

Impact

No. 1 AUTUMN 1998

The newsletter of Emergency Management in New Zealand

New directions in Emergency Management



Welcome



Welcome to the first issue of !IMPACT, the quarterly newsletter of the Emergency Management Policy and Establishment Unit of the Department of Internal Affairs. In each issue we will bring you the latest news on the new emergency management structure in New Zealand.

In this issue, we introduce John Norton, the new Director of Emergency Management and Civil Defence, and explain the background to the changes ahead.

You will also find an introduction to the staff of the Unit, including contact details.

HOW TO CONTACT US

For more information on Emergency Management or any of the material contained within !IMPACT please contact:

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Partnership: key to success

The new structure for emergency management, including a new Ministry of Civil Defence next year, cannot be developed in a vacuum. We will be consulting widely with organisations with an interest in emergency management, as we develop new legislation, and pilot the structure in the field.

We already have productive relationships with a number of key stakeholders. In particular, the members of *Local Government New Zealand* made significant contributions in the consultation process on the new model of the emergency management groups.

So you will be hearing a lot from us in the future. In the meantime if you have any comments that you think we may find useful then we would welcome your feedback at the address on this page. ①

David Bull

A big thank you



At the end of April, David Bull stepped down as Convenor of the Emergency Review Officials Committee and as Acting Manager of the Emergency Management Policy and Establishment Unit. David has overseen the Review from the initial workshop in 1994 through to the present vigorous programme of the Policy and Establishment Unit. In both activities, David has had a pivotal role. A testament to the success of David and the Officials Committee was seen in the approval of Cabinet of the new structure to be introduced into New Zealand, including a new Ministry and local emergency management groups. We wish David all the best for the future. ①

John Norton: *New Director for Emergency Management and Civil Defence.*

John Norton

Prior to taking up his new position, John Norton was a Group Manager for the Hutt City Council. Qualified in civil and earthquake engineering, it was natural that he should become involved in Emergency Management. He was one of the founders of the Wellington Earthquake Lifelines Group, developing risk and recovery plans for the utilities on which we all depend: gas, water, electricity and telecommunications.

In 1994 he led a reconnaissance team to Los Angeles to study the effect of the Northridge earthquake. Following the Kobe earthquake, he co-presented a paper on utility response planning to a joint USA/Japan conference at Osaka in 1995.

Now John wants to transform the way New Zealand deals with Emergency Management. Not change, transform. Civil Defence crops up less in John's vocabulary than do concepts like risk management and "all-hazards" approaches. The "all hazards" approach encompasses chemical spills, power failures, even epidemics.

For a while John will be a Director three times over: managing the existing Ministry of Civil Defense, an embryonic new Ministry, and the Emergency Management Policy and Establishment Unit which is planning the transition between the two.

John has seen what happens when communities trust in outside help and direction. "In Kobe it took them three days to get under way. When they got under way they ran, but it took three days."

The Northridge earthquake killed 57 people and severely damaged 4,000 buildings. In response the United States mobilised enormous resources: within

two days 22,000 people were being housed in tents around their communities and more than 1,000 welfare people were deployed. Water tankers were brought in, and within 24 hours 93% of power was restored.

"However in New Zealand, we simply are not large enough to provide that level of back up," says John. "So what we lack in size, we have to make up by being smarter."

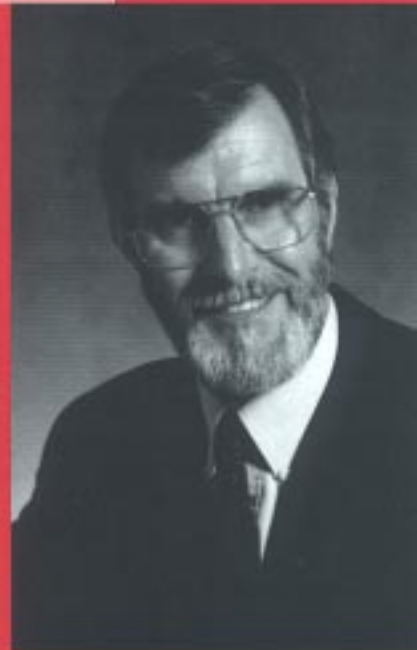
Government agencies will be called on to develop risk management plans. John gives the health system as an example. In a National Emergency an Auckland CHE might find itself having to understand the business of its Wellington counterpart. Better that the agencies begin working together now.

The new Ministry will also concern itself with international co-operation. We have, says John, no heavy rescue capability here in New Zealand and might well need to seek help from across the Tasman.

Norton is convinced that emergency management and the new Ministry urgently need to establish a profile, a new "brand", both to instil a sense of confidence and to remake the way people think about civil defence.

All going well, here is an opportunity to establish New Zealand as a world leader in nationwide risk management, and to set international standards.

"I want to create a new thinking, a new brand. That's what gives me a buzz - taking a traditional way of operating and making it better." ①



New Zealand's New Direction in Emergency Management – Why are we doing this anyway?



**This article originally appeared in a number of newspapers in February 1998.*

New Zealand has taken a close look at its civil defence system – and developed a completely new approach as a result.

As New Zealanders, we are intensely aware of our nation's vulnerability to natural disasters such as earthquakes and cyclones. It's part of our national psyche – and our preparedness for it is something we probably take for granted. But is our civil defence system the best it can possibly be?

It seems not – and now moves are underway to change how we think about "emergencies", how we prepare for and respond to them – and what we can do to prevent them happening at all.

"We've traditionally taken an 'ambulance at the bottom of the cliff' approach to civil defence, with mechanisms in place to respond to an emergency if it happens," says Jack Elder, Minister of Internal Affairs.

"However, emergency management is much more than response. We can be far more effective if we take a risk management approach – assess the risks of an emergency happening, take steps to reduce them, and operate an effective network that copes with them when they happen and helps communities recover as quickly as possible."

New emergency management structure

Since 1959, New Zealand's emergency management has operated through three civil defence zones (Auckland, Palmerston North and Christchurch), 78 regional council and territorial authority organisations.

However, a 1995 report by the Emergency Services Review task force (chaired by Sir Somerford Teagle) concluded there were too many levels and too many players in local emergency situations. It recommended a new system – a small number of regional Emergency Management Groups (EMGs) with local responsibilities.

In May 1997 the Government signalled its acceptance of the need for change – change that will see more ownership of emergency management at a local level, and the formation of a new Ministry of Civil Defence.

The Emergency Management Policy and Establishment Unit (EMU) is managing the transition from the old to the new system. The EMU has been in place since 1 July 1997 and will progressively expand to become the core of the new Ministry.

David Bull, acting Manager of the EMU at time of interview, says New Zealand's emergency sector – which ranges from the police and fire service to ham radio organisations and a huge volunteer network – recognised the need for change.

"In 1994, a workshop of 26 organisations in the emergency sector addressed two questions," he says. "Are our emergency services as well co-ordinated as they could reasonably be? and: Are we as well prepared for a large emergency as we should reasonably be? The answer to both was no, we could do better. The Teagle report reinforced that opinion."

Under the new system, each EMG will comprise emergency management specialists from throughout the sector. Their role will include assessing their

area for potential hazards, developing systems to manage those hazards and co-ordinating the community's emergency-related resources.

"It's an integrated approach," says David Bull. "By working together we will have clearly defined roles, avoid unnecessary duplication of services, spread our resources wider, use them more effectively and ultimately help the community recover better and faster."

Comprehensive emergency management

"In effect, disasters are failures," says Dr Neil Britton, Advisor to the EMU. "System failures, building failures and also the failure to plan and understand the risk of them happening. While there are some risks you obviously can't eliminate, you can try to ensure they are systematically managed so that the consequences aren't as severe as they could have been, and that you recover as quickly as possible.

"Even major disruptions can be seen as routine if you have a system that's ready for them. After all 'disasters' are always out there, it's just that we can't predict when they will happen."

The new emergency management system will have four components: risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery. It will apply a comprehensive all-hazards risk management approach, which goes beyond the range of well known emergencies such as earthquakes and floods to include the increasing range of human-caused technological and biological emergencies, such as oil and chemical spills and transport accidents – accidents that can severely affect a community.

Local government support

"All this change is happening in close partnership with local government, as it must," says Bull. "We have a shared vision of an efficient, effective emergency management system that recognises the immense skills and knowledge available at local levels."

John Hutchings, Strategy Leader, Environmental and Social of Local Government New Zealand, says the move is a logical one.

"Improving our efficiency at a local level will mean greater self-reliance and an improved ability to cope with local emergencies on our own. This in turn will mean less demand for help from outside agencies, and therefore a much higher threshold for declaring a state of emergency. By working with everyone else in the emergency framework, we will create a very effective network of skills and knowledge that we can access for particular situations."

Four pilot programmes in Nelson, Taranaki, Thames and Auckland will put the theory into practice (see *separate item for more information*).

"These areas have quite distinct differences in the hazards they face and their local structures," says Britton. "The pilots will enable us to achieve a good cross-section of New Zealand conditions, and eventually provide us with some effective management models that we can fine-tune for other locations."

One of the key priorities during this transition phase will be maintaining New Zealand's current civil defence capabilities.

"That's one of the main reasons for this transition period," says David Bull. "While we are developing the necessary mechanisms for the new structure, including completely new legislation, we must continue to use the existing high level of skills and preparedness."

"In the end the greatest measure of our success will be the disasters that don't happen, or have significantly less impact than expected," says Jack Elder. "While New Zealand will always need a civil defence capacity, this new structure offers the opportunity to ensure much greater community well-being in the event of an emergency." ①

in brief...

More on those pilots...

Work has commenced on the establishment of pilot emergency management groups to evaluate the structure we are developing. The pilots will be held in Nelson/Tasman, Taranaki region, Thames/Coromandel and Auckland City. Four distinct sites, chosen for their differing mixes of urban and rural communities.

Present work in this area involves developing a tool to benchmark where the pilot groups are currently, for each element of the EMG concept. Once the benchmarking is completed, a system will be developed to monitor and evaluate the pilot EMG's.

Expected outcomes for the pilot programme are:

- the determination of preferred methods of achieving comprehensive emergency management in each of the pilot areas;
- full documentation of procedures and processes, including the consultation process, that has resulted in final decisions being approved;
- local agreement to approach the new ministry for the EMGs to be established.

It is expected that the pilot EMG project will be completed by June 1999. ①

Emergency Management Web Page and Email News

We are on the way to developing our own Web Page which will contain up to date information on our activities as well as progress of the new emergency management structure. The Web Page should be up and running by June 1998.

In the meantime, we have established an email service for anyone interested in emergency management issues. We will email fast breaking stories related to emergency management, and other topics of interest.

If you would like to be included on our email list, then email your request to:
david.schnellenberg@dia.govt.nz

Emergency Management on the Road

The Emergency Management Policy and Establishment Unit has produced a multi-media presentation on *New Zealand's New Direction in Emergency Management*. This was presented first to a well attended conference on *Best Practice in Emergency Management*, in Wellington, in March 1998. Over the next few months, we will be taking the presentation around the country to interested parties in local government, emergency services and others.



If you would like us to visit you and your organisation, or want more information on when we will be in your area, please contact us at address on page 2. ①

Cabinet approves Emergency Management framework

In a recent letter to local authorities, Minister of Civil Defence, Hon Jack Elder, announced that Cabinet has approved the new emergency management framework, including the concept of emergency management groups. However, at the moment we still do not have a time slot for the introduction of the new emergency management legislation into Parliament.

Mr Elder noted in his letter that the government is committed to the reforms and seeks to reduce the drafting demands of the Bill, in order to facilitate its passing. In the meantime, the EMU continues its work on developing the legislation, in order to take any available slot in the programme ①



From left: Neil Britton, Beth Maynard, John Handiside, Dallas Moore, David Schnellenberg, Brigid Pike, Gerard Clark, Kevin O'Kane. (Not in photo - Graeme Aitken)

Meet the team of the EMU

Graeme Aitken, *Legal Advisor (04) 495 6842*

Graeme is developing, with Gerard Clark, new emergency management legislation to replace the current Civil Defence Act. This includes liaising with government and other agencies.

Dr Neil Britton, *Advisor (04) 495 6822*

As well as working on the emergency management group (EMG) pilots, Neil is involved in developing training and educational needs for emergency management, the assessment of a co-ordinated incident management system (CIMS) within emergency services, the contingent capability project and a national emergency management strategy and research protocols for the new Ministry.

Gerard Clark, *Policy Analyst (04) 495 6824*

Along with Graeme, Gerard is working on the development of the new legislation. Gerard is also working with Neil Britton on the pilot EMGs.

John Handiside, *Project Administrator (04) 495 6808*

John is responsible for managing EMU activities to ensure programme outputs are completed on schedule. John is mainly involved with business and resource planning, and meeting public sector management requirements. He is also involved in organisational design of the new Ministry.

Kevin O'Kane, *Policy Analyst (04) 495 6836*

Kevin is working on the assessment of Civil Defence field functions and location, which is required for decisions on staffing and structure of the new Ministry. He is also contributing to the contingent capability project.

Beth Maynard, *Policy Analyst (04) 495 6844*

Beth is involved in developing the policy framework for the new Ministry, and in the contingent capability project. Beth also assists with the Unit's public affairs functions.

Dallas Moore, *Manager, Planning and Public Education for the Ministry of Civil Defence, (04) 495 6821*

Dallas acts as a liaison between the EMU and the existing Ministry of Civil Defence. He also assists in the review of policy papers and the field functions and locations project.

Brigid Pike, *Policy Analyst, (04) 495 6821*

Brigid is developing the emergency management policy framework that will set out the goals, principles and assumptions of emergency management. She is also involved in the development of the new Ministry's functions including audit, purchase, and strategic policy.

David Schnellenberg, *Public Affairs Manager (04) 495 6828*

David manages the stakeholder relationships programme, media relations and internal communications for the EMU. ①