NCC/NCMC as part of the response, from the first shift after activation starting at 0700 on 28 January 2023 to the NCMC deactivation at 1400 on 22 March 2023.
 - c. Deployment and surge staffing processes of personnel or teams deployed by the NCC/NCMC E.g. Emergency Management Assistance Teams (EMAT), CDEM Group and public sector surge staff, and New Zealand Response Teams (NZRTs).
24. The After Action review will:
 - a. Focus on NEMA, partner agencies, CDEM Groups, NGO's and Iwi's reflections on NEMA's role and actions during the response in the time periods outlined above.
 - b. Consider the impact of NEMA's leadership role under a State of National Emergency and NEMA's use of the powers under the CDEM Act.

- c. Consider NEMA's relationship with the ODESC System.
- d. Generate themes around interactions with other agencies and partners, and system wide themes that could also be used in the reviews conducted by other agencies.
- e. Consider the wellbeing of personnel deployed during the response in the NCMC and in deployment.
- f. Act as an evidence base for future NEMA and system capability development/ investment.
- g. Act as an input into any wider government review
- h. Understand what can be learned across the 4R's (reduction, readiness, response, and recovery planning).
- i. Understand the lessons for the Operating Model and facility requirements of the NCC/NCMC, the Alternate NCMC, and
- j. Recommend an action plan.

Outside of Scope

25. The following matters are outside the scope of the Review:

- a. Recovery actions occurring after 22 March 2023, including NEMA support of the establishment of the DPMC Cyclone Recovery Unit, and any actions undertaken by the Cyclone Recovery Unit.
- b. All of Government actions. This is an internally commissioned review of NEMA's role in the response and recovery planning up to the 22 March 2023 when the NCMC was deactivated. The actions and decisions of other agencies are therefore outside the scope of the review.
- c. CDEM Group, Iwi, partner agency and other stakeholders' actions. This is an internally commissioned review of NEMA's role and actions in the response and recovery phases up to the time of NCMC deactivation on 22 March 2023. The actions and decisions of other agencies (including other agencies listed in 1.3 above) are therefore outside the scope of the review.

26. Notwithstanding these exclusions, the Sponsor/SRO expects that the Continuous Improvement Team:

- a. Will consult and cooperate with other agencies or organisations as appropriate for the purposes of the After Action Review.
- b. Will consider any information provided by other agencies or organisations (including the findings of any investigation or reviews undertaken by those parties), and
- c. Will not disclose any information, or make findings on information provided by those parties, that would prejudice the processes or outcomes of such investigations or reviews.

1.5 Deliverables

27. The After Action Review will create the following deliverables:

- a. An Interim and Final After Action Review Report to capture the learnings from NEMA's role and actions during the NCMC activation periods.
- b. A summary of findings accessible to NEMA, ODESC/ HRB, CDEM Groups, Iwi and Māori, the Emergency Management Sector, academia, the science community, and the public.

- c. NEMA's:
 - i. Improvement Action Plan
 - ii. Reporting Framework
 - iii. Communications collateral

1.6 Principles

28. The Review will be undertaken according to the following principles
- a. The emphasis of the After Action Review is on learning and improvement.
 - b. The Review will reflect NEMA's values:
 - Kia māia – Courageous
 - Kia honohono – Connected
 - Kia manawanui – Committed
 - Kia taute - Respect
 - c. Behaviours to create a learning culture, a just culture and psychological safety for all involved are expected.
 - d. Best practice approaches to After Action Reviews will be applied.
 - e. Endeavour to deconflict with any other reviews and reduce any potential duplication of effort.

1.7 NEMA's AAR approach

29. The After Action Review for the North Island Severe Weather Event presents significant opportunities for NEMA to learn from a significant multi-region set of concurrent events that resulted in a prolonged response effort. The After Action Review processes conducted in the past require strengthening so that the approach is inclusive, action oriented and results in collective understanding and acknowledgement of NEMA's successes and the prioritisation and agreement of improvement activities.
30. The Continuous Improvement Unit is responsible for NEMA's After Action Reviews. Given the scale, scope, and organisational impact of the North Island Severe Weather Event a project structure has been initiated. This is to ensure that the Continuous Improvement Unit has access to organisational resources, that the Executive Leadership Team is fully engaged and informed, and that NEMA as an organisation is fully focused on the required inputs into the review.
31. This was a complex event which covered a broad geographic area and involved many responding agencies and stakeholders. Unpacking the lessons from this event will take time to do thoroughly and we are approaching this through four workstreams. The workstreams are:

Workstream 1: Internal review with NEMA staff by May 2023 (complete)

- An internal NEMA After Action Review workshop (held on 16 May 2023) was informed by observations and insights collected and analysed during the activation period and post event debriefing activities.

Workstream 2: Engagement with external partners in August/September 2023

- Two After Action Review workshops:
 - CDEM NEMA After Action Review Workshop TBC August 2023 (preferred approach by CDEM Groups).

- Multi-Agency/CDEM After Action Review TBC August 2023

Workstream 3: Drafting report - July through to November 2023

- Outputs from NEMA's After Action Review workshops go through a natural justice process ensuring the content reflects a fair and accurate reflection of the perspectives shared.

Workstream 4: Share final findings by December 2023

- The final report and a summary of findings accessible to NEMA, ODESC/ HRB, CDEM Groups, Iwi and Māori, the Emergency Management Sector, academia, the science community, and the public.

32. AAR workshop planning teams will be established in the second workstream. Representatives from CDEM Groups and other stakeholders will be invited to provide advice on NEMAs engagement approaches and help with deconflicting and minimising duplication of effort with other reviews.

1.8 Confidentiality and Disclosure

33. The comments and contributions of individuals will be anonymised where practically possible.
34. Where a comment is attributable to an individual or stakeholder, that person or party will be provided an opportunity to review and provide comment prior to NEMA finalising the report.
35. Draft findings, results and recommendations will be released to relevant parties/persons as part of the natural justice process.
36. The draft final report (following all natural justice checks) will be provided to the NEMA Project Governance (see 1.10 below) including the Sponsor/SRO on completion of the review.
37. Where a copy of the final report, or any drafts, is requested under the Official Information Act 1981, any release of information will be handled in accordance with the provisions of the OIA.
38. It is noted that the Government Inquiry into the North Island severe weather events has powers to request a copy of the report, including any draft. Where any request is made, the disclosure will be handled in accordance with the provisions of the Inquiries Act 2013.

1.9 Costs

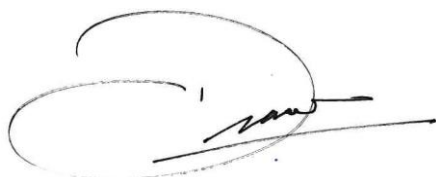
39. All costs associated with the After Action Review will be funded through the business as usual Continuous Improvement Team Budget or through funding targeted to North Island Severe Weather Event Recovery.

1.10 Project Governance

40. NEMA has established an After Action Review Steering Group, made up of NEMA Senior Leaders. The specific membership of the Steering Group may change over time to reflect the work being undertaken at any given time, but will include both NEMA Deputy Chief Executives.
41. The Steering Group will ensure that the AAR meets its objectives, has an appropriate level of oversight, manages risks, budgets and delegations, and implements appropriate processes effectively.
42. As per 1.3 above, the After Action Review Steering Group is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, Emergency Management. Members are asked to attend each meeting or propose an alternate person after conferring with the Chair. Delegates/alternatives or other attendees will be permitted with the agreement of the Chair.
43. Meetings will normally be held fortnightly using an in person/hybrid model.
44. NEMA's Continuous Improvement Unit is the After Action Review Lead and responsible for drafting the Report, Project Management, NZ Lessons Management project, and NEMA's Internal Lessons Management processes. They will also provide Steering Group Secretariat support.
45. There are also AAR workshop planning teams which include CDEM and other external agency members to provide advice on NEMAs engagement approaches and deconflicting and minimising duplication of effort with other reviews.

1.11 Approval

46. The terms of reference are approved by Dave Gawn, Chief Executive, National Emergency Management Agency, dated 9 August 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dave Gawn', is written over a large, faint circular stamp or watermark.