

# Submission template: Strengthening New Zealand's emergency management legislation

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is seeking feedback on options to strengthen New Zealand's emergency management legislation.

The deadline for submissions is **5pm, 13 May 2025**.

You can find the full discussion document and more information about the legislative reform process on NEMA's website. Your feedback will inform decisions about the proposals. We appreciate your time and effort to respond to this consultation.

[Emergency Management Bill consultation](#)

## How to make a submission

To make a submission, you will need to:

1. Fill out your name, email address and organisation on the next page. If you are submitting on behalf of an organisation, please ensure you have the authority to represent its views.
2. Fill out your responses to the questions in this document. You can choose to answer some or all of the questions. Where possible, please provide evidence to support your views. For example, references to independent research, facts and figures, or your experiences.
3. If your submission has any confidential information:
  - a. Please state this in the email accompanying your submission, setting out clearly which parts you consider should be withheld, and the grounds under the Official Information Act 1982 (Official Information Act) that you believe apply. NEMA will take this into account and will consult with submitters when responding to requests under the Official Information Act.
  - b. Indicate this in your submission. Any confidential information should be clearly marked within the text of your submission (preferably as Microsoft Word comments).
  - c. Note that submissions are subject to the Official Information Act and may, therefore, need to be released in full or in part. The Privacy Act 2020 also applies.
4. Once you have completed this form, you can send it by:

- a. email (as a Microsoft Word document) to [EmergencyManagementBill@nema.govt.nz](mailto:EmergencyManagementBill@nema.govt.nz)

**OR**

- b. post to:

Policy Unit  
National Emergency Management Agency  
PO Box 5010, Wellington 6140

## Submitter information

Any information you provide will be stored securely.

### Your name, email address, and organisation

Name: Helen Worboys, Mayor

Email address: Helen.Worboys@mdc.govt.nz

Organisation:  
(if applicable) Manawatū District Council

- ☐ The Privacy Act 2020 applies to submissions. Please tick the box if you **do not** want your name or other personal information to be included in any information about submissions that NEMA may publish.
- ☐ NEMA may publish submissions or a summary of submissions to its website, [civildefence.govt.nz](https://civildefence.govt.nz). If you **do not** want your submission or a summary of your submission to be published, please tick the box and type an explanation below:

I do not want my submission published on NEMA's website because...

### Does your submission contain confidential information?

- ☐ I would like my submission (or parts of my submission) to be kept confidential and have stated my reasons and the grounds under section 9 of the Official Information Act that I believe apply, for consideration by NEMA.

I would like my submission (or parts of my submission) to be kept confidential because...

### Use of information

Submissions will be used to inform NEMA's policy development process and will inform advice to Ministers. Your submission (including identifying information) may also be shared with other government agencies working on policies related to emergency management. NEMA may contact submitters directly if we need clarification on their submission or would like further information from them.

# Consultation questions

These questions relate to the issues and options raised in the discussion document *Strengthening New Zealand's emergency management legislation*. You can find the full discussion document on [NEMA's website](#).

**You do not need to answer all questions.**

## Objectives for reform

The Government's proposed objectives for reform are to:

- strengthen community and iwi Māori participation in emergency management
- provide for clear responsibilities and accountabilities at the national, regional, and local levels
- enable a higher minimum standard of emergency management
- minimise disruption to essential services
- ensure agencies have the right powers available when an emergency happens.

*Refer to pages 8–9 of the discussion document to answer the question in this section.*

### 1. Have we identified the right objectives for reform?

☒ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

The Manawātū District Council (MDC) generally supports the Government's proposed objectives for the reform of the CDEM Act. However we agree with the submission by Taituarā that careful consideration needs to be given as to whether a legislative fix is needed in every instance, to achieve these outcomes, or if the desired outcomes are able to be achieved through other means, such as guidance, templates, strengthening relationships, and identifying and sharing best practice.

## Objective 1: Strengthening community and iwi Māori participation

### Issue 1: Meeting the diverse needs of people and communities

We have identified options to ensure the emergency management system better meets the diverse needs of communities, with a particular focus on those who may be disproportionately affected during an emergency.

*Refer to pages 10–13 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

### 2. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☒ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

MDC agrees that some people and groups are disproportionately affected by emergencies and have different needs that cannot be met through a “one size fits all” approach. For example, the percentage of Māori land within the Manawatū District is around 1%. 84% of this land is next to waterways such as the Manawatū, Rangitikei and Ōroua Rivers and their tributaries that have a long history of flooding.

Council works with Community Committees and relevant community organisations to promote emergency management in neighbourhoods and the wider community. Council also engage with and supports iwi driven initiatives within the Manawatū District to support vulnerable community members in emergency events.

People’s actions (or inaction) can increase their vulnerability to natural hazards. Local authorities have a role in ensuring that communities have access to the best information available and how they can self-prepare for an emergency event.

MDC supports option 2 – the development of national level guidance tailored for the diverse needs of people and communities. MDC is part of the Manawatū-Whanganui Civil Defence Group. We already engage with local iwi and community and tailor our Group Plan to the needs of these groups. However, MDC does not support these requirements being legislated (options 3 and 4) as this could result in these requirements being dictated to us in a way that does not best meet the needs of these communities and iwi/Māori. A prescribed approach may also lead to challenges of discrimination against certain groups. Legislative requirements could also open Council up to greater liability.

Option 4 – requiring the Director to consult with disproportionately affected communities to inform the development of the National CDEM Plan and the National CDEM Strategy is supported in principle. However, MDC questions how effective national-level engagement could practically address the needs of specific communities. MDC considers that local authorities and CDEM Groups are best placed to understand their communities’ diverse needs.

### **3. Are there other reasons that may cause some people and groups to be disproportionately affected by emergencies?**

Please explain your views.

Effective engagement is dependent on effective relationships between Councils and iwi Māori. Where relationships are strained, this can impact on the effectiveness of hazard planning and preparedness.

Remote communities that rely on one or two key transport routes may be disproportionately affected by emergencies (e.g. Tangimoana and Āpiti in the Manawatū District).

Some of our rural communities have limited internet access. There are also parts of our District, such as Rongotea, that have no mobile phone coverage. This makes information sharing difficult on a good day, and virtually impossible during emergency events.

Some people are more vulnerable by virtue of being less willing or able to engage or have an increased level of mistrust.

**4. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

Preferred option is option 2. MDC would not support any increase in legislative requirements unless this is accompanied by central government funding to cover the increased cost burden.

**5. What would planning look like (at the local and national levels) if it was better informed by the needs of groups that may be disproportionately affected by emergencies?**

Please explain your views.

Improved outcomes as barriers are reduced.

**6. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## **Issue 2: Strengthening and enabling iwi Māori participation in emergency management**

We have identified options to recognise the contributions made by iwi Māori in emergency management, to the benefit of all people in New Zealand.

*Refer to pages 13–16 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**7. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

MDC agrees that greater recognition is needed of the willingness, expertise and capability of iwi Māori in emergency management. MDC recognises the community benefit that comes from having Māori representation on the Emergency Management Coordinating Executives Group, as without local representation, the pre-planning of a community response, and welfare coordination during an emergency event involving local marae risks being disjointed and ineffective.

However, in MDC's experience, the representative needs to be carefully chosen to ensure that they have the right local knowledge and are cognisant of the needs of the communities they serve.

**8. Have we accurately captured the roles that iwi Māori play before, during and after emergencies?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

In particular, MDC recognises the importance of having local Māori representation in caring for their communities through response and recovery from an emergency event.

**9. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

MDC has mixed views on the proposal for the mandatory (legislative) inclusion of Māori members on Emergency Management Committees and Emergency Management Coordinating Executives. If Māori representation is to be required by legislation, central government will need to resource these members sufficiently to enable them to participate fully in the emergency management system.

**10. How should iwi Māori be recognised in the emergency management system?**

Please explain your views.

As iwi Māori are disproportionately affected by natural hazards, the inclusion of Māori members on Emergency Management Committees and Emergency Management Coordinating Executives would help ensure that the needs of Māori are given adequate consideration at all levels and across governance, planning, and operational activities.

MDC seeks clarification on how iwi Māori members are currently appointed to Emergency Management Committees and Coordinating Executives and the criteria/skills that are considered. The appointment of the right person is critically important to outcomes.

**11. What should be the relationship between Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups and iwi Māori?**

Please explain your views.

CDEM Groups should engage with and support iwi-driven initiatives to support vulnerable community members in emergency events. CDEM Groups promote emergency management in neighbourhoods and the wider community. Iwi Māori help to inform planning for hazards and help coordinate response, recovery, and welfare of their communities during an emergency event.

**12. What should be the relationship between Coordinating Executive Groups and iwi Māori?**

Please explain your views.

MDC recognises that there would be benefit from having iwi Māori representation on Coordinating Executive Groups. However, the legislation needs to provide for direct reimbursement of costs to Māori by central government. Also, there needs to be selection criteria to ensure the appointed representatives have on-the-ground local knowledge, local relationships and expertise to be successful in their role.

**13. What would be the most effective way for iwi Māori experiences and mātauranga in emergency management to be provided to the Director?**

Please explain your views.

The legislation should provide flexibility for iwi Māori to develop their own local approaches to sharing experiences and mātauranga in emergency management to the Director. The approach should not be prescribed in regulation/legislation.

#### 14. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### Issue 3: Strengthening and enabling community participation in emergency management

We have identified options to improve communities' ability to participate in emergency management. This includes making it easier for individuals, businesses, and other community organisations to offer resources to the "official" emergency response.

*Refer to pages 16–18 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

#### 15. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

MDC agrees that communities have a role to play in managing their own risks and helping families, neighbours, and people in their own networks. However, the discussion document does not give adequate recognition to the health and safety responsibilities/obligations on local authorities in an emergency management event where volunteer groups may self-organise and involve themselves in the response.

MDC understand that WorkSafe has recently prepared guidance that clarifies health and safety obligations of local authorities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 with respect to casual volunteers ([Keeping volunteers healthy and safe | WorkSafe](#)). As this guidance is designed for "business as usual" activities, it would be helpful for additional guidance to be developed that is specific to civil defence emergencies.

Concerns over health and safety liability may hinder local authorities willingness to accept offers of resource from the public and local organisations during and after an emergency event.

MDC is working with community groups such as Central District 4 x 4 club and have supported them through gaining recognised qualifications and courses such as psychological first aid and police checks so that Council is satisfied that we have made reasonable efforts that they are suitable, reasonable and qualified to assist in an emergency event. Our concerns are more with groups that self-organise who may put themselves at risk without Council's direction.

#### 16. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

MDC supports option 2 (non-legislative) – being to develop and update guidance and strengthen public education. However, MDC is concerned that such guidance might set expectations of reimbursement of costs incurred by voluntary groups who self-organise without being authorised by Council.

Any guidance developed for the health, safety and wellbeing of volunteers should align with the guidance released by WorkSafe. For example, the obligations in that guidance

with respect to casual volunteers (i.e. those not authorised by the controller) compared to those for volunteer workers should be consistent.

## 17. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

MDC requests that additional or updated guidance be developed by central government to support local authorities in understanding their roles and liabilities with respect to community groups and volunteers who self-organise during an emergency management event. The current guidance 'Volunteer Coordination in CDEM' references the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, which has been repealed and replaced with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

## Issue 4: Recognising that people, businesses and communities are often the first to respond in an emergency

We have identified options to address barriers that may stop people, businesses, and communities from acting during an emergency.

*Refer to pages 18–19 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

## 18. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

While we agree with the issues raised in the Discussion Document, we do not consider that the concerns around civil liability are a significant deterrent to people taking immediate action in a Civil Defence emergency due to protections such as ACC.

## 19. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

MDC agrees that during an emergency event it is the reality that people, businesses and communities often need to take immediate action to protect life or property during an emergency. For this reason, MDC supports option 2 (legislative protection from civil liability). However, it may be difficult for people to provide sufficient evidence that they were undertaking reasonable and significant emergency management actions in good faith, and in circumstances where they were unable to seek or be given direction by a Controller or constable.

MDC is very concerned by the suggestion in option 3 that enables compensation for labour costs. As outlined in the table, the risk of this option is unpredictable costs on the Government and local government, including administration costs. MDC agrees that such an approach might incentivise people to carry out unsafe or unnecessary actions for financial gain.

MDC would only support the proposal for labour costs to be recovered if the private individual/companies are instructed by the Director to undertake works, and these costs are able to be recovered (and auditable) through the normal cost recovery process.

**20. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Other problems relating to this objective**

**21. Should we consider any other problems relating to community and iwi Māori participation?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Objective 2: Providing for clear responsibilities and accountabilities at the national, regional, and local levels

### Issue 5: Clearer direction and control during an emergency

We have identified options to make it clearer who is in charge of the operational response to an emergency.

*Refer to pages 20–25 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

#### 22. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

#### 23. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

MDC agrees in principle with submission by Taituarā that option 3 is the most straightforward option. The most critical factor is that responses are led locally where possible. Autonomy is needed for local authorities to decide how best to respond to local issues/events.

#### 24. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

#### 25. Do you think more fundamental changes are needed to the way direction and control works during the response to an emergency? If so, why?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

It is a well-known, agreed structure, that staff have been trained in for years.

### Issue 6: Strengthening the regional tier of emergency management

#### Issue 6.1: Resolving overlapping CDEM Group and local authority roles and responsibilities

We have identified options to ensure it is clear what CDEM Groups and each of their local authority members are responsible for.

*Refer to pages 26–28 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

#### 26. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Local authority boundaries do not align with boundaries of partner agencies such as the NZ Police, FENZ, Health NZ and iwi. This complicates the response.

**27. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

MDC agrees with the Taituarā submission that providing distinct responsibilities for CDEM groups and their local authority members in legislation (option 2) should reduce duplication and ambiguity of roles and help in delivery.

MDC opposes Option 3. We do not support the proposal to require CDEM Group Plans to state how each member will fund and deliver on functions and decisions. Legislating such a requirement is unnecessary and reduces flexibility.

**28. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**29. Do you think more fundamental changes are needed to the way emergency management is delivered at the local government level (for example, the CDEM Group-based model)? If so, why?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

There needs to be consistency across the groups, both in funding, capacity and staffing. Inconsistent management of CDEM Groups impacts on their effectiveness and cohesiveness, and the division of labour.

**Issue 6.2: Providing for clear and consistent organisation and accountability for emergency management**

We have identified options to ensure CDEM Groups are organised effectively, with clearer lines of accountability.

*Refer to pages 28–31 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**30. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Refer to our response to question 29.

**31. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

MDC supports option 3. There needs to be consistency in the way that CDEM Groups are responsible for organising emergency management.

MDC agrees with the issues raised in the Taituarā submission with respect to Option 4. The Chief Executive of each local authority should not be required to hold the role of Controller and Recovery Manager. The Chief Executive should not carry a designated role as they need to be the conduit between elected members, Central Government and response staff.

**32. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Issue 6.3: Strengthening the performance of Coordinating Executive Groups**

We have identified options to strengthen how Coordinating Executive Groups provide advice to and implement the decisions of their CDEM Groups.

*Refer to pages 31–32 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**33. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

We agree in part with the description of the problem being issues with engagement in Coordinating Executive Groups. However, a key problem not mentioned in the discussion document is that there is not rigid adherence to the requirement for membership to be at the Chief Executive Level.

Representatives 'around the table' need to have the delegations and authority to speak on behalf of the organisations that they represent, and to be able to commit to actions. As attendance is not compulsory, competing priorities means that attendance and membership at Coordinating Executive Groups is haphazard. We agree that this impacts on approval of items, delays in decision-making, budget decisions etc.

**34. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

MDC supports the submission by Taituarā. MDC is not convinced that a legislative solution is required. Like Taituarā, MDC supports option 2. We also support Option 4 as this would support consistency, relationship building, and ensuring that the people in the room have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the organisations that they represent.

### 35. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Issue 7: Keeping emergency management plans up to date

We have identified options to make it easier to update the National CDEM Plan and CDEM Group plans, reflecting changes to roles and responsibilities.

*Refer to pages 33–34 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

### 36. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Competing timeframes caused by Parliamentary processes and legislative requirements result in delays in adopting or amending new CDEM Group Plans and the National CDEM Plan.

### 37. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

MDC supports option 2 and 3 for the reasons outlined in the submission by Taituarā. It is important that Councils can make changes to emergency management plans in a timely way that is not administratively cumbersome. It would be beneficial for Councils to be able to add new hazards or change risk profiles without requiring a full review. Simplifying the process for developing and amending the National CDEM plan while maintaining its legislative status will offer more flexibility.

### 38. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Other problems relating to this objective

### 39. Should we consider any other problems relating to responsibilities and accountabilities at the national, regional, and local levels?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Objective 3: Enabling a higher minimum standard of emergency management

### Issue 8: Stronger national direction and assurance

#### Issue 8.1: Strengthening the Director's mandate to set expectations and monitor performance

We have identified options to enable a wider range of mandatory standards to be set, and strengthen the Director's ability to provide assurance about the performance of the emergency management system.

*Refer to pages 36–37 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

#### 40. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

The problem definition does not adequately recognise that emergency management officers are not members of a nationally consistent government department – there is no direct line of responsibility from staff level to the regional or national level. NEMA and the Director do not have any oversight or influence on the performance of staff working in emergency management as their responsibilities are to their own local authorities.

The system is very fractured currently. We do not even have nationally consistent training.

#### 41. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

MDC supports options 2 and 3. The development of any guidance in option 2 or rules through secondary legislation (option 3) should be done in conjunction with the local government sector and agencies. Option 4 lacks clarity. It is not clear whether the reference to 'performance' refers to people operating in the system, or the processes and legislation that determines the system. Without this clarity, MDC does not support this option.

MDC raised concerns in our submission on the Emergency Management Bill (November 2023) with respect to proposed powers for the Director (Chief Executive of NEMA) to prescribe forms that may be used for the purposes of the Act, the rules or regulations. During Covid Lockdown One, there was one form in particular, Āwhina, that was promoted by NEMA but rejected by most, if not all, Councils at the time. The form was poorly constructed and did not serve its intended purpose.

Through our submission on the Emergency Management Bill, we also raised a concern regarding the proposed authority given to the Director to prescribe the operational approach to the management of concurrent emergency designations at a local, regional, and national level. Such an approach could potentially constrain a local authority from

acting in the manner it considers will best serve its people. Local Authorities should have the power to make autonomous decisions for their communities.

**42. Which aspects of emergency management would benefit from greater national consistency or direction?**

Please explain your views.

Nationally mandated training.

Nationally consistent operating platforms for incident management and GIS.

Templates for community response plans.

Nationally consistent public messaging and educational resources.

Recognised qualifications / a career path and minimum standards/prerequisite requirements for staff working as emergency management professionals.

**43. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Issue 8.2: Strengthening the mandate to intervene and address performance issues**

We have identified options to better ensure those with legal emergency management responsibilities are meeting them sufficiently.

*Refer to pages 37–39 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**44. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

The current powers held by the Minister or Director lack the legislative authority to intervene to address issues with the emergency management system.

**45. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

MDC generally supports the submission by Taituarā. MDC supports the intent that the Director and Minister have the powers necessary to achieve improved outcomes, but we have concerns with the way the current options are framed. Emergency management operates from the ground-up. Until there is a nationally consistent framework and reporting lines established from the local level to national level, the effectiveness of top-down enforcement actions is questionable.

**46. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Issue 9: Strengthening local hazard risk management

We have identified options to strengthen the way CDEM Groups and their members manage the risk of hazards in their areas, including by using CDEM Group plans more effectively.

*Refer to pages 39–42 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

### 47. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

In our region, the CDEM Group Plan is not focused on the activities of the Group Office. It is a high-level policy document that identifies and describes the risks facing the region. However, the effectiveness of the plan is reliant on lead agencies having plans at the local level that address these risks.

### 48. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

MDC supports the Taituarā submission. That is, MDC supports options 2, 3 and 4 for the reasons outlined in the submission by Taituarā. MDC would like to be kept informed of any guidance and standards being developed at the national level, including as part of any national working party.

### 49. What is the right balance between regional flexibility and national consistency for CDEM Group plans?

Please explain your views.

Local authorities must have direct involvement in decision-making that affects our communities. Central government must take a leadership role and provide clear guidance, direction and resourcing to support local government in their decision-making. We see the regional levels role as the coordinator of local responses, particularly for events that span more than one territorial authority.

### 50. What practical barriers may be preventing CDEM Group plans from being well integrated with other local government planning instruments?

Please explain your views.

Reducing barriers to be able to better share natural hazard information between agencies is critical.

Planning instruments may not consider the full breadth of natural hazard risks (e.g. fault lines, tsunami risk, liquefaction risk and slip hazards) due to different levels of certainty in the accuracy of the information (including the scale at which the hazard is mapped – i.e. whether it is accurate at regional or property scale) or different ownership of the hazard information.

Timing of document preparation. Planning instruments are generally updated infrequently and may be based on hazard information that is out-of-date.

**51. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**52. Do you think more fundamental changes are needed to enable local authorities to deliver effective hazard risk management? If so, why?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Emergency management is reactive/responsive and involves planning for a particular event. For people and communities to become less vulnerable over time, there needs to be a stronger legislative relationship between land use planning and emergency management.

There needs to be better legal protections for council. If we provide property owners with all natural hazard information available (i.e. have taken all reasonable steps) and they choose to act independently or against that advice, councils should not be held liable for any loss incurred.

Where hazard risks are intolerable, there needs to be clear legislation in relation to local government liability for decision-making on hazard avoidance and managed retreat, and clear tools and processes for acquiring land and related compensation (in consultation with affected communities).

**Issue 10: Strengthening due consideration of taonga Māori, cultural heritage and animals during and after emergencies**

**Issue 10.1: Considering taonga Māori and other cultural heritage during and after emergencies**

We have identified options to ensure the impacts of emergencies on taonga Māori and other cultural heritage is considered appropriately.

*Refer to pages 43–45 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**53. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**54. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

MDC supports developing guidance on considering taonga and other cultural heritage (option 2). There is an opportunity to provide more training for staff involved in emergency management to ensure better awareness of Māori and cultural heritage and the specific cultural needs of different communities.

MDC does not support option 3 (legislative) due to concerns that a local approach will be more successful than trying to develop national-level requirements.

**55. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Issue 10.2: Considering animals during and after emergencies**

We have identified options to ensure the impacts of emergencies on pets, working animals, wildlife, and livestock is considered appropriately.

*Refer to pages 45–47 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**56. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☒ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Yes, the emotional, safety, and economic implications of not integrating animal welfare into emergency planning has been acknowledged. However, the framing could be improved by also acknowledging the diversity of animal-related impacts—companion animals, working dogs, production livestock, and native wildlife each have different needs and implications. For instance, protecting working animals (e.g. police or search and rescue dogs) may have public safety implications, while loss of livestock could threaten livelihoods and regional economies.

**57. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

MDC considers that the best approach is a mix of Option 3 and Option 4, with support from Option 2. Making it a requirement to include animals in emergency planning (Option 3) means they won't be forgotten and helps keep things consistent across the country. Giving emergency teams the ability to help animals in distress (Option 4) is also really important – it can stop people from putting themselves in danger trying to rescue their pets or stock. Backing it up with good guidance (Option 2) will make it easier for everyone to know what to do and how to do it well.

**58. Noting that human life and safety will always be the top priority, do you have any comments about how animals should be prioritised relative to the protection of property?**

Please explain your views.

While human life and safety should always come first, MDC considers that safety of animals should generally be prioritised ahead of property. People often see their pets, working animals, and livestock as part of their whānau or livelihood, and will risk their own safety to protect them. Early integration of animals into emergency management planning can help reduce the risk that owners will place themselves at risk, and lead to better overall

outcomes. Unlike property, animals can't be replaced, and their wellbeing directly affects people's emotional and mental health during and after emergencies.

**59. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Other problems relating to this objective**

**60. Should we consider any other problems relating to enabling a higher minimum standard of emergency management?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Objective 4: Minimising disruption to essential services

### Issue 11: Reducing disruption to the infrastructure that provides essential services

#### Issue 11.1: Narrow definition of “lifeline utility”

We have identified options to extend emergency management responsibilities to a broader range of infrastructure that provides essential services.

*Refer to pages 50–52 and Appendix C of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

#### 61. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☒ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

MDC agrees that the current definition of a lifeline utility is too limited and does not match the wider range of services that are relied on in emergency management response and recovery. Services like internet access, card payment systems, and even grocery distribution are all essential – we saw during Cyclone Gabrielle how badly things can go when they’re disrupted. If these kinds of services aren’t included in emergency management planning, we risk leaving big gaps that could make recovery harder, and put people at greater risk.

#### 62. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

MDC supports Option 3: replacing the current lifeline utilities list with a broader, principles-based definition of “essential infrastructure.” MDC considers that a principles-based definition of “essential infrastructure” provides greater flexibility, is more realistic of how emergencies actually unfold and ensures that the definition remains current.

#### 63. If we introduced a principles-based definition of “essential infrastructure”, are there any essential services that should be included or excluded from the list in Appendix C of the discussion document?

☒ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

MDC recommends that the following essential services be added to the list of “essential infrastructure” in Appendix C, out of recognition of the key roles that they play during response and recovery:

- Animal Welfare Services;
- Welfare Agencies (NGOs); and
- Disability support services.

**64. If you think other essential services should be included in the list in Appendix C, what kinds of infrastructure would they cover?**

Please explain your views.

These services support health, safety, and wellbeing during emergencies and help communities recover faster.

**65. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### Issue 11.2: Strengthening lifeline utility business continuity planning

We have identified options to ensure lifeline utilities have planned effectively for disruption to their services.

*Refer to pages 52–54 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**66. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

The problem has been framed well and reflects what we've seen in recent emergencies: gaps in planning can lead to cascading failures across systems and leave people and organisations vulnerable.

**67. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

MDC supports Option 3. This option retains flexibility for different sectors, yet still sets clear expectations and real consequences if planning is inadequate.

**68. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### Issue 11.3: Barriers to cooperation and information sharing

We have identified options to strengthen cooperation and information sharing between lifeline utilities, CDEM Groups, and other agencies.

*Refer to pages 54–57 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**69. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

The problem is well-framed and based on lessons learnt from events such as Cyclone Gabrielle.

**70. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

MDC recommends that a combination of Options 2–5 are progressed with a goal of setting clear expectations, enabling legal protections, and building stronger relationships across agencies. This will lead to better coordination and faster, more effective responses.

MDC shares Taituarā's concerns that a legislative approach to requiring lifeline utilities to contribute to national response plans (option 4) needs careful thought given the administrative effort associated, and, it is assumed, some sort of compliance framework to ensure it happens.

**71. Because emergencies happen at different geographical scales, coordination is often needed at multiple levels (local and national). Do you have any views about the most effective way to achieve coordination at multiple levels?**

Please explain your views.

Coordination works best when local and national teams plan together from the outset. Having clearly defined roles, shared response plans, and dedicated liaisons helps to avoid confusion. Having common data standards and tools ensures consistency when it is most needed.

**72. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Issue 12: Strengthening central government business continuity**

We have identified options to ensure central government organisations have planned effectively for disruption to their services. This includes options to expand the range of central government organisations recognised in the Act.

*Refer to pages 57–60 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**73. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                             |                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure / no preference |
| Please explain your views.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                             |                                                   |
| The document clearly explains that while some central government agencies are already covered by business continuity requirements in the CDEM Act, others that provide critical services – such as the NZ Police, Defence Force, and Crown entities – aren't formally included. This creates gaps and inconsistencies in how well government functions are maintained during and after emergencies. |                             |                                                   |

**74. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Please explain your views.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| MDC recommends that Options 3, 4, and 5 are combined. This creates a flexible but robust framework that ensures critical services are planned for, while still allowing for guidance, exemptions, and support where needed. |

**75. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

|                            |
|----------------------------|
| Please explain your views. |
| Insert response            |

**Other problems relating to this objective**

**76. Should we consider any other problems relating to minimising disruption to essential services?**

|                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Please explain your views.                                                                                                      |
| There is a need for better real-time information sharing and communication tools to support faster, more coordinated responses. |

**Objective 5: Having the right powers available when an emergency happens**

**Issue 13: Managing access to restricted areas**

We have identified options to improve the way cordons are managed.

*Refer to pages 61–63 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**73. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

There is a lack of clarity and consistency about who can set up cordons, how access decisions are made, and how long they can be maintained.

**74. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

MDC considers option 3 (prescribe the form of identification passes through regulations) to be the most practical and future-proof approach. It supports public safety, while also recognising the real needs of individuals and communities who may need limited or time-sensitive access during emergencies.

**75. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Issue 14: Clarifying who uses emergency powers at the local level

We have identified options to ensure emergency powers sit with the most appropriate people at the local government level.

*Refer to pages 63–65 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

### 76. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

MDC suggests that there is a mismatch between who has the powers and who actually knows how to use them in an emergency. MDC considers that authority should sit with trained emergency managers, to support and enable them to carry out necessary functions during an emergency event.

### 77. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

MDC supports option 2, being a tidy up of existing functions and powers related to CDEM Groups, Controllers, and Recovery Managers.

### 78. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Issue 15: Modernising the process to enter a state of emergency or transition period

We have identified options to remove the requirement for a physical signature to declare a state of emergency or give notice of a transition period.

*Refer to pages 65–66 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

### 79. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

MDC agrees with the issue as described. Relying on physical signatures during emergencies is outdated and can cause unnecessary delays. Moving to digital approvals is a simple, practical fix that will help speed up decision-making is time critical.

### 80. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

MDC supports option 2 - digital declarations with safeguards. This option is efficient, realistic, and supports faster emergency response without sacrificing accountability.

MDC also supports option 3 (enabling authorised persons to declare a state of emergency verbally). Giving these trained professionals the authority to act quickly without waiting on formal sign-off will speed up decision-making.

**81. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Issue 16: Mayors' role in local state of emergency declarations and transition period notices**

We have identified options to make mayors' role in local state of emergency declarations and transition period notices more explicit.

*Refer to pages 66–68 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**82. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

MDC agrees that there is benefit in clarifying the mayor's role in local state of emergency declarations and transition period notices. A clearly defined role is necessary to avoid confusion and delays during emergencies, especially when quick action is needed.

**83. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

MDC agrees with the submission by Taituarā that Mayors', as the local leader in their community, should continue to have primary responsibility for declaring a local state of emergency or giving notice of a transition period for their district or wards (option 2). This important role should be supported through training and guidance, and through support from the local CDEM group.

**84. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Other problems relating to this objective**

**85. Are there any circumstances where Controllers or Recovery Managers may need other powers to manage an emergency response or the initial stages of recovery more effectively?**

Please explain your views.

MDC requests that the powers be amended to more clearly authorise the access or use privately owned infrastructure when it is deemed critical to the response. MDC also requests stronger powers to require timely information sharing from agencies or service

providers, and better coordination powers during recovery. Recovery Managers often deal with complex, multi-agency issues but have limited formal authority. Giving Recovery Managers more powers and tools would help make both response and recovery more effective.

## **Other comments**

### **86. Do you have any other comments relating to reform of New Zealand's emergency management legislation?**

Insert response