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

Six Monthly Activity Report

1. Purpose

To advise the Committee on the programme of work carried out by the Emergency Management Department ensuring the Council's effective response to an emergency event within the budget.

This report briefly describes the activities undertaken in the period July to December, 1998.

2. Activities

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Emergency Management Group

As a result of the workshop initiated by the Wellington Regional Council regarding the establishment of the Emergency Management Group on 9 and 10 June, 1998, the following progress has been made:

- The "Foundation Document" was prepared and finalised on 3 July, 1998. The Foundation Document presents a perspective on the Emergency Management Group concept from the civil defence officers of the Wellington Region.

- The "Pathway Forward" document was finalised on 17 July, 1998. The Pathway Forward sets up a calendar of events and identifies matters that need to be addressed by the Emergency Management Group - in particular the Governance Body.

- The Foundation and Pathway Forward documents were presented to the Chief Executive Officers and Mayors on 20 July, 1998. All the territorial local authorities

and the Wellington Regional Council have formally endorsed the Foundation Document and the Pathway Forward document. They also agreed in principle to establish and belong to the Emergency Management Group for the Lower North Island and elected their respective representatives with the delegated authority to negotiate a draft charter for the Emergency Management Group.

- Several meetings (31) were attended to prepare and develop a draft document outlining the history, background and proposed programme to establish the Emergency Management Group, the proposed model, the functions, legal issues, roles and responsibilities of the Group and a proposed Charter.

- Several meetings with the Emergency Services (Police, Fire) and the Lifelines Groups were held to negotiate their representation on the Co-ordination and Advisory Group of the Emergency Management Group. All of the agencies involved expressed their support for the formation of the Emergency Management Group and their interest in being a functional part of the Group.

- On 4 December 1998 a presentation was made to the Chief Executive Officers regarding progress in establishing the Emergency Management Group. The presentation was centred around the document *Report on the Formation of the Emergency Management Group* which contained detailed information on a draft Charter and operating models. The Chief Executive Officers indicated that they were encouraged by the progress made. A number of issues were raised and the sharpness of focus in the document was questioned. Consequently, further work is required before a final document is presented to the Local Authorities for endorsement.

- A presentation regarding progress with the EMG was made to the Mayors on 11 December. They also received the information with great enthusiasm.

Wellington Engineering Lifelines Group

The Lifelines Co-ordination Centre (LCC) forms part of the Emergency Management Headquarters and is staffed by Wellington Regional Council staff volunteers. Lifelines co-ordination is essentially a system for managing the flow of information between utility organisations and local authorities in an emergency event. The system seeks to overcome operational "bottlenecks" as early as possible and maximise opportunities for co-operation.

The first meeting of the Lifelines Co-ordination Centre Management Committee was held on 24 June 1998, at the WRC Beehive Emergency Operations Centre. The principal objective of the committee is to progress the implementation of the Lifelines Co-ordination Centre (LCC).

The LCC Committee is progressing with the following tasks:

- Formalising commitment and completing a Memorandum of Understanding

- Drafting an Operations Manual
- Installing a communication system

- Identifying key personnel and developing appropriate contracts and training regimes
- Re-confirming ongoing maintenance budgets and mechanisms
- Confirming committee membership (Telecom, Trans Alta etc.)

The current membership of the committee is:

Rian van Schalkwyk	Manager, Emergency Management, WRC (chairman)
Wayne Hastie	Manager, Resource Policy, WRC
Dan Roberts	Manager, Operations, WRC
Lachlan Wallach	Director Operations, UHCC
David Brunsdon	Project Manager, WeLG

The Wellington Regional Council (Emergency Management) is supporting the Lifelines Groups in the following way:

- Providing accommodation (Headquarters) for the Lifelines Centre and assisting with secretarial and administrative support.
- Providing and maintaining a robust emergency communications system to enable emergency operations communications between the Lifelines Centre and the key utilities.

Liaison

For the period July to December 1998, this department attended 162 official meetings *(purpose of meetings in brackets. These included meetings with:*

- Police (Emergency Services Co-ordinating Committee, Emergency Management Group, Communication)
- Rural fire (Rural fire Committee, rural fire exercises)
- Fire (Emergency Management Group, exercises)
- Ambulance (Emergency Management Group, exercises)
- Lifelines (LCC Management Committee)
- First Impact Committee (Wellington International Airport exercise, discussion of emergency air traffic incidents)
- Ministry of Civil Defence (Emergency Management Group, courses, exercises)
- Local Authorities (Emergency Management Group, emergency management issues, exercises, communication, approval of "Civil Defence Plans" for Porirua and Hutt City)
- Council's Solicitors (Emergency Management Group)
- Department of Conservation (Rural fire)
- Chinese Embassy (Assistance with emergency management planning, visits)
- Auckland Regional Council (Project Phoenix, exercises, inter regional liaison)
- Earthquake Commission (Representing Regional Emergency Management on Commission)
- Insurance Council of New Zealand (Representing Regional Emergency Management on Insurance Council)
- Telecom NZ (Communications)
- Hazardous Substances Technical Liaison Committee (Representing Regional Emergency Management on Committee)

Staff

Debbie Callaghan (now Cunningham) was appointed and joined the department on 28 September as Emergency Management Officer.

2.2   **Training**

Five staff from Beacon Hill Signal Station were trained in emergency warnings procedures and information processing.

A survey of our staff volunteers was carried out during August and revealed a positive attitude towards emergency management. The majority of them committed their assistance and support to staff the Operational Headquarters during an emergency event. To keep the staff volunteers motivated and interested in the aspects of emergency management, a training programme is following which includes "Basic First Aid", "Advanced First Aid", "Media Liaison", "Rescue work", and communications.

The department is also planning to introduce the following additional training courses:

- Emergency Administration
- Public relations
- Survival Procedures
- Vehicle Handling and Driving

2.3   **Regional Emergency Management Headquarters and Communication**

Infrastructure Maintenance

Inspections of all sites have been conducted on a regular basis to ensure all equipment is maintained in a state of functionality. These sites are located in the Beehive, Wakefield Street, all Local Authorities, Hospitals, Police, Beacon Hill, Mt. Climie, Colonial Knob, Normandale, Eringa, and the Mobile Headquarters. Steve Stipkovits of Access Telecom has been contracted to maintain the Wellington Regional Council emergency communications system. After detailed inspections, repairs (where necessary) have been carried out and the system is reported to be in good functional condition. Access Telecom has also identified all components in the regional system and these have been cross checked with the asset register.

The Duty Officer Service (to ensure 24-hour readiness) is shared by the Manager: Emergency Management and the Emergency Management Officer of the Council.
A new duty officer's guide has been produced which contains updated contact information and new operating procedures.

Communication Tests

Formal communication testing between the Regional Operation Centres (Beehive, Marshall House and the Mobile Headquarters) and the territorial local authorities has taken place every week. This determines the capability and the effectiveness of the communication system. All problem areas are attended to immediately and we can report that the entire system is in a functional and satisfactory condition. The system is robust and specifically designed to cope with emergency situations.

Communication tests with Beacon Hill signal station, Wellington Police, Wellington Hospital and our maintenance contractor (Access Telecom) are also carried out and recorded on a regular basis. We can report that links with these groups are also functional.

2.4   **Emergency Management Exercises**

This department has been involved in several exercises which indicated our readiness and effectiveness of handling emergencies, namely:

- Two Rural Fire Exercises (29 August and 23 November)
- First Impact Exercise-Wellington International Airport (11 November).
- Project "Phoenix". Good progress has been made on the planning of the combined exercise ("Project Phoenix") between Auckland and Wellington Regional Councils. The purpose of the exercise is to see what aid Auckland region can provide when the Wellington region is struck by a major emergency event. On November 3, this Department delivered a presentation of the scenario of a major earthquake in Wellington. Members of the Auckland Regional Council, territorial authorities in the Auckland region, the business sector, the Ministry of Civil Defence the emergency services and other service providers (utilities) were present. We are working in close relationship with Auckland and the final report on this project will be available on 21 February, 1999.

2.5   **Administration and Technology**

Smartfax

A "Smartfax" system was installed at the Emergency Management Department and at Beacon Hill signal station to improve the standard of our warning system and warning procedures. Previously it took approximately 40 – 45 minutes to warn the respective role-players in the region and with this system the warning time is reduced to a maximum of 5 minutes. Procedures were revised and an easy-to-use procedure was implemented at Beacon Hill. A total of five staff were trained in the process.

Response 98 Database

The "Response 98" Database was installed at the Department on 31 August 1998. The system has been designed to be "user-friendly" for everyone. Databases include:

- Human Resources function - information relating to any individuals or groups (specific training, geographical information, skills, functions etc.). Communication by letters, memos or notices to those selected can be easily done with pre-formatted forms in the system.

- Equipment function. This massive database lists not only all the many items of equipment but also the details about each item. These details include the capability limits, the accessories normally available or required to operate the item, and the fuel required.
- Services function. This gives access to all the other organisations that may be involved or of benefit in any major emergency.
- Tools function. This gives access to logistics, welfare registration, inventories, statistics and emergency procedures.
- Operations Management function. This provides all the tools to manage any emergency (messages, scenarios, actions, replies, requests, monitoring, reports, locating tasks, logistics, etc.).

This system will enable the Council to function even more effectively and from any location. A huge amount of data has already been entered into the system.

Earthquake Checklist

The "Earthquake-Checklist" was completed and printed and distributed to all WRC staff. We also made it available to the other local authorities in our Region, and placed it in other strategic public places, e.g. doctor's waiting rooms.

Hazard Maps

A combined project between the Resource Policy and Emergency Management Departments resulted in the production of posters combining hazard maps and the emergency checklist. The product has been found to be both useful and affordable. Previously the cost of a hazard map was $40.00. These maps are now available to the public at a cost of $10 each (when ordered) and $5 when bought over the counter. The Department supplied each local authority in the Region with 20 copies relating to their area, plus a full set for the Region.

2.6   Hazard Related Activities

The Emergency Management Department has been involved with additional hazard related activities, including:

- commenting on natural hazard aspects of district plans,
- consulting on natural hazard aspects of resource consent applications
- providing information and maps on earthquake hazards to members of the public,
- liaising with emergency managers from outside organisations,
- responding to public queries regarding the zoning of land based on geological hazards,
- attending conferences on geophysics, hazards, and risk management.

Warnings/Events

Nine earthquakes were recorded in the Wellington Region over the past six months, the largest being a 4.4 Richter. Other earthquakes recorded by IGNS were:

1998 July 14 - 22 km west-north-west of Wellington (4.4)
1998 July 20 - 64 km north-west of Paraparaumu (3.9)
1998 August 6 - 17 km west of Porirua (3.7)
1998 August 28 - 56 km south-west of Blenheim (4.3). Felt in Wellington
1998 August 30 - 88 km east of Martinborough (3.6)
1998 September 22 - 24 km south-east of Wellington (3.3)
1998 October 15 - 13 km south of Featherston (3.6)
1998 October 27 - 11 km west of Masterton (3.8)
1998 December 21 - 43 km west-north-west of Levin (4.4). Felt in Wellington

A total of 57 weather warnings were received and promulgated. Of these 28 were for strong wind and 29 for heavy rain. This department informed all involved. No problems were experienced except in the two flooding events of 21 and 28 October.

The Emergency Management Department was closely involved in these flooding events on the Kapiti Coast, the Hutt Valley and the Wairarapa. The department assisted the Hutt City on 21 October (7:00pm to 5:30am) to inspect danger areas near the Hutt River and to assist their roading contractor (closing roads, placing warning signs and communications).

On 28 October the department made itself available to the Kapiti Coast District Council and participated in their headquarters operations. We accompanied the Kapiti Coast DC Mayor in helicopter inspections of the area and on our return provided a situation report to the Ministry of Emergency Management and Civil Defence and the other local authorities of the Region. We attended all media briefings and from that compiled situation reports that were also made available to the Ministry and local authorities. The situation was so serious that at 8:00pm we alerted our Controller (John Allard) and our volunteer staff to be on standby should a Regional Civil Defence Emergency needed to be declared. At that stage the rain eased.

3.   Recommendation

That the report be received and the information noted

Report prepared by   Approved by

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