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Report to the Environment Committee
from Rian van Schalkwyk, Manager, Emergency Management

Report on Emergency Management Training

1. Purpose

To advise the Committee about what training is in place for the various non-professional groups and organisations involved in Emergency Management.

2. Background

On 18 May 2000 the Environment Committee, under Item 00.322, resolved as follows:

That officers ask territorial local authorities about the number and location of trained Emergency Management community volunteers. This information is to be used to gauge the degree of preparedness across the Region.

3. Findings

A letter was sent to the Chief Executive Officers of the territorial local authorities within the region. The following feedback was received:

3.1 Wellington City

“Civil Defence is about people. It is about people helping people, people rescuing people, people saving people, people treating and feeding people and people burying people.”

Wellington City Council has 28 operational Community Emergency Centres spread throughout the City including Makara and Ohariu. The centres are geared to manage any Civil Defence emergency affecting their community and are staffed by Co-ordinators and volunteers. All Centre Co-ordinators complete a six-evening course on emergency management and they are expected to co-ordinate and provide leadership to their communities in times of emergency. Each Co-ordinator signs an agreement to serve for at least two years.

The Co-ordinators are autonomous in their respective areas and they liaise with Fire, Police and Ambulance representatives in their areas. The Centres always report to the Wellington Emergency Management Office (WEMO).

Currently Wellington City is embarking on providing people to participate in Red Cross Disaster First Aid Training and the City also provides funds for interested people, especially school principals and staff, to complete these courses in their own time. The current numbers of trained people are around six hundred, although several thousand people, of whom many are still around, have been trained in the past. Through the media, publicity and local talks, WEMO encourages businesses, organisations (public and private) as well as individuals to “Be Ready” for emergencies.

“WEMO firmly believes that using the system of raising and training, resourcing and committing selected and suitable community volunteers, is the best way to prepare and respond to potential emergencies.”

3.2 **Hutt City Council**

“The level of training carried out cannot gauge readiness for emergencies in Hutt City. Training or exercising is the best substitute to experience or participating in the real event. Having a prepared community will create a necessary resilience to ensure a good enough safety net at all levels of the community. A recent survey carried out by the National Review Board (NRB) showed that 67% of Hutt City residents and the business community are prepared and have plans to manage a civil defence emergency.”

Training of community volunteers are carried out at various skill levels and consists of the following:

- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training for individuals and groups, including neighbourhood support. About 2500 people have attended this course in the past eighteen months. This course is available to our Environment Committee as well.
- Civil Defence Centres. Volunteer staff at these 53 sites are trained twice a year and are supplied with operational manuals for managing their centres.
- Sector training at Eastbourne and Wainuiomata is carried out for approximately 60 staff every two months.
- About 300 people are trained from within the Hutt City Council. The training is given for themselves, their families and the management of the Emergency Operations Centre.
- Support Unit. Approximately 40 volunteer staff trained in search and rescue, first aid, headquarters operations, emergency radio management and in civil defence management principles.
- Welfare Agencies. Eight welfare agencies, which consist in excess of 1000 people, are trained three times a year on civil defence matters.

- Schools. On an annual basis all schools in the Hutt are given training in preparing plans for civil defence. Secondary schools also train in search and rescue techniques and first aid to certificate standard.
- Exercises. Members of the community participate in yearly exercises and in this regard several hundred people receive the necessary civil defence training.
- Other volunteers. Thousands of people have been trained in fire fighting, civil defence, search and rescue, filling of sandbags, and first aid. Hutt City also provides information to business groups to do their own training. The Amateur Radio Emergency Corps (AREC) train to support the Hutt City Council in emergencies.

3.3 Upper Hutt City Council

In Upper Hutt the following fully civil defence trained groups are available to emergency management on an immediate response basis:

- Red Cross response unit – 25 persons
- Upper Hutt Community Rescue – 10 persons
- Akatarawa Valley Emergency Response Team (AVERT) – 40 persons
- Moonshine Residents Association – 20 persons
- Hutt Valley Bush Fire Force – 40 persons
- There is a back up of community volunteers from various groups. These are co-ordinated by the Upper Hutt City Council's Community Development Officer who is also the civil defence organisations Chief Welfare Officer
- There are a large number of industrial and commercial organisations that have trained emergency teams.

3.4 Porirua City Council

A recent completed peer review provided reasonable evidence that Porirua's state of preparedness is satisfactory.

“Porirua City is exposed to major earthquake, major hazardous substance event and major flooding events. Although preparedness is based on an all-hazards approach, the worst case event will be the major earthquake. This event is the benchmark of local preparedness, particularly as initial isolation is expected and therefore a significant degree of self-sufficiency by the city will be required.”

- A major concern of Porirua City following a major earthquake is the retention of water in local reservoirs. Although auto-shut valves have been fitted to key reservoirs, a back-up reservoir water retention procedure using 30 volunteers is in place with a 6-monthly training cycle.
- A 6-monthly training cycle of volunteers from Lions Club members for staffing suburban civil defence centres covers some 60 volunteers augmented by other groups including Neighbourhood Support groups.

- Vital initial safety checking of buildings, particularly houses has been arranged with 32 local builders and engineers who have an annual training workshop.
- Emergency welfare arrangements are handled through local service groups like Salvation Army, Red Cross, CAB, Victim Support all who have initial and follow-up training.
- Local schools recognise that many students may not be collected on the day of a major earthquake and are trained in arrangements to safely hold students at school until they are collected by caregivers.

Porirua City has analysed major emergency needs and responded with targeted volunteers selection and training as the most effective approach to prepare for a major emergency event.

Ongoing joint training is held with local emergency services and there are 6 monthly exercises of the Council civil defence headquarters.

Ongoing public preparedness material is put around the community.

The focus of preparedness is to have prepared and resilient families, resilient neighbourhoods and resilient communities co-ordinated by a prepared council response with local emergency services.

3.5 **Kapiti Coast District Council**

Kapiti Coast estimates that around 20,000 (50% of their population) people have been trained in civil defence matters. Kapiti Coast widely makes use of neighbourhood support groups to which approximately 2560 people belong. The key responsibility of these groups is community emergency management.

In Kapiti the following civil defence trained groups are available to emergency management on an immediate response basis:

- Fire crews at Otaki, Paraparaumu, Waikanae and Paekakariki. Approximately 20 persons at each station.
- Rural Fire Force at Te Horo – crew of 18
- Police at Paraparaumu (20 officers) and Otaki (4 officers)
- Emergency Medical Services (paramedics and trauma doctors)
- Search and Rescue. Four Wheel Drive Club (20 members), Tramping Club (40 members), Boating Clubs (100 members), Amateur Radio Emergency Corps, all Rugby Clubs, Mana Coaches, and District doctors,
- Other organisations like Churches, Government Departments, etc.
- KCDC staff. All staff (approximately 120) are trained regularly and participate in emergency management activities.

3.6 **Masterton District Council**

Liaison is maintained between the Masterton District Council Civil Defence Organisation and the professional and volunteer agencies of the community that have roles in civil defence. The Amateur Radio Emergency Corps (20 members) and the Welfare Section of the community receive regular updates of relevant information and discuss issues pertaining to their operational roles.

Individual members of the headquarters structure have received specialist training with the Ministry for Emergency Management. A programme is underway with the Neighbourhood Support Groups in which 180 Co-ordinators have been met with and of these 50 are now involved in specialist training to staff the Civil Defence Centres.

In the rural blocks of the District communities are self-sufficient and they have received training in radio communications and First Aid. Members are also trained in Search and Rescue and in this regard they also get specialist training in handling sniffer dogs.

3.7 **South Wairarapa District Council**

In the rural areas farmers are well prepared and they do get training in First Aid and radio communications.

For the urban areas South Wairarapa has 30 Co-ordinators that cover the various wards in that district. The Co-ordinators regularly meet with the District Controller to discuss preparedness issues, exercises and training. At present there are no Neighbourhood Support Groups in the District.

3.8 **Carterton District Council**

- Headquarters staff (volunteers). Two teams of twelve people
- Welfare. Co-ordinator and two deputies with three teams of six persons each. Also have support from the Red Cross, Salvation Army and Victim Support
- Other groups include Churches and Homes for the Elderly
- Training and exercises take place at least once a year
- Wardens. Three urban and five rural wardens with approximately 182 volunteers. Annual exercises and training of volunteers take place, but only about 50% of volunteers normally turn up.

4. **Comment**

The feedback revealed that the territorial local authorities do carry out training for individuals and organisations, mainly volunteers and voluntary organisations. Overall the preparedness level is regarded as satisfactory.

5. **Communication**

This is a territorial local authority responsibility, and therefore it is appropriate that any communication be carried out by territorial authorities.

6. **Conclusion**

Although training to various individuals, groups and organisations is provided, there is still a lack of co-ordination in this regard. The entire process will be enhanced once the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group is in place.

7. **Recommendation**

That the report be received and the information noted.

Report prepared by:

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