

Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Meeting Minutes

Meeting held in the Council Chamber
36 Water Street, Whangārei
on Tuesday 3 March 2026, commencing at 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Tuhinga/Present:

Chairperson - NRC Councillor, Colin Kitchen
Deputy Chair - FNDC Councillor, Kelly Stratford (online)
WDC Mayor, Ken Couper (left 2.37pm)
KDC Councillor, Gordon Lambeth
NEMA Representative, Shona Morgan
FENZ Representative, Wipari Henwood
NZ Police Representative, Matthew Srhoj (left 2.36pm)

I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

Full Meeting

FNDC CE Guy Holroyd (online – left 2.51pm)
FNDC GM Community & Engagement, Ruben Garcia
NRC CE, Jono Gibbard (online)
NRC GM Community Resilience, Louisa Gritt
NRC CDEM Manager, Damian Rio
NRC Emergency Management Partnership Manager, Brendon Gray
NRC Governance Manager, Jane Hickmott (online)
Emergency Management Response Specialist, Jenny Calder
NRC Welfare Specialist, Kylie Cox
NRC Emergency Management Specialist, Tony Devanney
NRC Emergency Management Specialist, Laura Exton
NRC Emergency Management Specialist, Kori Puckey (online)
NRC Emergency Management Specialist, Bill Hutchinson (online)
NRC Emergency Management Specialist, Rongomaiwahine Glassie (online)
Emergency Management Specialist – Lifelines, James Harvey (online)
Emergency Management Communications Specialist, Zach Woods – (online)
Medical Officer of Health, Dr David Sinclair
FNDC Contractor, Alistair Wells (online)
KDC Group Controller, Alastair Dunlop (online)
KDC Local Controller, Jack Rudolph (online)

Part Meeting

KDC Alternate Member Snow Tane (left 2.37pm)
NRC Alternate member Arama Morunga
WDC Alternate member Nicholas Connop (left 2.24pm)
NRC Chairman, Pita Tipene (left 1.18pm)
WDC GM Community Services, Victoria Harwood (left 2.38pm)
NRC Monitoring Manager, Jason Donaghy
NRC Kai Whiri Iwituna – Senior Catchment Advisor, Chantez Connor-Kingi
NRC Natural Hazards Specialist, Sarah Gauden-Ing

The Chair declared the meeting open at 1pm with Karakia by Wipari.

Ngā Mahi Whakapai/Housekeeping (Item 1.0)

Ngā whakapahā/Apologies (Item 2.0)

There were no apologies.

Secretarial note: apologies noted for the record for the following non-members: CEG Chair – WDC CE Simon Weston, Deputy CEG Chair – KDC CE Jason Marris, KDC Interim CE – Michael Day, FNDC Mayor Moko Tepania, Papanui Polamalu

Receipt of Supplementary Agenda Item (Item 2.0A)

Report from Louisa Gritt, GM Community Resilience

Moved (Stratford/Couper)

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

Carried

Secretarial notes: The supplementary agenda item is number 8.6

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.

Confirmation of Minutes - 9 December 2025 (Item 4.1)

Report from Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience

Moved (Lambeth/Kitchen)

That the minutes of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group meeting held on 9 December 2025, be confirmed as a true and correct record and that these be duly authenticated by the Chair.

Carried

Secretarial notes: The chair took the opportunity to acknowledge the exceptional resilience and preparedness of staff, agencies and local communities during the January weather event, with civil defence centres and Maraes activating quickly to support affected whanau. Emergency services were recognised for their professionalism and seamless cooperation with councils and community response groups. Discussed the ongoing recovery phase, emphasising the importance of strong communication and community-led resilience. It was noted that while immediate lessons are being gathered, a more comprehensive review will occur once the situation stabilises.

Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 5.1)

Report from Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience

Moved (Couper/Stratford)

That the action sheet be received.

Carried

National Emergency Management Agency Update (Item 6.1)

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

Moved (Couper/Kitchen)

That the report 'National Emergency Management Agency Update' by Shona Morgan, NEMA Representative - Senior Regional Emergency Management Advisor and dated 13 February 2026 be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: Hon Chris Penk is visiting Northland next week. Members were informed that a formal announcement regarding government contributions to mayoral relief funds would be made shortly. Mayor Couper reported initial funding received and anticipation for further government support.

Actions:

1. **NEMA Representative to send an email to FNDC Representative summarising the mayoral relief fund information provided at the meeting.**

Membership and appointments – Northland CDEM Group (Item 7.1)

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

Moved (Stratford/Couper)

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, 23 February 2026 be received.
2. That CDEM note the resignations of Health New Zealand representative – Sarah Boniface.
3. That CDEM note the stepping down of iwi representative Snow Tane from CEG.

Carried

Secretarial notes: The committee acknowledged the effort and contributions of Snow Tane in the iwi space for CEG.

Actions:

1. **CDEM Manager to draft letter of appreciation to Snow Tane for contributions to the CEG as iwi representative**

CDEM Group Plan Delivery (Item 7.2)

Report from Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager

Moved (Kitchen/Stratford)

1. That the report 'CDEM Group Plan Delivery' by Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager and dated 17 February 2026, be received.
2. That the Northland CDEM Joint Committee note the additional information requested by the Coordinating Executive Group to enable more effective oversight of the operational delivery of the Northland CDEM Group plan.

Carried

Secretarial notes: Concerns were raised about KPIS added operationally and not in collaboration with governance. Members want to ensure that collaboration occurs on the next group plan KPIS. Understands that they are operational but believes in working together on the work programme and KPIS.

CDEM manager confirmed that the drafted timeline includes governance and agency workshops with key partners, community consultation and NEMA assessment before sign off by the CDEM and it is sent to the Minister.

CDEM Finance Report (Item 7.3)

Report from Tony Devanney, Emergency Management Specialist

Moved (Stratford/Couper)

That the report 'CDEM Finance Report' by Tony Devanney, Emergency Management Specialist and dated 19 February 2026, be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: Explained the three budgets: Total civil defence budget (funded by targeted rates and service level agreements), CEG and Joint Committee administrative budget (district councils contribute), and reserve fund budget (used for projects like tsunami sirens). Positive variances were noted due to recovery funding rollovers, but a deficit is expected next year.

Cr Stratford raised concerns about the lack of detail regarding the MACC, questioning where council contributions are held and how progress is reported. It was clarified that the project is managed by NRC's property team and will be reported through different processes, with a commitment to provide financial updates at governance level.

Future financial reports will be more spreadsheet-based and less narrative, providing clearer tracking of each budget. The group agreed to include MACC project funding details at the next meeting for improved transparency.

Actions:

- 1. Financial information for the MACC and to be included in the finance update to Governance**

Section 17a Review Update (Item 7.4)

Report from Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager

Moved (Couper/Stratford)

1. That the report 'Section 17a Review Update' by Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager and dated 2 February 2026, be received.
2. That the Northland CDEM Group Joint Committee note the recommendations arising from the *Northland CDEM Group Capability Assessment Report (September 2025)*.
3. That the Northland CDEM Group Joint Committee endorse the implementation plan incorporating short-, medium- and long-term actions as outlined in this report. (Attachment 1).
4. Request an independent review to be undertaken of the response and transition to recovery of the severe weather event January 2026

5. Request that the outcomes of the independent review are used in conjunction with the Section 17a review recommendations in the decision making for future CDEM funding and structure arrangements in Northland

The motion was lost

Moved (Kitchen/Couper)

1. That the report 'Section 17a Review Update' by Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager and dated 2 February 2026, be received.
2. That the Northland CDEM Group Joint Committee note the recommendations arising from the Northland CDEM Group Capability Assessment Report (September 2025).
3. That the Northland CDEM Group Joint Committee approve a staged, flexible implementation plan incorporating short-, medium- and long-term actions as outlined in this report. (Attachment 1).

Carried

Secretarial notes: Discussed the findings and recommendations of the Section 17A review, focusing on capability gaps, governance roles, operational leadership, and the endorsement of an implementation plan with short, medium, and long-term actions.

CDEM Manager summarised the Section 17A review, noting strengths in community preparedness and public information, but identifying gaps in recovery, response, operational leadership, and integration of iwi and communities. Twelve recommendations were developed, spanning effective response, community resilience, and governance.

Mayor Couper proposed an independent review of the severe weather event response and transition to recovery, but concerns were raised about funding and the value added compared to internal reviews. The motion for an independent review was not supported, with the group opting to continue internal review processes and escalate recommendations to the Mayoral forum as needed.

Cr Stratford requested improved reporting from local councils on progress towards operational readiness and resilience goals, including business continuity and emergency preparedness. CDEM Manager confirmed that enhanced internal reporting and community consultation are part of the review's recommendations.

Agency Updates (Item 8.1)

Report from Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience

Moved (Lambeth/Couper)

That the verbal updates from FENZ, Police and any other agencies, be received

Carried

Secretarial notes: David Sinclair introduced himself as the Medical Officer of Health at Te Whatu Ora. Explained his role in emergency management and the importance of post-event health communication, especially regarding flooding and related health risks. He is based both here and in Auckland. The CEG contact continues to be Paula Martin and Callum Chapman is temporarily covering the vacancy left by Sarah Boniface.

FENZ reported ongoing restructuring, removal of regional structure, and industrial action with support gained to extend the one-hour stoppages on Mondays and Fridays. Raised concern about

potential vegetation fires with the current weather. Mentioned efforts to build capability in the Far North, including challenges faced by the Kaikohe Brigade in terms of response times. New station being built in Paparoa and Karikari (amalgamating Rangiputa). They will be moving in April for the MACC build.

Police highlighted ongoing partnership with FENZ and LandSAR, coordination for large weather events, and challenges in mid-north staffing. Updates included priorities set by the commissioner, new targets for trust and confidence, youth offending reduction, and retail crime resolution. Mentioned the Move-on orders announced last week and noted WDC are having a task force meeting to discuss.

Actions

- 1. Police/CDEM to connect offline to review the contact group information as Matt was missed from important information circulated.**

CEG Chair Report (Item 8.2)

Report from Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager

Moved (Lambeth/Couper)

That the report 'CEG Chair Report' by Damian Rio, dated 13 February 2026 be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: The report highlights how important the reduction and readiness phase is and how much work is going on in this space. A debrief from the January weather event will be undertaken and a report will be shared at the April CEG meeting with recommendations. Noted that WDC is in recovery and will be for some time.

Actions:

- 1. A request for additional rain gauges in Mokau Marae and Wainui to improve data collection and support for affected communities to be passed to NRC Hydrology team**

Emergency Management Bill Submission - Retrospective Approval (Item 8.3)

Report from Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager

Moved (Stratford/Lambeth)

1. That the report 'Emergency Management Bill Submission - Retrospective Approval' by Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager and dated 16 February 2026, be received.
2. That That the Northland CDEM Group Joint Committee retrospectively approve the attached submission on the Emergency Management (EM) Bill (No2).

Carried

Secretarial notes: Satisfaction with the process and the staff's efforts was expressed.

Community Response Planning and Marae Preparedness Planning (Item 8.4)

Report from Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager;

Moved (Kitchen/Lambeth)

That the report 'Community Response Planning and Marae Preparedness Planning' by Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager and dated 13 February 2026, be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: Highlighted the significant activation of Marae during the recent weather event, with 81 marae trained personnel supporting over 180 Marae in the region. The importance of familiar faces and community trust was emphasised.

Challenges faced by Marae in meeting compliance requirements for water, evacuation, building fitness, and insurance were discussed, with suggestions to reduce compliance costs to facilitate their role as welfare centres.

Acknowledged the extra workload on council staff following events, noting the importance of community response plans and the leadership shown by Northland in this area.

Landslide Assessments - Correspondence (Item 8.5)

Report from Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager and Jane Hickmott, Governance and Policy Manager

Moved (Couper/Stratford)

1. That the report 'Landslide Assessments - Correspondence' by Damian Rio, CDEM Emergency Manager and Jane Hickmott, Governance and Policy Manager and dated 16 February 2026, be received and noted.

Carried

January 2026 Severe Weather Event - Landslip Risk (Item 8.6)

Report from Jason Donaghy, Natural Resources Monitoring Manager

Moved (Couper/Kitchen)

That the report 'January 2026 Severe Weather Event - Landslip Risk' by Jason Donaghy, Natural Resources Monitoring Manager and dated 26 February 2026, be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: Described the sequence and intensity of the January storms, noting unprecedented rainfall and its role in triggering widespread landslides. Comparisons were made to previous cyclones, highlighting the severity of the event.

Aerial surveys were conducted with local kaitiaki, capturing imagery and identifying hazards. Geotechnical experts reviewed the data, prioritising properties at risk and informing recovery actions. Discussed the importance of rapid intelligence gathering, including the use of LiDAR and community-submitted photos, and the challenges of verifying geotechnical risks in Northland due to limited expertise.

Recommendations included building community resilience in areas prone to repeat landslides, improving preparedness planning with Marae, and deploying more rain gauges to enhance data collection and event confirmation.

Actions:

1. **NRC Secretariat to circulate the presentation slideshow from the January 2026 Severe Weather Event – Landslip Risk**

Whakamutunga (Conclusion)

The meeting concluded at 2.53pm with karakia by Wipari.

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