

Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Meeting Minutes

Meeting held in the Council Chamber
36 Water Street, Whangārei
on Tuesday 2 September 2025, commencing at 11:30 am - 1:00pm

Tuhinga/Present:

Chairperson, FNDC Deputy Mayor Kelly Stratford
Deputy Chairperson - WDC Mayor, Vincent Cocurullo
KDC Councillor, Gordon Lambeth
NRC Councillor, Rick Stolwerk
WDC alternate, Nicholas Connop
NEMA Representative Mike Gillooly
FENZ Representative Wipari Henwood
NZ Police alternate, Dean Robinson

I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

Full Meeting

NRC CDEM Emergency Manager, Damian Rio
NEMA Representative, Shona Morgan
NRC GM Community Resilience, Louisa Gritt
NRC Emergency Management Partnership Manager, Brendon Gray
FNDC GM Community & Engagement, Ruben Garcia
NRC Welfare Specialist, Kylie Cox
Emergency Management Specialist, Bill Hutchinson
Emergency Management Specialist, Kori Puckey
Emergency Management Specialist, James Harvey
Emergency Management Specialist, Tony Devanney
Emergency Management Response Specialist, Jenny Calder
NRC EA to the Chair, Rae Hetaraka – (online)
Emergency Management Iwi Engagement, Papanui Polamalu (online)
Emergency Management Specialist, Laura Exton (online)
Emergency Management Communications Specialist, Zach Woods – (online)

The Chair declared the meeting open at 11.30am with karakia.

Ngā Mahi Whakapai/Housekeeping (Item 1.0)

The chair informed that the meeting would be recorded for the purpose of minute taking support

Ngā whakapahā/Apologies (Item 2.0)

Moved (Stratford / Cocurullo)

That the apologies from NRC Councillor Shortland, FNDC alternate Moko Tepania and NZ Police Representative Matthew Shroj for non-attendance be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: Apologies were noted for the following attendees: Jason Marris, Simon Weston, Cr Robinson, Cr MacDonald, Guy Holroyd, Michael Day

Nga whakapuakanga/Declarations of Conflicts of Interest (Item 3.0)

It was advised that members should make declarations item-by-item as the meeting progressed.

Receipt of Supplementary Report (Item 4.0A)

Report from Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience

Moved (Cocurullo / Stratford)

That as permitted under section 46A(7) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 the following supplementary report be received – Group Controller Appointment

Carried

Secretarial notes: Entered as item 7.4 on the agenda

Confirmation of Minutes - 3 June 2025 (Item 4.1)

Report from Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience

Moved (Cocurullo / Lambeth)

That the minutes of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group meeting held on 3 June 2025, and the be confirmed as a true and correct record and that these be duly authenticated by the Chair.

Carried

Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 5.1)

Report from Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience

Moved (Stolwerk/ Cocurullo)

That the action sheet be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: Discussed the development and implementation of a Community Resilience Induction Package to ensure all incoming and existing elected members receive civil defence and emergency management training, with staff tasked to create and share the package across councils.

Confirmed that all councils are required to include civil defence and emergency management training in the induction process for newly elected members, as outlined in the action sheet, with staff responsible for preparing the necessary materials.

The induction package aims to ensure elected members understand their roles and responsibilities in civil defence, especially given recent emergencies and the unique situation of having experienced members like the chair

Staff are actively developing the induction package under the community resilience space with NRC, which will be shared with new elected members and included in council induction processes, covering not just civil defence but also adaptation and other relevant topics.

National Emergency Management Agency Update (Item 6.1)

Report from Shona Morgan, NEMA Representative - Senior Regional Emergency Management Advisor

Moved (Stratford/ Cocurullo)

That the report 'National Emergency Management Agency Update' by Shona Morgan, NEMA Representative - Senior Regional Emergency Management Advisor and dated 20 August 2025 be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: Shona introduced herself. She will be attending CDEM in place of Mike Gillooly who has now taken a different position within NEMA.

Explained that new requirements for group plans include specific provisions for people effected disproportionately during emergencies, coordination of community assistance, and management of animals during emergencies. The CDEM group plan is up for review next year – it will be prudent to start planning soon.

A targeted consultation is underway regarding Section 33 of the National Plan, focusing on how financial support to local authorities is managed, and groups are encouraged to submit feedback to ensure local authorities understand available government support. CDEM group is invited to provide feedback during the process.

The current legislative proposal is for CEs to be appointed as controllers, with the ability to delegate, and council members were advised to provide feedback during the Select Committee process, with the timeline for submissions expected towards the end of the year. Feedback can be provided as individual councils but the CDEM group will do its own.

CEG Chair Report (Item 7.1)

Report from Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager

Moved (Stratford/ Stolwerk)

That the report 'CEG Chair Report' by Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager and dated 28 August 2025 be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: Clarified that NRC has a core team of 13 staff, dedicated to civil defence, with additional council staff trained in incident management to support during events. KDC has one assigned civil defence staff member, but 50 council employees are trained and can be mobilised for emergency response, while still being paid by their respective councils. The number of trained staff fluctuates as personnel join or leave, and the council can provide updated figures on trained staff upon request.

Discussed the effectiveness of various communication channels for emergency messaging, emphasising a multi-channel approach that includes radio, social media, council websites, and phone trees, with radio remaining the most trusted source according to recent surveys. Outlined the main

channels used: RNZ and local broadcasters, Facebook as the primary social media platform, and council websites for updates, with ongoing exploration of additional social media options. Mike highlighted that radio remains the most trusted source of information during emergencies, as confirmed by NEMA surveys and local feedback, though the council continues to use all available channels to ensure message consistency and accuracy. Noted the importance of tailoring communication to different demographics, ensuring accurate information is disseminated, and addressing misinformation, especially for rural and isolated communities.

Discussed the coverage and effectiveness of the Emergency Mobile Alert System, noting improvements in message delivery, ongoing network upgrades, and the impact of 3G network closure. Observed that nearly all phones now receive emergency alerts, with only a few exceptions, and Zach confirmed that network coverage is continually improving, though not yet at 100%. Zach participates in the EMA users group, which meets quarterly to discuss system updates, and noted that the closure of 3G is expected to improve coverage, with ongoing efforts to address connectivity gaps. Zach is in contact with the rural connectivity group to address issues related to network upgrades and vandalism, ensuring isolated communities remain connected during emergencies.

Discussed the status of the Tsunami Sirens project, clarifying the difference between constructed and completed sites, operational requirements, and ongoing efforts to secure funding for sites lacking mains power connectivity. Explained that a site is considered completed once it is constructed, connected to satellite, cell phone, and mains power, with some sites currently operational via solar power only. Sites lacking mains power are outside the existing budget, and the CES forum is exploring funding options to complete these installations, with 90 sites constructed and operational via satellite or cellular connectivity.

Discussed the near-completion of documentation for the Multi-Agency Coordination Centre, with the CEs forum monitoring progress and plans to provide a programme update once finalised. Early discussions are underway regarding future collaboration and co-location of agencies within the centre, aiming to enhance joint operations and resource sharing.

KDC asked to note that item 15: Wairoa River Model gives the impression that the whole river was cross sectioned, they believe only a very small percentage was completed – wanted this noted for the record that it is misleading.

Actions:

- 1. Confirm how long NRC has collected rates for the Multi-Agency Coordination Centre and the current amount held. (CDEM)**
- 2. Share data on the percentage of people receiving Emergency Mobile Alerts following recent tests.** – Information provided in the chat by Zach at the meeting: The latest information on the EMA systems reach from NEMA In May 2025: John Price, Director, National Emergency Management Agency says NEMA's test of the system(28/05/2025) say the alert successfully transmitted to all parts of New Zealand with cell phone reception. "Our 2022 survey showed nine out of ten people received an alert or had been with someone who had. Given this year's transmission was successful, we can safely estimate between 5 and 6 million phones received the alert."

Membership and appointments – Northland CDEM Group (Item 7.2)

Report from Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager and Kylie Cox, Welfare Coordination Group Representative

(Cocurullo/ Stratford)

1. That the report 'Membership and appointments – Northland CDEM Group' by Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager and Kylie Cox, Welfare Coordination Group Representative and dated, 30 July 2025 be received.
2. That the CDEM Group notes the new iwi representative is Thomas Hohaia replacing JJ Ripikoi and Hone Dalton, effective 29 May 2025.
3. That the CDEM Group approves the removal of Shona Morgan, Joanne Tasker and Sian Leith and Paula Ulrich from their appointed CDEM roles for Whangarei District Council.
4. That the CDEM Group notes the transition of John Burt, Local Controller appointment from Kaipara District Council to Whangārei District Council (replacing Shona Morgan) effective 1st September 2025; and
5. That the CDEM Group notes that John Burt will continue as a Group Controller on behalf of Whangārei District Council effective 1st September 2025.
6. That the CDEM Group approves the appointment of Tracey Deane, Kaipara District Council and Esther Powell, Far North District Council as Local Recovery Managers in accordance with CDEM Act 2002 s. 30 (1).

Carried

Declarations During Elections (Item 7.3)

Report from Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager

(Stratford/ Cocurullo)

That the report 'Declarations During Elections' by Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager and dated 20 August 2025, be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: Presented on the authority to declare emergencies during the election period, clarifying the legislative process, the role of outgoing members, and the Minister for Emergency Management's authority during the transition, with council members seeking practical guidance. It is important for members to be aware of the gap and the process.

During a state of emergency, the chair of the CDEM group is the first to declare, followed by the deputy chair or another CDEM group member, and if unavailable, the mayor or a nominated council member of the affected district, with authority shifting to the Minister for Emergency Management during the post-election gap.

Outgoing council members retain authority to declare emergencies until official election results are announced, after which only the Minister can declare until new members are sworn in, as per the Local Government Act and emergency management legislation.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for convening the first council meeting to swear in new members, potentially creating a 10-15 day gap where only the Minister can act, with the group controller and CE coordinating with emergency services during this period

Group Controller Appointment (Item 7.4)

Report from Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager

(Stolwerk/ Cocurullo)

1. That the report 'Group Controller Appointment' by Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager and dated 27 August 2025, be received.
2. That the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group committee approve the appointment of Damian Rio as a Group Controller.
3. That the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group committee notes that Damian Rio continues with his Controller Development plan, due to be completed by mid-November 2025.

Carried

Community Response Planning and Marae Preparedness Planning (Item 8.1)

Report from Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager; Papanui Polamalu, Emergency Management - Iwi/hapū Engagement Advisor; Laura Exton, Emergency Management Specialist – Kaipara and Kori Puckey, Emergency Management Specialist

(Stolwerk/ Cocurullo)

That the report 'Community Response Planning and Marae Preparedness Planning' by Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager; Papanui Polamalu, Emergency Management - Iwi/hapū Engagement Advisor; Laura Exton, Emergency Management Specialist – Kaipara and Kori Puckey, Emergency Management Specialist and dated 30 July 2025, be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: The CDEM Group has prioritised expanding community response planning and Marae fitness, resulting in improved resilience and more efficient resource allocation during emergencies. Staff efforts have been instrumental in increasing the number of prepared communities, with the benefits evident during recent emergency responses, particularly in remote areas.

Discussed the outcomes of the 35 Marae project, highlighting key messages around water, food, and safety, practical resilience measures in isolated communities, and ongoing efforts to secure funding and resources for vulnerable groups. Papanui reported that coastal Marae focus on high tide and tsunami risks, inland Marae on flooding and water supply, and forested areas on fire risk, with consistent emphasis on supporting vulnerable groups such as elders and disabled individuals. Isolated communities have increased their resilience by installing water tanks, acquiring generators, and establishing multiple response hubs for different hazards, with plans to implement solar arrays for alternative energy. Many communities struggle to afford emergency supplies and infrastructure, prompting efforts to concentrate resources at Marae and seek funding streams to support food and equipment for households. Desalination plants are being considered for isolated communities to ensure water supply during emergencies, though cost remains a barrier to widespread implementation.

The chair then opened the floor to Police and FENZ to share any updates we should be aware of.

- *Police: Despite vacancies, support from across the country ensures that frontline service delivery remains unaffected, with resources focused on operational needs.*
- *FENZ: Paid staff are undertaking low-level industrial action, which has not affected frontline operations, with ongoing negotiations aimed at resolution. Early discussions with CDEM Emergency Manager are exploring future collaboration and co-location within the Multi-Agency Coordination Centre to enhance joint emergency management efforts. Expecting a La Nina weather pattern this summer.*

Whakamutunga (Conclusion)

The meeting concluded at 12.27pm with karakia by the chair

Un-confirmed