

# Katrina: Lessons for New Zealand

The official report on Hurricane Katrina pulls no punches. John Norton, looks at the lessons for New Zealand in his Directors column on page two and on page 12 United States media lay the blame.

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## MESSAGE FROM

# JOHN NORTON

## LESSONS FROM KATRINA - INITIATIVE & AGILITY

**There are sobering implications for New Zealand in the latest official report on Hurricane Katrina to**

**come out of the United States. The final report from the House of Representatives Select Bi-partisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina is entitled "A Failure of Initiative". It makes for interesting and compelling reading.**

The seven or eight key conclusions are of significance for New Zealand. Here's some of what it has to say:

"It has become increasingly clear that local, state and federal government agencies failed to meet the needs of the residents... Too often, because everybody was in charge, nobody was in charge. Many government officials continue to stubbornly resist recognising that fundamental changes in disaster management are needed... We need to stop waiting for the disaster that fits our response plan and instead design a scalable capacity to meet whatever Mother Nature throws at us.... With Katrina, there was no shortage of plans... but there was not enough plan-ning."

"If 9/11 was a failure of imagination, then Katrina was a failure of initiative. It was a failure of leadership....

The failure of initiative was also a failure of agility.... We again encountered the risk-averse culture that pervades big government, and again recognised the need for organisations as agile and responsive as the 21st Century in which we live."

However, it is important to recognise that the report found that many things went right. "We found many examples of astounding individual initiatives that saved lives, and stand in stark contrast to the larger institutional failures."

The report shows that both sides of a lessons-learned equation are needed for disaster managers to constructively move on to doing it better next time. Because there is always a next time with Mother Nature.

The things that went right included the largely successful mandatory evacuations of millions of people. These evacuations without question saved many lives. The accuracy and timeliness of forecasting also prevented further loss of

life. Throughout the affected areas the first responders, the military, private individuals and organisations made heroic efforts to act decisively and protect lives. Ultimately state-to-state pre-planned co-operative arrangements were critical in restoring law and order, and accelerating the provision of relief supplies. The fundamental issue is how quickly decisions can be made to activate these arrangements.

Could we in New Zealand have done any better? Our "dispersed accountability" framework, embodied in the CDEM Act; our focus on arrangements to support communities managing their disasters; and our small size give us greater potential for agility. With fewer layers of government we need not get bogged down in siloed bureaucracy. If we are smart, we should be able to move quickly to take on lessons learned.

So why is the Katrina report important for us in New Zealand? We have to face the reality that overwhelming disasters happen everywhere and dealing with them is extraordinarily difficult, even, in the case of Katrina, for the biggest economy in the world. The fundamental philosophy underlying CDEM development in New Zealand is communities managing their hazards and disasters, supported by strong regional and national arrangements – this is different from "managing" from the centre. We need to understand that and commit to it.

We have our new CDEM legislation and structure. The National CDEM Strategy provides the direction, and the Group Plans provide the basis for management. The National Plan and Guide which come into effect on 1 July provide the basis for co-ordination and support.

As the implementation phase continues, it is important to keep our eye on the ball. The lessons learned from Katrina reinforce the fact that we owe it to ourselves and our communities to hold to the philosophy, to learn from past experiences, and become capable and agile. We all have to make this work.

John Norton

*Ps Since writing this I have announced my decision to move on from this role. I will talk about that – and my time at MCDEM – in the May issue.*

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MESSAGE FROM

Hon Rick Barker  
Minister of Civil Defence



TSUNAMI RISK – WE'RE TACKLING THE ISSUE

**The Boxing Day tsunami in the Indian Ocean was a shock to us all. The enormity of the devastation, and the extent of the human misery it caused was beyond our comprehension. I, like you, asked myself the question – could this happen here? And, more importantly, what can we do to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities?**

Immediately after the disastrous tsunami, the government commissioned our foremost scientists in this area to produce two reports, the first assessing the risk to New Zealand from tsunami, the second assessing our preparedness for it.

The reports show that the tsunami risk in New Zealand is similar to the risk from earthquakes – in other words, significant. The risk of tsunami has not changed, but we now know more about it. Importantly, the reports note that preparedness can reduce the risk of death and injury from tsunami by 90-95%.

Work is under way to improve monitoring for tsunami, so there will be better alerts and more warning time for people to move to safety.

I have asked MCDEM to report to me by 30 July on the outcome of discussions with CDEM groups, local authorities and other

government agencies about further action that could protect our coastal communities from tsunami.

Meanwhile MCDEM, in conjunction with advertising firm Clemenger BBDO, is making good progress on creative work towards the four-year, \$6 million, public education programme to promote community awareness of all hazards – tsunami included.

I'm looking forward, as I'm sure you all are, to seeing the results of this work. The value of public awareness of hazards was starkly demonstrated by the British schoolgirl Tilly Smith who, during the Boxing Day tsunami, was able to save scores of lives through her knowledge of the warning signs. Her example is one that we should all be able to follow.

In the meantime I have started to spend time with CDEM people around the country - to see things from their perspective.

Last month I visited the Northland CDEM Group in Whangarei and was impressed by the levels of integration and co-operation between the various local authorities and agencies that form the group.



Back Row - Greg Gallop, Superintendent Viv Rickard, Alan Kerrisk (NZ Fire Service) Graeme MacDonald (EMO, Northland CDEM Group), Front row - Minister Rick Barker, Mike Lister (NZ Fire Service), Ruth McKenzie (Northland Health Risk Manger), Mark Farnsworth (Chair Northland Regional Council), Clive Manley (Chair Northland CEG), Warren McLennan (CEO Northland Regional Council).

# New rail bridge aims to reduce flood impact

**Work on the construction of a new rail bridge, designed to allow the passage of high volumes of floodwater, is expected to start at Matata in the next months.**

Government rail infrastructure agency Ontrack is working with Environment Bay of Plenty to secure the necessary consents to build the new bridge which will replace the structure washed away in the May 2005 floods.

The new bridge will enable the removal of temporary culverts that have been criticised because of their inability to deal with two subsequent floods – the most recent last month (subs Feb).

The bridge will form part of a package of mitigation work in the Matata area, which will see Ontrack, Transit NZ, Environment Bay of Plenty, Whakatane District Council and the Department of Conservation undertaking improvements over the next two years.

The most recent flooding, overnight on 10-11 February, again washed out the rail line and State Highway 2 and damaged a telecomms cable – cutting phone services to thousands of Bay of Plenty people.

About 250 millimetres of rain drenched Matata, which is still recovering from last year's devastating floods and landslides.

Whakatane District Mayor Colin Holmes praised the efforts of contractors who worked through the night in hazardous conditions to divert one of the streams in the township.

Meanwhile planning for other flood mitigation work in Matata is continuing following Civil Defence Minister Rick Barker's announcement just before Christmas that Cabinet had agreed to contribute a further \$3 million to the integrated Matata regeneration package.

In total, government expenditure on response and recovery and risk mitigation for the Matata area is likely to top \$20.8 million.

The assistance package will help fund the proposed civil engineering works and other works around the town. These include:

- A 17-metre high debris dam on the Awatarariki Stream
- A bund on the side of the Waitepuru Stream to control the direction of future debris flows
- An ex-gratia \$100,000 payment to the District Council to help employ a manager for two years to oversee the regeneration project
- \$225,000 (via DOC) to help manage the effects of flooding on the Matata Lagoon – of which the western end was devastated in the May floods

The package will also contribute to flood-proofing upgrades of SH 2 and the rail line. The total cost is likely to be around \$4.5 million for highway works and \$3.9 million for the rail works.



**FLOODPROOFING** – The new rail bridge will replace the temporary culverts in the centre of the photograph.  
Credit: Whakatane Beacon.

## CDEM in Schools launch

**The new educational resource, What's the Plan Stan?, developed for MCDEM by Educating NZ, is ready to go out to schools. The package which contains a multimedia CDROM, a teachers handbook and a website at [www.mcdem.govt.nz](#) is to be backed up with a series of professional development workshops to give teachers a fuller understanding of CDEM.**

All primary schools will have received the new resource at the start of Term Two on 25 April. An official launch by Minister Rick Barker is planned for 27 April.

All emergency management offices will have received a copy of the resource, graphics and other relevant promotional material around 18 April.

For more information on the resource email [chris.baylis@dia.govt.nz](mailto:chris.baylis@dia.govt.nz), ph 027 248 3672 or 04 495 6833.



# Cities On Volcanoes – lessons for NZ

**More than 20 New Zealanders attended the fourth international Cities On Volcanoes conference in Quito, Ecuador, in January.**

The New Zealand delegation comprised representatives from central and regional government, research institutes and universities.



Four of the NZ contingent to the Cities on Volcanoes Conference in Ecuador with their armed police escorts.

The conference, organised by the Cities and Volcanoes Commission, aims to provide a link between the volcanology community and emergency managers, serving as a conduit for the exchange of ideas and experience between 'volcano cities'. It also aims to promote multidisciplinary applied research involving collaboration between physical and social scientists and the likes of city officials.

The wide focus of the conference brings together scientists, emergency managers, city planners and the medical community to better understand, evaluate and improve prevention and mitigation measures, land-use planning, public awareness, and emergency management - all required to successfully confront volcanic crises in densely populated areas. New Zealand has been represented at all Cities on Volcanoes conferences to date.

MCDEM's representative, Emergency Management Planner Sara Williams, presented to the conference on 'Planning for welfare issues in a large-scale long-term evacuation in response to a volcanic threat the challenges to New Zealand', and presented a poster on the relocation of tangatawhenua within a developed nation in response to a volcanic threat.

Sara says the COV conferences enable people from around the world to compare notes and learn about the many issues relating to the location of large populations on or about volcanoes. "As populations grow around the world there is increasing pressure for the development of land on the flanks of active volcanoes."

"Auckland is a case in point – though we can be thankful that the Auckland volcanic field is not posing any immediate threat at this stage in time."

A conference report is being written and will be available on the MCDEM website upon completion. It will include details of presentations that may be of interest to the sector. The next COV conference is to be held in Nagasaki, Japan, in November 2006.

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## Update on the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan

### Sector Review of the Guide Completed

**The Guide to the National CDEM Plan has been through a review process by the sector following the release of a draft on the 16th February for feedback and comment from interested persons or organisations.**

The Guide is to provide detail, additional to that specified in the Plan, of current national CDEM arrangements. It will be a key reference for national civil defence emergency management. In addition to the wording of the Plan, it will contain references and links to other relevant information, including the Act, the National CDEM Strategy, selected Directors Guidelines, SOP's, and standards.

The Guide's structure follows that of the Plan; which enables the Guide to be published with the Plan embedded, thus providing a single reference document. Various document design and formatting elements, including colour, are used to distinguish different parts of the Guide so that readers can quickly find information about significant operational arrangements.

Key national stakeholders, including representatives of government departments, CDEM groups, non-government organisations, and lifeline utilities, have worked closely with Ministry staff over several months to prepare the material and review it at various stages during the process of editing and formatting.

In February, the Ministry invited interested organisations and

persons to provide written comments and feedback on the draft prior to it being finalised for approval by Government. The feedback period for the draft Guide has now closed, with about 50 focused and constructive submissions received.

The submissions, which are from a number of government agencies, CDEM groups, and lifeline utilities, are being entered into a database, where each comment can be managed independently or collectively. These submissions are being used to improve the document by more accurately reflecting the arrangements in place at a national level for managing CDEM events.

Many of them are requesting that a particular agency or organisation is added to the Guide as providing support for CDEM activity. This willingness to be involved and to seek inclusion in the arrangements is very encouraging for national CDEM arrangements. The team is also pleased by those comments that acknowledge the usefulness of the Guide in documenting national arrangements.

The final part of the process of developing the Guide is to obtain support from government stakeholders and approval by key Ministers.

The Guide will be a public document, available in both printed and electronic versions. It is to come into force, at the same time as the Plan, on 1st July 2006. It is anticipated that the Guide will be updated more frequently than the Plan (which is to be first reviewed two years after it initially comes into force), to reflect changes to national arrangements.

# Reports show no part of New Zealand's coast is free from tsunami

Two Government-commissioned reports released before Christmas by Civil Defence Minister Rick Barker show the New Zealand tsunami risk is similar to earthquake risk.

One report deals with the risk of tsunami and the other with New Zealand's level of preparedness. They have been posted on the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management website – [www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz)

"The two reports gather together all we know about the tsunami threat. It's bigger than we had thought, but effective work by New Zealanders can greatly reduce the risk of death and injury," said Mr Barker.

The reports analysed tsunami risk to 19 coastal urban areas.

Commissioned by the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management from GNS Science, the reports show that no part of the New Zealand coast is completely free from tsunami risk.

The east coasts of both the North and South Islands are most at risk – with Gisborne, Hawkes Bay, the Wairarapa coast, Wellington, the Kaikoura coast,

Christchurch and Dunedin most exposed. The east coasts of Northland and Coromandel are also considered exposed, as are the Chatham Islands.

The east coast of both islands is exposed to tsunami waves generated by quakes on South America's west coast – but the east coast of the North Island is especially at risk from tsunami generated by local earthquakes.

The reports, however, show that preparedness can reduce the risk of death and injury from tsunami by 90-95%. But if tsunami strike unprepared communities there could be significant numbers of deaths, comparable to those predicted for earthquakes.

Mr Barker says work is under way to improve monitoring for tsunami, so there will be better alerts and more warning time for people to move to safety.

MCDEM staff are to report to the Minister by July on the result of discussions – since the release of the reports – with local CDEM groups, local authorities and other government agencies about further action that can be taken to protect New Zealand communities from tsunami.

- quakes accompanied by coastal landslides
- 1 from a spontaneous landslide without a quake
- 8 others from unknown sources – one possibly a submarine landslide.

The most significant historical tsunami were generated by the M8.2 1855 Wairarapa earthquake, by an earthquake 50km offshore of Gisborne in March 1947, and the tsunami from South America in 1868, 1877 and 1960.

Tsunami with run-up heights of 30m or more have been found in geological records of the past 6000 years.

The 1855 earthquake, which ruptured the Wairarapa fault east of Wellington, generated a tsunami with a maximum known run-up of 10 m at Te Kopi in eastern Palliser Bay and up to 4–5 m in several locations in Wellington and along the northern Marlborough coast. The Rongotai isthmus and Miramar were reportedly covered many times in water to about 1m depth, rushing in from Lyall Bay and from Evans Bay. Waves swept around Wellington Harbour and in Cook Strait for more than 12 hours.

While submarine and coastal landslides may have contributed to the tsunami, the raising and lowering of the sea bed, by as much as 6 m vertically near Turakirae Point, was probably the main cause.

In March 1947, a 120 km long stretch of coast, from Mahia Peninsula northwards, was struck by a tsunami 30 minutes after a moderately-felt earthquake. The maximum run-up height of about 10 m occurred at a near-deserted beach about 20km north of Gisborne. Here, the bridge on the main road near Pouawa was swept hundreds of metres inland and all except one room of the only house nearby was destroyed, the five

occupants surviving. Other houses were damaged a little further south and near Mahia.

Another tsunami, two months later in May 1947, again along the east coast north of Gisborne, caused waves of up to 6 m.

In addition to events in the European historical period, an event in the 1820s reputedly drowned many Maori walking along the beach near Orepuki, Southland. The source was most probably local, or regional, and not from a distant source such as South America.

The 1868, 1877, and 1960 tsunami from South America caused significant damage and disruption along the east coast of the North and South Islands and in the Chatham Islands. The 1868 tsunami caused the only death attributable to tsunami since European settlement.

The tsunami was generated by a magnitude M9.1 earthquake off southern Peru/northern Chile. The greatest near-source run-up recorded for the 1868 tsunami was 18m. In New Zealand, run-up of 1-4m occurred in the main New Zealand region and up to 10 m in the Chatham Islands. Considerable damage to houses, boats, shops, wharves, jetties, and boatsheds occurred along the whole eastern seaboard and in the Chathams. Westport also reported waves of 1-2 m. Damage was more limited than it could have been because the largest waves of the tsunami arrived within an hour or two of low tide at locations south of Napier.

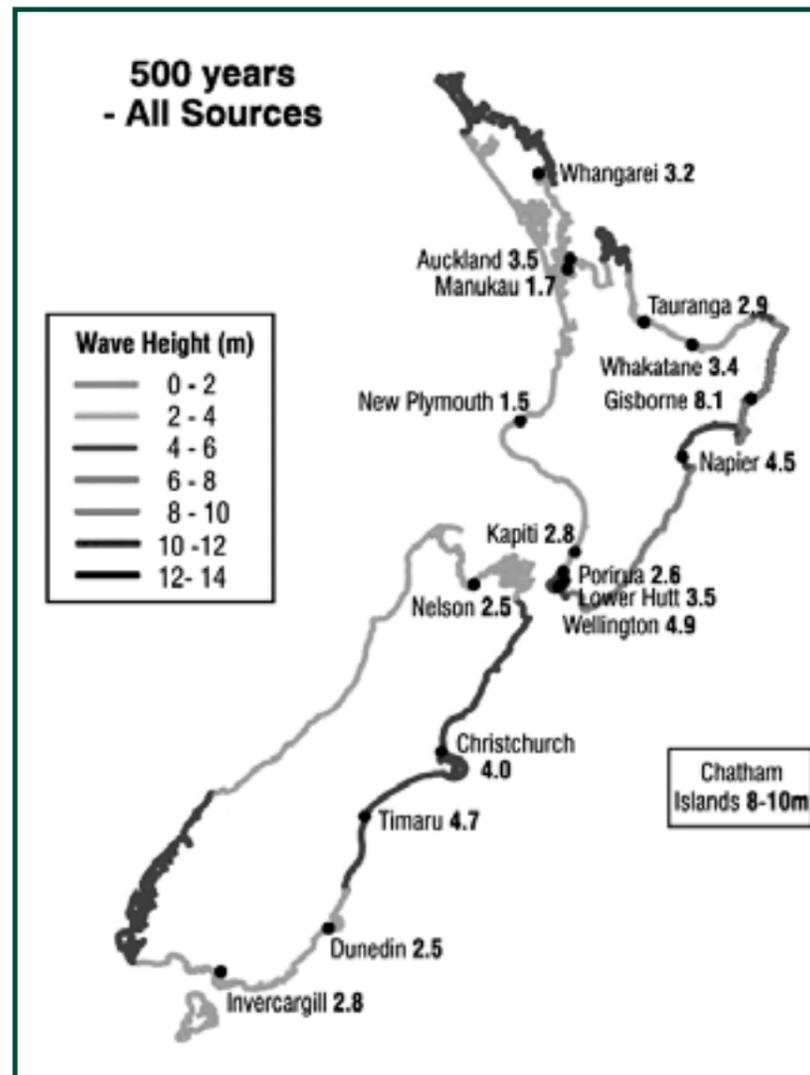
The 1877 tsunami was up to 21m high near its source, but in New Zealand the effects were generally not as

extensive or as well recorded in historical documents as the 1868 tsunami. Nevertheless, the tsunami had peak run-ups of 3.5m.

The 1960 tsunami was generated by a massive, Mw7.9-9.5 earthquake off central Chile. It was the largest earthquake in the 20th century. It caused a large local tsunami (maximum run-up 25m) resulting in US\$550 million in damage and 1000 deaths. Another US\$24 million in damage and 61 deaths occurred in Hawaii. In Japan the waves were more than 6m high causing 199 deaths.

Run-ups of 1-4m occurred along the whole eastern seaboard from Northland to Southland, and in the Chathams. Considerable damage was done to houses, boats, shops, wharves, jetties, port facilities, and boatsheds, as well as threatening the lives of several people in Hawke's Bay, Gisborne and Banks Peninsula.

The written historical record covers only 165 years, and this is too short a time to reflect the full range of possible events that New Zealand might experience. Many large earthquakes have recurrence intervals in hundreds of years for the smaller events (M8.5) to several thousand years for the largest earthquakes (e.g. M9.5). Also, historical record of small tsunami, or tsunami in the early years of our history, in sparsely populated places, or in remote places, such as Fiordland, is almost certainly incomplete. Nevertheless, New Zealand's historical tsunami database is one of the most comprehensive databases in the Pacific.

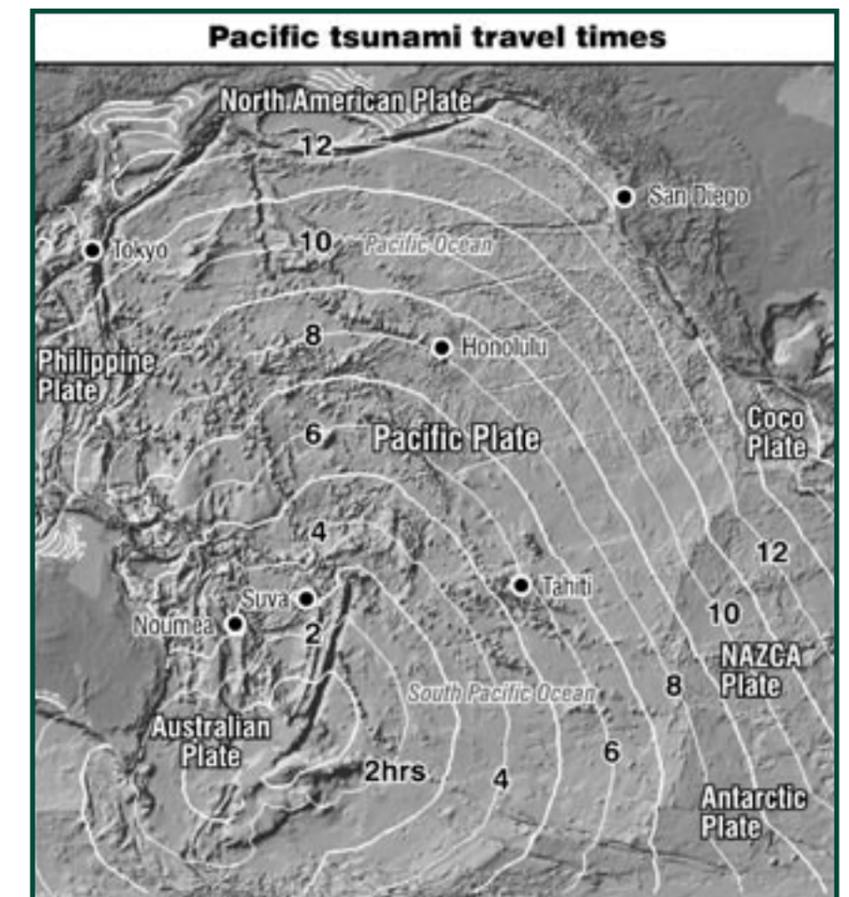


New Zealand has been affected by more than 40 tsunami in the past 165 years. Of these:

- 14 were from distant quakes
- 7 from regional quakes
- 9 from local quakes
- 4 from local



Tsunami have the power to cause serious destruction as witnessed in Thailand 26 December 2004.



# Aerial survey of Ruapehu lahar path

Scientists have conducted a state-of-the-art aerial survey of the path of the predicted lahar from Mt Ruapehu's Crater Lake.

GNS Science, in association with Massey University, commissioned the survey last month (FEB).

Mt Ruapehu hosts one of the most active volcanic crater lakes in the world and the Whangaehu River, which drains the lake, has carried more

than 45 lahars since the 1953 Tangiwai tragedy.

The survey was done by NZ Aerial Mapping Ltd and its Australian partner Fugro Spatial Solutions, which provided the US\$1 million LiDAR (light detection and ranging) mapping system.

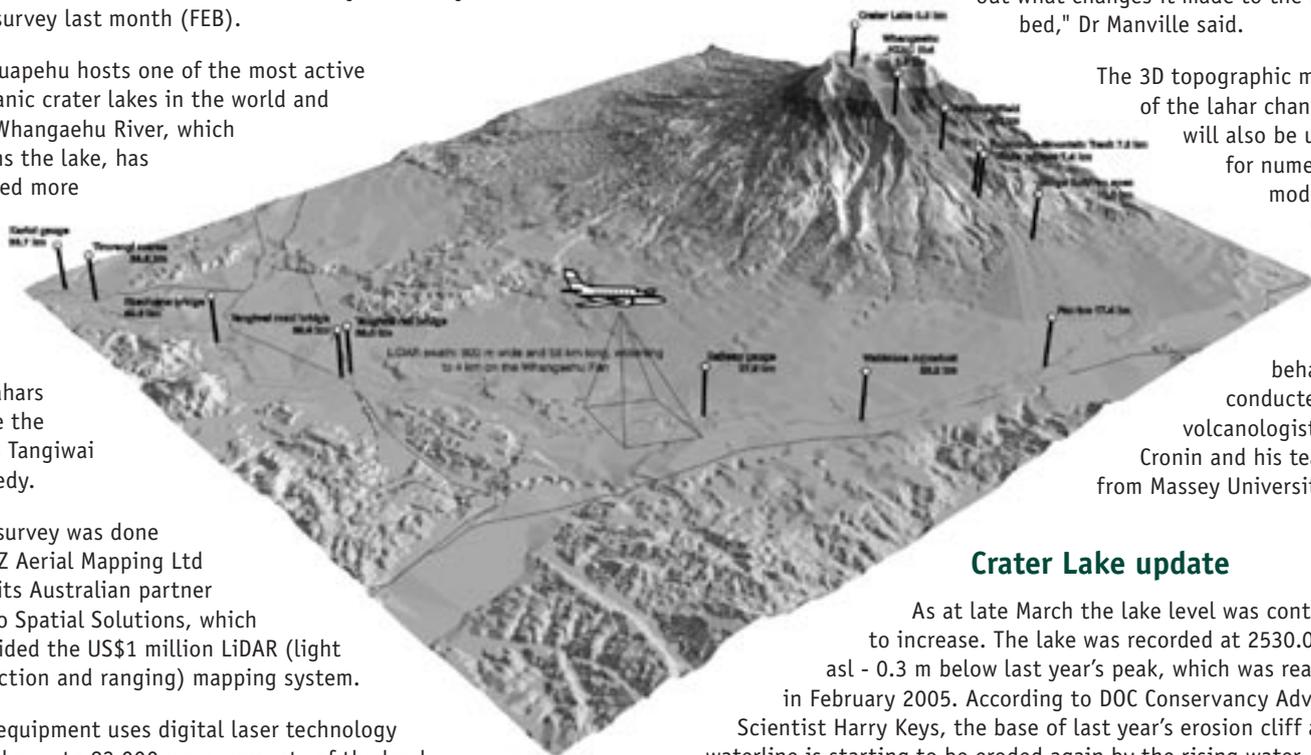
The equipment uses digital laser technology to take up to 83,000 measurements of the land surface per second. Combined with high-resolution digital photography, the method produces a highly accurate 3D snapshot of the land surface.

GNS Science lead scientist for the project, Vern Manville, said LiDAR offered the most cost-effective method of producing

a highly accurate 3D map of the upper Whangaehu River. "Comparison of the results of this survey with a duplicate mission flown immediately after the lahar happens will allow us to work out what changes it made to the river bed," Dr Manville said.

The 3D topographic model of the lahar channel will also be used for numerical modelling of

lahar behaviour conducted by volcanologist Shane Cronin and his team from Massey University.



## Crater Lake update

As at late March the lake level was continuing to increase. The lake was recorded at 2530.0 m asl - 0.3 m below last year's peak, which was reached in February 2005. According to DOC Conservancy Advisory Scientist Harry Keys, the base of last year's erosion cliff at the waterline is starting to be eroded again by the rising water.

The lake is filling at a rate of about 6000 cubic metres per day. The water appears to be warming, and NIWA forecasts a continuation of above-average air temperatures, all of which are consistent with an ongoing rise in level.

# Waitakere recognises volunteer effort



The efforts of Waitakere City's CDEM volunteers have been recognised at a BBQ and awards function.

Waitakere City Council's CDEM organisation paid tribute to its volunteers with the presentation of special recognition awards at the end-of-year function.

On hand to present the awards Council Chief Executive Harry O'Rourke who praised the work of the volunteer contingent and the excellent contribution they make to the effectiveness of any major emergency response.

From left to right: Bruce Carr - Volunteer of the Year; Bob Hight - Special award for voluntary service to the CD communications group; Robyn and Norman Shaw - In recognition of voluntary service as past members of the volunteer rescue team with eight and 16 years' service respectively.

# Wanganui vehicles send the message

By Max Bensemman

Just before last Christmas we took delivery of a new Mitsubishi Airtrek 4WD 'crossover' car to complement the similar Nissan X-Trail vehicle we bought a year earlier.

Following two competitive tender processes and generous discount rates, we had surplus funds available to 'signpost' the new vehicles.

We took a number of signage ideas to Ross Hendry of Image Signs in Wanganui for his professional input. The concept was to capitalise on the 'blank wall' white sides of both the Airtrek and the X-Trail to provide mobile messages of self-sufficiency.

A significant point for us from the February 2004 storm emergency was the number of people who still believe that "Civil Defence is going to come and help me".

We are now more aggressive than we have been in the past, and put the responsibility



The trailer signage also got upgraded to match the vehicles.

firmly back where it belongs – with each and every individual. The simple slogan of "Surviving an emergency depends on you!"

with a graphic of a shaky house and seismic 'waves' is now also on our new rescue team trailer.

## National Hazardscape work underway

**Work is now under way on the compilation of a state-of-the-nation report on the natural and man-made hazards in New Zealand.**

MCDEM staff are guiding the gathering of information for the hazardscape report – the first such document to be produced in more than a decade.

Project Leader Peter Kingsbury says there is a definite need for a hazardscape report. "To help make sound, robust and defensible decisions, Government and policy makers need to understand our hazards, what their impacts may be and how well they are managed. The proposed report aims to partly serve this purpose."

The report will seek to primarily inform at Ministerial level and senior levels in government departments, along with other organisations with "secondary" hazard and risk management responsibilities and those with hazard and risk management interests.

The NHR is not targeted at core CDEM organisations or technical and research organisations and individuals. The NHR will also be a useful resource for a wider range of readers such as international audiences, educationalists and the general public.

The report will partly draw on, and update, information from the Ministry of Civil Defence's National Report of New Zealand, published as an issue of Tephra in 1994.

It is intended the new report, scheduled

for completion at the end of this year, will provide a contemporary summary of New Zealand's hazardscape. Mr Kingsbury adds that it will be a benchmark from which future changes and trends in hazard vulnerability may be measured and monitored.

Key hazard and risk management issues will be defined and significant changes and trends discussed. The report will also indicate if hazard management should be done differently to achieve better results, and it may influence decisions on national level research funding and CDEM group hazard and risk assessment activities.

Mr Kingsbury says the report will augment

the CDEM Act 2002, National CDEM Strategy 2003-2006, and the National CDEM Plan 2005.

A series of meetings is to be held in April with selected stakeholders to help formulate the report and consider the extent of the information it will contain. A review team has been formed from representatives of organisations including the Foundation of Research, Science and Technology, Ministry for the Environment, EQC, and other interested parties.

We will keep the CDEM sector updated on progress on the report during this year via regular email bulletins and through future issues of Impact.



The Ministry is working to better understand New Zealand's hazards, like this slip in 2003 at Paekakariki where a motel and a car were buried.

# National Public Education Campaign

By Chandrika Kumaran

**Work on a national advertising campaign to raise public awareness about emergency preparedness is now well underway.**

The \$6.1 million public education campaign, to stretch over four years and ongoing, was announced in the 2005 Budget to increase individual and community awareness and preparedness for disasters. It was part of the Government's response to concerns, especially in light of the February 2004 floods and the Indian Ocean tsunami, that New Zealanders are not adequately prepared to fend for themselves in a disaster.

Clemenger BBDO and Senate – both leading companies in the advertising and public relations fields – are working with MCDEM on the campaign for TV, radio and print that will be launched in June this year.

The Ministry and Clemengers met with CDEM Group representatives at their meeting on 16 March in Wellington to outline the strategic rationale for the campaign and the proposed creative approach.

## **Benchmark research**

An integral component of the programme is quantitative benchmark research to understand current national levels of awareness, understanding and preparedness.

In addition to providing an invaluable basis for developing the national programme, the annual research provides an ongoing tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the initiatives undertaken and identify areas for improvement.

The annual national benchmark research to be undertaken by Colmar Brunton, takes the form of telephone interviews of 1000 random respondents around the country and is scheduled to start in April.

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## Katrina fallout

**Hurricane Katrina exposed the US government's failure to learn the lessons of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, as leaders from President Bush down disregarded ample warnings of the threat to New Orleans and did not execute emergency plans or share information that would have saved lives, according to a blistering report by House investigators.**

The report, released in February, includes 90 findings of failures at all levels of government. Titled *A Failure of Initiative*, it is one of three separate reviews by the House, Senate and White House that will dissect the response to the nation's costliest natural disaster.



The 600-plus-page report lays primary fault with the passive reaction and misjudgements of top Bush aides, singling out Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, the Homeland Security Operations Center and the White House Homeland Security Council. Regarding President Bush, the report found that "earlier presidential involvement could have speeded the response" because he alone could have cut through all bureaucratic resistance.

According to *The Washington Post*, the report, produced by an 11-member House select committee of Republicans, proposes few specific changes. But it is an unusual compendium of criticism by the House Republicans, who generally have not been aggressive in their oversight of the administration.

The report portrays Chertoff, who took the helm of the department six months before the storm, as detached from events. It contends he switched on the government's emergency response systems "late, ineffectively or not at all," delaying the flow of federal troops and materiel by as much as three days.

The White House did not fully engage the president or "substantiate, analyze and act on the information at its disposal," failing to confirm the collapse of New Orleans's levee system on 29 August, the day of Katrina's landfall, which led to catastrophic flooding of the city of 500,000 people.

On the ground, Federal Emergency Management Agency director Michael Brown, who has since resigned, FEMA field commanders and the US military's commanding general set up rival chains of command. The Coast Guard, which alone rescued nearly half of 75,000 people stranded in New Orleans, flew nine helicopters and two airplanes over the city that first day, but eyewitness reconnaissance did not reach Washington before midnight.

At the same time, weaknesses identified by 9/11 investigators – poor communications among first responders, a shortage of qualified emergency personnel and lack of training and funding – doomed a response confronted by overwhelming demands for help.

"If 9/11 was a failure of imagination then Katrina was a failure of initiative. It was a failure of leadership," the report's preface states. "In this instance, blinding lack of situational awareness and disjointed decision making needlessly compounded and prolonged Katrina's horror."

Chertoff spokesman Russ Knocke said, "every ounce of authority" and "100 percent of everything that could be pre-staged was pre-staged" by the federal government before landfall once the president signed emergency disaster declarations on 27 August. Brown had "all authority" to make decisions and requests, and his "willful insubordination ... was a significant problem" for Chertoff, Knocke said.

White House spokesman Trent Duffy said Bush had full confidence in his homeland security team, both appointed and career. "The president was involved from beginning to end," implementing emergency powers before the storm and taking responsibility afterward, Duffy said.

# National Exercise Programme launched

By David Coetzee

**The National Exercise Programme (NEP), after almost two years of extensive consultation and development, was established on 16 December 2005.**

A very positive meeting was held at MCDEM's Wellington offices where the commitment of CDEM groups and the National Engineering Lifelines Committee (NELC) to the NEP was confirmed.

The Exercise Programme is a means by which the operational capability of agencies, CDEM groups and their partners, such as lifeline utilities, may be tested in relation to civil defence emergency management. It is made up of regular exercises that link local CDEM groups with each other and with national and central government CDEM response.

The programme recognises that exercising must occur at all levels of the CDEM structure. It identifies a four-tier exercise approach. Each tier is based on, and informed by, a consistent regime of planning, observation, evaluation, feedback and continuous improvement. The four tiers are:

- Tier 1: Operational exercising within individual organisations.
- Tier 2: Operational exercising at CDEM group level.
- Tier 3: Operational exercising across CDEM groups/CDEM groups and MCDEM.
- Tier 4: Strategic exercising of national arrangements – MCDEM and DESC/ODESC.

The programme maintains a ten-year schedule, with Tier 3 exercises held every second year and Tier 4 exercises held in the intervening years.

MCDEM is the overall national exercise programme sponsor. The programme is owned collectively by the participant stakeholders

and is subsequently managed in partnership through an NEP representative governance group, which is guided by the NEP Charter.

## First national exercise – tsunami alert

The first national (Tier 3) exercise under the NEP will be a distant-source tsunami exercise in May. Interest in the exercise is overwhelming - at the date of publication 15 of our 16 CDEM groups have confirmed participation and, at national level, the emergency services, Ministry of Health, lifeline utilities and GNS Science and NIWA will be involved. We expect the number of participant agencies to grow even further, marking this first exercise under the NEP as the most inclusive ever.

For further information contact David Coetzee (Exercise Coordinator) at david.coetzee@dia.govt.nz



LETHAL – the tsunami exercise in May aims to prevent scenes like this from December 2004.

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# New Zealanders well aware of pandemic risk

**Three out of five New Zealanders think New Zealand is taking the threat of an influenza pandemic 'seriously enough' while nearly two-thirds have seen information on how to prepare for a pandemic.**

A TNS phone survey of almost 1000 people - commissioned by the Ministry of Health in January - included a series of questions on public awareness and the level of preparedness for a pandemic.

"It's clear the majority of New Zealanders have access to good information about a possible flu pandemic," Health Minister Pete Hodgson says. "It's also good to see that New Zealanders are digesting the information in a calm, reasoned way.

The data also shows that while public awareness is high, most New Zealanders have not taken steps to prepare themselves for a pandemic. Around 32 per cent of those surveyed have made preparations; with the majority of prepared households having stocked an emergency supply kit.

The Ministry of Health is stepping up its public awareness campaign over the next few months. The campaign began with

public health messages on radio stations and has been extended to television commercials on TV1, TV2 and TV3.

*Family Health Diary*, which screens on TV1 and TV2, is also featuring information. The advertising emphasises the simple things people can do to try more and stop the spread of influenza, like basic hygiene and stocking of emergency supplies.

A nationwide mail-out to 1.4 million households started in March, and includes a brochure covering the key messages and a fridge magnet (with the ministry's 0800 number and website details).

Meanwhile the Ministry of Civil Defence Emergency Management is doing its bit under the New Zealand Influenza Pandemic Action Plan.

MCDEM staff, local government and CDEM sector representatives have prepared a draft Pandemic Guide for local authorities and CDEM groups which is out for consultation. Comments on the draft are due by 24 February, with the final scheduled for release by 17 March.

For further details email alan.walker@dia.govt.nz

# Napier – quake survivors showed true grit

**Prime Minister Helen Clark has paid tribute to the ‘true grit’ of the people who survived the 1931 Hawkes Bay earthquake – New Zealand’s most deadly natural disaster.**

Ms Clark took part in an official ceremony in Napier on 3 February that commemorated the 75th anniversary of the quake, which killed 256 people.

More than 3000 people – including many quake survivors – gathered at the Napier Soundshell for the commemoration.

Ms Clark said many lives were destroyed in the quake, and families were shattered. The loss of livelihood was huge, but the human loss was immeasurably greater.

“At times like those, the true grit and spirit of New Zealanders shines through. And so it was in the aftermath of the earthquake.

“Everybody did everything they could to help – despite death and disaster all around them.

“Nurses – knowing that their friends and colleagues had died in the collapse of the nurses’ home – rushed to help. Doctors rushed to the scene. A field hospital was set up at the racecourse. Ordinary citizens dragged others from the rubble of buildings.

“Even a prison work gang rushed to help. We are told none

tried to escape, and that they reassembled later to be locked up.

Ms Clark said that, from the perspective of 2006, it is almost impossible to imagine what it was like.

“In the past thirteen months, we have seen huge media coverage of natural disasters elsewhere in the world: the tsunami which followed the quake in the Indian Ocean, the earthquake in Pakistan and India, and Hurricane Katrina.

“Our equivalent of those events was the Hawke Bay earthquake. Had it happened in the age of modern communications, the world would have watched in horror, as we have watched the suffering of others far away.

“This anniversary, and the series of disasters offshore, remind us of how fragile and precarious human existence is when faced with the overwhelming forces of nature.

“We cannot stop the earth’s movements, but we can be well prepared to respond to them and plan proactively to minimise the effects where we can.

“After the quake, the devastated communities were determined to rebuild. All those who drove that process deserve our admiration and gratitude – and so too do the citizens of our devastated cities who rebuilt their lives and made Napier and Hastings the vibrant cities they are today.”



The Ministry’s Keith Evans and Bernie Rush (far left and far right) with Emergency Management Officers Angela Reade from Napier City Council and Nigel Simpson from Napier Regional Council at the 75th anniversary of the 1931 Napier Quake.



Helen Clark, Napier City Mayor Barbara Arnott and Russell Fairbrother took time out of their busy schedules to remember the 256 killed in the 1931 disaster.

## Debriefing guide out now

*Organisational Debriefing: Information for the CDEM Sector [IS6/05]* is the Ministry’s latest publication for the CDEM Sector.

The booklet provides how-to information on how to successfully facilitate debriefing sessions after emergencies or other events.

It will be relevant and helpful to all agencies involved in emergency management including CDEM groups, local authorities, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and others.

If conducted properly, an organisational debrief will help ensure that the good things are remembered and that planning our managements are enhanced and weaknesses addressed so that the same mistakes are not made during the next emergency.

If you have not received a copy or would like additional copies, please email your request with your postal address to: sarah.stuart-black@dia.govt.nz. An electronic version can also be downloaded from [www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz).

