



TARANAKI
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

News letter

April 2013

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A long, hot, dry summer for Taranaki

Like many parts of country, Taranaki has experienced less rainfall and more hot, drying conditions than usual for this time of year. On 15 March, a state of drought was officially declared for the entire North Island by the Minister for Primary Industries (MPI). It has been 30 years since New Zealand had a drought this significant. A significant amount of rain is going to have to fall to turn this event around.



Satellite images from March 2012 (left) and March 2013 (right) show significant browning across the North Island. Photo / NASA

Waitangi Day Tsunami

At 2.12pm on 6 February a Magnitude 8 earthquake, at a depth of 33km hit the Solomon Islands, triggering a tsunami that posed a potential threat to New Zealand. We received information which identified that the Taranaki region was in the centre of the NZ coastline, that could experience the highest amplitude waves, of up to 0.9 metres, together with unusual surges and other water movement.

The response of the Taranaki CDEM Group focused on identifying the stretches of coastline at greatest risk, and distributing of messages to key parties, agencies and the public, via multiple media. Personnel were deployed from surf lifesaving clubs, the Fire Service, Police and Council staff to ensure the public in vulnerable areas were informed.

The New Zealand tsunami gauge network did not show clear evidence of the tsunami, although at Raoul Island there was a significant increase in sea turbulence at the expected time of arrival. The tide measurement tower at Port Taranaki, which is maintained for Port operational purposes, detected a clear signal of increased sea movement from around 2200hrs onwards.



Port Taranaki wave/tide data: Increasing oscillations were detected from 2200hrs.



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New Year earthquakes rock Taranaki

Taranaki experienced a number of earthquakes in January, starting with a Magnitude 5.30km off the coast of Opunake at 3.11am on New Year's Day. This was followed by two smaller aftershocks and a powerful Magnitude 4.3 at 3.42am.

A number of other shakes took place subsequently. GNS Science said it could have been an earthquake swarm. These are most common in the volcanic region of the Central North Island, but they also occur in the Cape Egmont fault zone. Historically, the Cape Egmont fault does not produce large earthquakes, however, about 100 – 200 quakes occur in the area each year.

While the earthquakes were of no major concern, it was a good reminder for everyone of the need to be prepared.



Training

Following on from the 'Introduction to CDEM' training which took place last year, we are now organising the next stage in the training series. The next training, scheduled for this year will be 'CIMS 4' and an 'Introduction to the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)'.

Dates for these sessions will be released soon via email.

Community Emergency Plans

The first step in helping communities prepare for an emergency began in Oakura on 12 February, with a public meeting and workshop facilitated by Taranaki CDEM and New Plymouth District Council.

The public were invited to come along and find out how they can help their community be better prepared for an emergency, by developing a Community Emergency Plan.

The event went exceptionally well and 24 people put their names down to participate in establishing a plan for Oakura. Since the public meeting, those keen to be involved have met again to form a Committee and begin the process of developing their Community Emergency Plan.

Communities throughout Taranaki will be encouraged to develop their own emergency plans, and the process trialled in Oakura will be rolled out to other communities across the region.



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CDEM Exercise - Volcanic Eruption

As part of the National Exercise Programme, Taranaki will be running an inter-group Exercise in November this year. The Exercise will involve Taranaki CDEM fully activating the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) for a day. The Exercise will also be an opportunity for businesses to test their Business Continuity Plans.



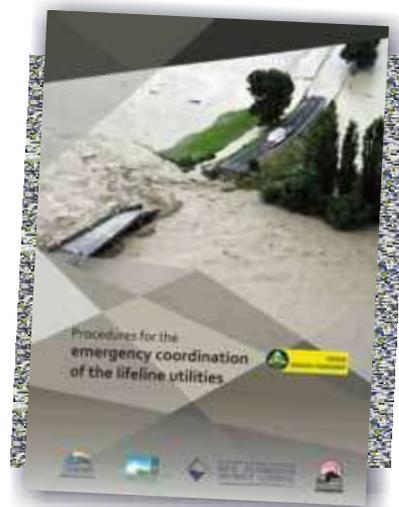
Water tank for TEMO

The Taranaki Emergency Management Office (TEMO) now has a stand-alone water tank, installed alongside the emergency generator. This will allow the Emergency Operations Centre to continue to be fully functional and independent during an emergency, if the mains water supply fails and/or there is a power cut.

Procedures for the Emergency Coordination of Lifeline Utilities

A new document 'Procedures for the Emergency Coordination of Lifeline Utilities' has recently been released to replace the 2008 version 'Standard Operating Procedures – Lifelines Advisory Group Coordination Protocols (Response and Recovery)'.

Prepared by the Taranaki Emergency Management Office, in consultation with the Lifelines Advisory Group, Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, and the New Zealand Lifeline Committee, this document defines the communication processes between lifeline utilities and the CDEM Emergency Operations Centre during local, regional and national scale emergency events. It also recommends a number of pre-event (readiness) activities to ensure the response and recovery processes are properly implemented. The document is not intended to be a detailed statement of each agency operational response. These remain the responsibility of each utility.



SPCA Open Day

Taranaki CDEM recently participated in the annual North Taranaki SPCA Open Day held on Sunday 10 February, delivering information to the public regarding the importance of remembering to plan for your pets, as well as your family, when it comes to planning for an emergency.



The day was a huge success for the SPCA, raising over \$2000 and finding homes for 59 animals.

Christmas function survey

Thanks to all those who took the time to respond to the CDEM Christmas function survey. The feedback was interesting and showed that past arrangements have not worked. The results showed an underwhelming desire to have further get-togethers, with only 11 per cent of respondents stating they would come to a function in the future, and 29 per cent would consider it.

Some suggestions made as an alternative to the current process included, organising a presentation from a key speaker, training and an Exercise, all to be held outside of the Christmas period when everyone has more time to attend. Thus we will look at other ways to acknowledge the contributions of CDEM staff and volunteers in the future and organise something a little different next time. Thanks again for your input.



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