



News letter

December 2013

This issue

- Happy Christmas
- Exercise Pahu
- Whanau and Marae Resilience Projects
- MoreFM Emergency Services Open Day
- Water shortage in Raetihi
- Wanganui floods
- Community Emergency Plans
- Training

Happy Christmas

Well it's that time of year again when we are all starting to wind down. What a busy year it has been. Here at the Taranaki Emergency Management Office we have planned for and run the largest civil defence exercise ever held in Taranaki (more about this later in the newsletter). We have also worked with a number of communities around establishing an emergency plan for their community, attended open days, given preparedness presentations to community groups, school children and businesses, and continued to build and maintain our relationships with partner agencies. We have certainly been busy here, and we are sure that you have all been busy too!

Although it's time for us to unwind and spend time

relaxing with friends and family – we still need to remember that emergencies can happen at anytime. We need to continue to look out for our neighbours and family and friends, and ensure that we have a plan to manage if an emergency does happen over the Christmas and New Year period. And let's spare a thought too for those working through the holiday period!

From those of us here at TEMO we wish you and your families a safe and happy Christmas and all the best for 2014. We will catch up with you all in the New Year!



PXHU EXERCISE

The largest civil defence emergency management exercise ever run in the Taranaki region, was held on Wednesday 20 November 2013. Exercise Pahu involved emergency services, the Taranaki District Health Board, councils, utility companies, DoC, GNS Science, Civil Defence groups from Waikato, Hawke's Bay and Manawatu/Wanganui, The Ministry of Civil Defence Emergency Management, and other government agencies. All up, more than 200 people were involved.

The exercise scenario was a major eruption of Mount Taranaki. Three weeks of lead-in information, based on fictitious but realistic seismic activity, preceded the main event and helped to prepare those involved in the exercise for what they might face if this was to be a real event.

A lot of planning work went in to making the exercise as realistic as possible. "It was a good pressure-test for both civil defence personnel, and systems and processes," says Senior Emergency Management Officer Shane Briggs.

An eruption of Mt Taranaki is a matter of 'if' not 'when' and therefore it is important to test civil defence personnel and systems on a regular basis.

Formal evaluation of the exercise is still taking place. But from debriefs that have been held so far, it is clear that some valuable lessons were learnt on how we can improve and fine-tune our processes.

Although Exercise Pahu did not involve communities in Taranaki, we will use the exercise scenario during training and exercising of Community Emergency Planning teams during 2014 and beyond.

It's really important to remember that a volcanic eruption of Mt Taranaki is a real possibility, and communities need to be prepared. For more information visit www.getthru.govt.nz and learn about creating a household emergency plan, survival items and a getaway kit. There's also a lot of useful information on what to do before, during and after an eruption.



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Whanau and Marae Resilience Projects

Over the past few months the Taranaki Emergency Management Office has been working with Te Puni Kokari (TPK), Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) and local Iwi on a couple of projects to increase whanau and marae resilience.

The first of these projects looks at supporting marae to function as an emergency accommodation centre and at the development of marae emergency preparedness and response plans across the Taranaki Region. TRC Iwi liaison Officer Sam Tamarapa has been working with Owae Marae and Puniho Marae on this initiative.

The second project looks at increasing whanau resilience through the development of a resource aimed to communicate the importance of whanau preparedness for emergencies. Emergency Management Officer, Kate Pishief, has been working closely with Bobbi-Jo Nathan and Hayden Potaka from TPK to develop a DVD that weaves preparedness messages into traditional maori knowledge. This is a new initiative that has been well received in the region.

The MoreFM Emergency Services Open Day

A warm humid Sunday in November saw hundreds of children and adults turn out for the MoreFM Emergency Services Open Day at East End Beach Reserve in New Plymouth. Stan, from “What’s the Plan Stan?”, paid a visit and proved very popular with both adults and children alike. A couple of visitors of the four-legged furry variety didn’t take to kindly to him though – with a lot of barking occurring if he got too close.

The day was a huge success – with plenty of happy kids’ faces when they received one of the hundreds of yellow “What’s the Plan Stan?” balloons blown up by TEMO staff and wonderful helpers (Liz Smith and TCERT volunteers).

All emergency services (NZ Fire Service, NZ Police, St John, Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust; Coastguard Taranaki, Surf Life Saving, Land SAR, North Taranaki SPCA, Red Cross, North Taranaki Neighbourhood Support, Plunket and Civil Defence) came together to talk to people about what they do, and promote safety and preparedness. It was a fantastic way to increase community knowledge, and help build a better-prepared and resilient Taranaki. Well done to the organisers of this event, and a HUGE thank you to Liz Smith for manning the tent for the day. We couldn’t have done it without you!



Stan posing for his photo, with Emergency Management Officer Kate Pishief, and five-year-old Aimee Hooper.

Water Shortage Emergency in Raetihi

Emergency events don’t always take the form of a flood, earthquake, volcano, storm or tsunami. It’s important to remember that emergencies can happen at any time, and for any reason. In October, residents of the town of Raetihi in the Ruapehu district, found themselves without clean drinking water for a number of weeks. This water shortage was caused by a tank at Turoa skifield leaching 19,000 litres of diesel into the Makotuku Stream – the primary tributary for the water supply to the town of 1000 people. This had a huge effect on the township, with people unable to access fresh drinking water or even water for doing laundry or showering. Luckily for the community of Raetihi, the Medical Officer of Health gave the all-clear within a few weeks – initially people had been told they might not have access to access tap water until the new year!

This issue highlighted that we need to remember to always have at least three litres of water per person per day for a minimum of three days – even longer if you live in a rural area.



Each person will need nine litres of safe drinking water for three days supply



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Wanganui Floods

A state of local emergency was declared on Tuesday 15 October in the Wanganui district due to flooding to properties and roads. In anticipation of the Whanganui River overtopping the stop banks in Wanganui, residents located near the river were told to evacuate and a Welfare Centre was established to care for displaced people. In total, 138 people were evacuated, with 25 of these people being put into accommodation by the Wanganui District Council. The state of local emergency was lifted at 3pm the following day.

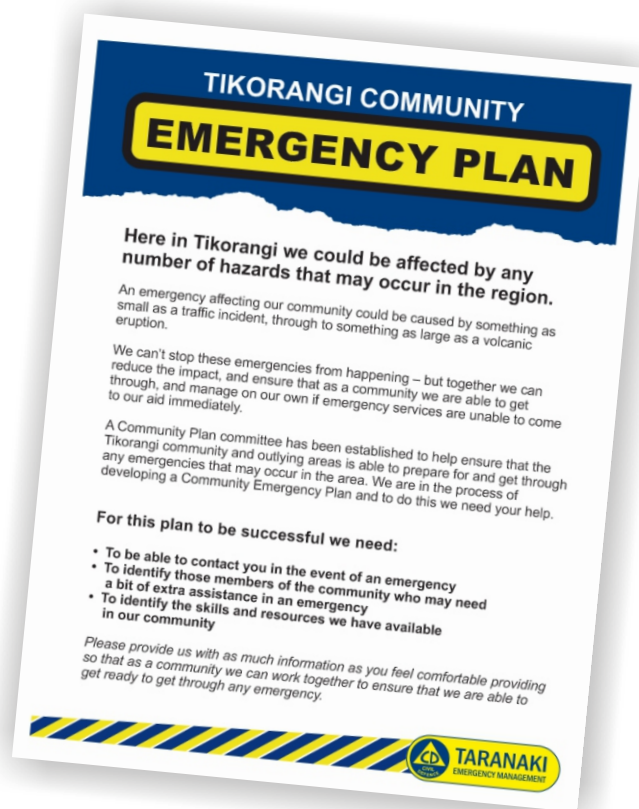


Community Emergency Plans

We have had a really busy time this year, working with communities throughout Taranaki to develop their own Community Emergency Plan (CEP). To date five communities have almost completed their draft plan which has been really encouraging to see, and many people in these communities have worked tirelessly towards a common goal – a resilient community! Well done to those of you who have been involved in the developing plans for Waverley, Urenui, Tikorangi, Inglewood, Oakura and surrounds – your communities are now better prepared to get through and recover from an emergency, if one should impact on your area!

Many of you in these areas will have seen a form that looks like this (see right) in the past few months.

If you haven't done so already, please take a few minutes to complete the form and return it to the designated return point. These forms help the team who develop your community emergency plan, to determine just what skills and resources are in your community. This is an opportunity for you to help your community in an emergency by identifying the skills and resources you have. The form can also be used to identify people in the community who may need extra assistance to get through an emergency event. Remember – it's as simple as getting to know your neighbours, and helping each other out when you can!



Training

Integrated Training Framework (ITF)/ Controllers Development

In the last newsletter we talked about the ITF and the development of EOC training. Taranaki ran one of the five pilot courses earlier in 2013. There are now 50 foundational instructors; and 250 students have completed the training from around the country, with another 100 or so already scheduled over the next few months. In addition to CDEM staff, other agencies have been attending the course including health boards, St. John, Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Health. So far, feedback has been very positive.

Development of the intermediate level courses (general application) is currently in development, with a tentative release date of 1 June 2013. Taranaki will be delivering this training as soon as it is available.

At the National Controllers forum in November 2013, support was given for enhanced training for CDEM Controllers. In December 2013, the Minister announced funding to develop a controllers course, that can lead to accreditation of CDEM Controllers. The Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management will lead this work, along with subject matter experts from the sector and external tertiary providers.



Training (cont)

Qualifications review

EMQUAL (The emergency management industry training organisation) has received approval to develop the new emergency management qualifications from NZQA. A lot more work and consultation is required to develop new qualifications that meet the sector's needs, while meeting the requirements of NZQA. We will have more on this as it progresses.

The Tertiary Education Commission has recently changed the way they fund courses related to civil defence emergency management and volunteers. Until recently volunteers had to enrol in full qualifications to receive Government subsidised training. In 2015 volunteers will be able to enrol in individual courses and have that training funded by the Government.

"This means more choice for people to match their training to personal circumstances. These measures are focused on strengthening our civil defence system and ensuring the people at the front line in an emergency have the necessary skills." said Civil Defence Minister, Niki Kaye.

Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS)

We often get enquires about when we will be running a CIMS course. With changes to CIMS, and the new ITF for Emergency Operations Centres, in which CIMS is embedded, the need for CDEM to deliver traditional CIMS courses will be reduced. However, in response to current demand and internal requirements, the Taranaki Emergency Management Office (TEMO) is running a two-day CIMS level 4 course on 8-9 April 2014. We are going to trial a true multi-agency approach by partnering with WoodGroup M&O to co-deliver the course.

This means students may come from emergency services, emergency or crisis management, and industrial response. This should bring a much wider perspective on how the principles of CIMS are used to manage a range of emergencies.

Those who have been around Emergency Operations Centres or incident management for a while, will know that CIMS has been under review for some time. The main focus of the review is to strengthen how CIMS is used in major emergencies such as the Christchurch Earthquakes, and Pike River. The new CIMS Manual should be finalised by the CIMS steering committee in late January 2014. It will then be sent for to the Officials Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination (ODESC) for their approval in early 2014.



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