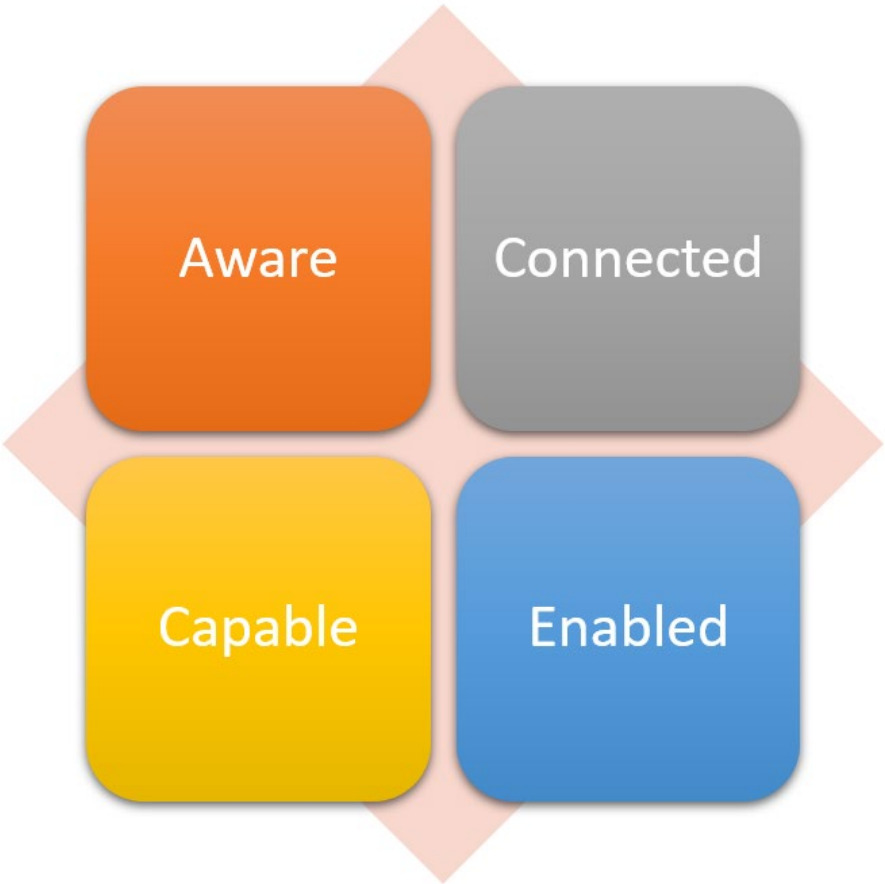
Emergency Management Otago

Te Rākau Whakamarumaru Ōtākou

Community Resilience Strategy



"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change."

Charles Darwin, Naturalist

"We are living through the most immense transfer of power from institutions to individuals in history."

Nancy Gibbs, Managing Editor of TIME

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Introduction

Emergency Management Otago

In November 2016, the six councils of the Otago Region amalgamated their respective Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) functions. The resulting organisation, Emergency Management Otago, is a semi-autonomous 'networked enabled' organisation characterised by a small core of staff leveraging off both the efforts of others as well as the benefits of modern technology.

This structure for emergency management represents an opportunity to deliver more from existing resources by taking a coordinated, integrated, holistic and functional approach to the design and delivery of CDEM services in line with the National Disaster Resilience Strategy[1].

Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to create a structured pathway for the Emergency Management Otago team to enhance community resilience by:

- developing a strategic set of objectives to enhance community resilience by working flexibly with councils and communities
- establishing a set of flexible engagement principles and tools for Emergency Management Otago
- fostering stronger partnerships between community leaders, practitioners, and researchers
- guiding future resilience thinking and practice for the Otago region
- Defining a model for operating a Council-led and community-led response that aligns with Councils' emergency response frameworks.

Scope

This Community Resilience Strategy applies to Emergency Management Otago. It focuses primarily on societal resilience as it applies to disaster risk management. This strategy will guide Emergency Management Otago through to 2026 at which point it will be reviewed and adjusted, if required.

Benefits

The benefits of having a defined Community Resilience Strategy include:

- clarifying the role of Emergency Management Otago and the scope of its responsibilities in the community resilience space
- the development of policies and programmes that specifically target disaster resilience planning, offering opportunities for communities to influence emergency related outcomes
- enabling Emergency Management Otago, councils, and communities throughout the region to build and/or strengthen relationships with the goal of working together to achieve mutually desired outcomes
- laying the groundwork for an effective response and a strong and rapid recovery after an emergency event.

[1] National Disaster Resilience Strategy | Rautaki ā-Motu Manawaroa Aituā - published April 2019

Community Resilience

There are many definitions of resilience. The meanings and focus depend on the audience and purpose. This strategy focuses on societal resilience as a dynamic process owned by individuals, organisations, and communities.

The National Disaster Resilience Strategy (NDRS) defines resilience as-

> *The ability to anticipate and resist the effects of a disruptive event, minimise adverse impacts, respond effectively, maintain, or recover functionality and adapt in a way that allows for learning and thriving.*

According to the NDRS, the attributes of a safe and resilient community are that it is: connected, healthy, has cultural norms, economic opportunities, infrastructure, services, and safe buildings, can manage its natural assets, is organised, and knowledgeable.

Connected communities with strong social capital are also shown to recover more quickly. Planning work by community groups, community leaders, and response agencies *before* an event happens reduces shock and enhances the ability of a community to respond and quickly move into recovery[2].

Strategy Pathway

The model below represents Emergency Management Otago's systematic approach of turning resilience theory into operational practice by linking households and businesses to their neighbours, then to the larger geographical community through to the official CDEM structure.

The foundation of a resilient community begins in the home and workplace where people have the greatest effect on their own lives. Most of the tools in this Strategy are aimed at these lower levels and may not require external guidance from an Emergency Manager. In contrast, Emergency Management Otago primarily engages with community leaders to help them drive change and help others be better connected and prepared for a disaster. The top two layers of the pyramid relate to those groups who are actively involved in a CDEM community response. Both layers will be working towards meeting the needs of their communities within their mandated area. Each level is dependent on the others surrounding it with the formal and informal response.

[2] https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/ajem-jan-2018-we-needed-help-but-we-weren-t-helpless-the-community-experience-of-community-recovery-after-natural-disaster-in-australia/

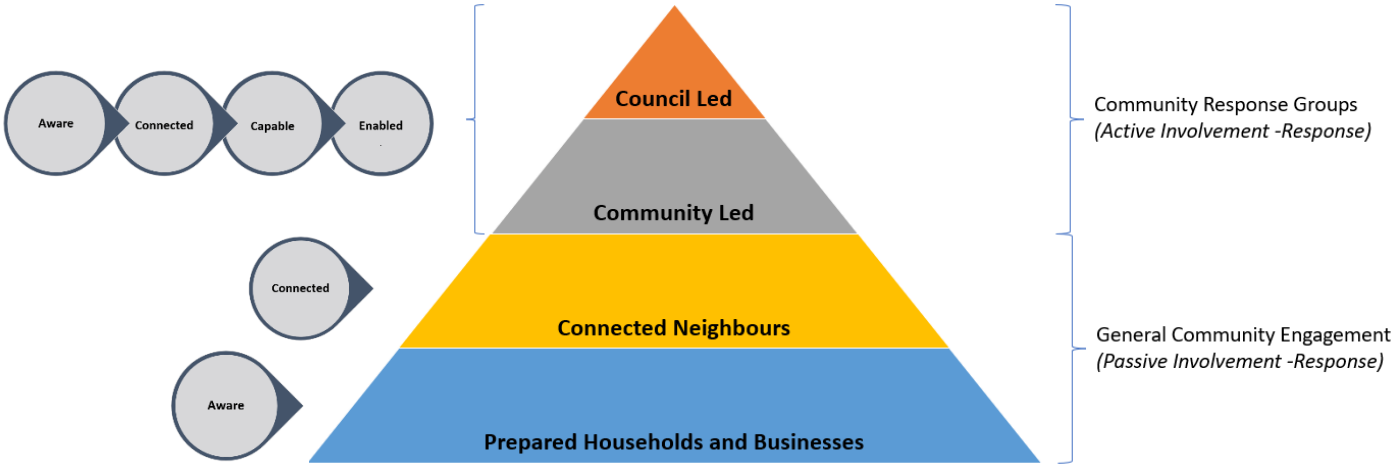


Figure 1 – Integrated Community Resilience Framework

Strategic Objectives

Enhanced community resilience is achieved through four strategic objectives, aligning with the strategic objectives from the National Disaster Resilience Strategy:

1. Create awareness
2. Increase connectedness
3. Build capability
4. Enable and empower

Strategic Objective 1: Create awareness[3]

Awareness activity will seek to improve people's understanding of the local hazards and how to prepare for an emergency. This includes making information more accessible and building a collective understanding of risks, the hazards and disruptions communities face, and the collective exposure of people, animals, property, and assets, and vulnerabilities.

Hazards – Understanding hazards, risks and easy mitigation strategies is an important part of preparedness. Emergency Management Otago promotes the Otago Regional Council hazards portal database which includes information on liquefaction, earthquakes, flooding, and landslides. Emergency Management Otago's 'Community Resilience Guides' are hosted on the Emergency Management Otago website. These guides have been designed to highlight hazards in individual communities and focus on activities that inform and lead to a better prepared and more resilient community.

Public Education - Creating and leading campaigns that increases knowledge of personal preparedness and planning leads to more resilient communities. Examples include Shakeout, Clued Up Kids, AF8 Roadshow and business continuity planning workshops.

Communication Channels – social media and other online platforms provide efficient and effective two-way communication with the community before, during and after an emergency event. For example, Emergency

[3] Objective 3 of the National Disaster Resilience Strategy

Management Otago uses Facebook and Twitter to promote public education and events that build strong communities. The Emergency Management Otago website provides advice on emergency preparedness including information on creating emergency household plans, emergency items and getting connected.

Vulnerability Mapping – Online maps allow for visual representations of resources and information to a community before, during and after an emergency event. Emergency Management Otago is developing an online situational awareness and public information tool to be hosted on the Emergency Management Otago website.

Strategic Objective 2: Increase connectedness[4]

Emergency Management Otago will support activities that create and strengthen relationships across diverse communities. Organisations such as Red Cross, Community Boards, and public safety organisations play a crucial role in coordinating resources and providing immediate response during emergencies. Informal community networks, such as neighbourhood associations, faith-based organisations, and volunteer groups often have deep local knowledge and can provide valuable support in emergency situations.

We will work closely with council staff, including but not limited to, community development advisors, multicultural advisors, engineering teams and natural hazard teams.

In addition to emergency management networks, we will support traditional, non-emergency related community development activities that improve social capital. There are many government, non-government and community groups working to build social capital throughout the region. Most of these organisations have no defined emergency management function. Emergency Management Otago aims to connect emergency and non-emergency related individuals and organisations to one another. Examples include, Welfare Coordinating Group, Regional Leadership Comms Network Subfunction, Rural Advisory Group and Community Response Groups.

Emergency Management Otago also supports and promotes community events and projects that directly or indirectly lead to increased social capital and resilience. Examples include A & P shows and school gala days.

Strategic Objective 3: Build capability[5]

Capability building is the process of developing and strengthening knowledge and skills that aid in the preparation for, response to and recovery from an emergency event. Emergency Management Otago will provide opportunities and tools that improve communities' ability to anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly after an emergency event.

Prior to an emergency, volunteers are trained to provide valuable community support during an event, and to connect with local Emergency Operation Centres who will be leading the official response. Training is available to a wide range of individuals and organisations across communities of place and interest and includes emergency management knowledge and skills. This builds stronger relationships with community leaders and organisations.

Emergency Management Otago's *Training and Capability Strategy* defines the levels of knowledge and skills identified for the emergency management workforce and volunteers.

[4] Objective 14 of the National Disaster Resilience Strategy
[5] Objective 11 of the National Disaster Resilience Strategy

Strategic Objective 4: Enable and empower[6]

In partnership with local councils, we will enable and empower communities by the creation, dissemination, and evaluation of emergency plans.

Community-Driven Response Planning – Emergency Management Otago supports community members and leaders to plan how they will coordinate and address the challenges caused by an emergency. The leaders meet each other and define their community values, identify their community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges to create a shared response framework and connection with the Emergency Operation Centre.

Businesses Continuity Planning – Businesses and organisations need to have plans for emergency response and business resilience. Most have limited time and/or money to develop a robust emergency plan and business resilience plan. There are several resources to help with this including free online templates and information about how to go about planning provided by organisations such as Resilient Organisations[7] and Business.govt.nz[8]. Emergency Management Otago promotes ongoing development of emergency plans and business continuity plans, and hosts business resilience workshops.

Mana Whenua

This strategy acknowledges the importance of Mana Whenua involvement as a partner in Emergency Management and this strategy will align with strategic activity led by Mana Whenua.

This strategy supports the establishment of an Emergency Management Facilitator role that can provide crucial network communication and intelligence to Te Rakau Whakamarumaru Otakou.

'Marae Preparedness' currently exists as a defined strategy (Ngāi Tahu) and Iwi are well advanced in this area. Marae play a significant role in community response to emergencies in New Zealand. They hold a special place in Māori society as focal points for cultural, social, and spiritual activities. During times of crisis, marae serve as essential hubs for community support, coordination, and resilience. Marae offer cultural connection, community gathering spaces, information dissemination, emergency accommodation, cultural practices and healing, coordination, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. By leveraging these strengths, marae contribute significantly to community resilience, support, and recovery during times of crisis.

Models for Community Response

The models below outline practical options for building community resilience and response processes in Otago.

Council-led response in communities

Background - Territorial local authorities ultimately own the responsibility of how a 'formal' community

[6] Objective 13 of the National Disaster Resilience Strategy
[7] https://www.resorgs.org.nz/
[8] https://www.business.govt.nz/risks-and-operations/planning-for-the-unexpected-bcp/emergency-planning-for-businesses/

response is conducted within their area. This response is predominantly focused on meeting welfare needs of those impacted by an emergency. Local Welfare Managers have the responsibility of coordinating welfare services to meet the needs of those impacted. This will often occur within a community setting.

This strategy will support a framework for utilising Council staff, professional volunteers, and established community networks, e.g., Community Boards, Red Cross, and Neighbourhood Support Groups, to deliver welfare support during emergency events.

Although this mode of community delivery is preferred by some councils, significant events will overwhelm these networks and a complementary community-led response is also desirable.

Response and training - As this facet of the response will be directly responsible to the Controller a high level of training, vetting, and exercising will be required for these groups to meet Health and Safety at Work Act requirements.

If district and city councils identify and establish formal Civil Defence Centres (CDCs) as part of their response, they will need to ensure that these centres can be operated effectively with appropriately trained staff or volunteers, (that are scaled appropriately).

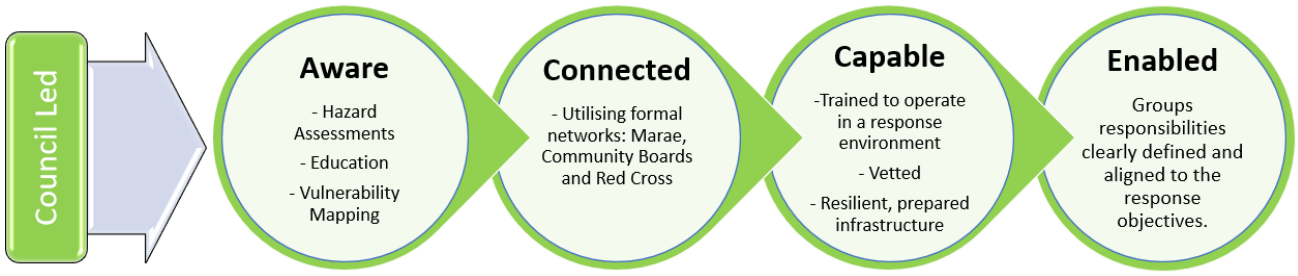
Examples of training and other requirements include:

- Supervising a CDC
- Working in a CDC
- Welfare Needs Assessment
- Psychological First Aid
- Police vetting of all people involved in the running of the CDC

Civil Defence Centres provide a direct interface between the formal response and the affected community. Each Emergency Operation Centre needs to develop protocols and standard operating procedures for establishing and directing Civil Defence Centres, including communication procedures. Emergency Management Otago will work with councils to develop these products.

Facilities – Legislation requires[9] any facility situated within a medium / high seismic risk area to be formally identified as an emergency facility or shelter by a territorial authority in the context of an emergency response to meet a standard to ensure they are safe and suitable for use during response.

This strategy would see a formalised approach with Emergency Management Otago working alongside council infrastructure teams (when and where relevant) to understand the level of exposure to these facilities.



[9] Building Act 2004 sections 133 AE (1(b) & (c))

Figure 2: Council-led Community Response

Community Response Groups

Background – This strategy looks to recognise and support community networks, such as neighbourhood associations, faith-based organizations, and volunteer groups. These groups often have extensive local knowledge and connections across their communities.

This strategy will enable the creation of a framework for empowering these community networks to meet their own needs, (when and where appropriate), ultimately reducing the operational burden on Councils. These groups are referred to as Community Response Groups.

The main purpose of these groups is to safely meet the needs of their local communities or groups, communicating and escalating matters that exceed their mandate in a manner that is consistent with the formal response. The mandate (activity within the abilities of any individuals' qualifications and authority) of any group will ultimately be defined by the local Controller if they are needed to contribute formally to a response.

Response and training – As this facet of the response may be indirectly responsible to the Controller a reduced level of training, vetting, and exercising will be required.

The creation and promotion of Community Response Groups encourages individuals and groups to respond to emergencies in their own communities. To ensure that Community Response Groups have the capability to activate, training can be provided by Emergency Management Otago to cover:

- Community Emergency Hub operations,
- Demonstrate knowledge of health and safety requirements (NZQA unit standard 497),
- Status reporting, and radio communications.

Facilities – Unlike Civil Defence Centres, Community Emergency Hubs (formerly community-led centres) have no formal designation by councils, these are locations that communities have identified to come together in response. As such, there are no requirements on these locations to meet structural standards (where relevant) beyond their designed purpose.

That accepted, Emergency Management Otago will continue to work with communities to recommend what resilience elements could be instituted (for placed based groups) and assist groups in identifying appropriate funding streams to implement them.

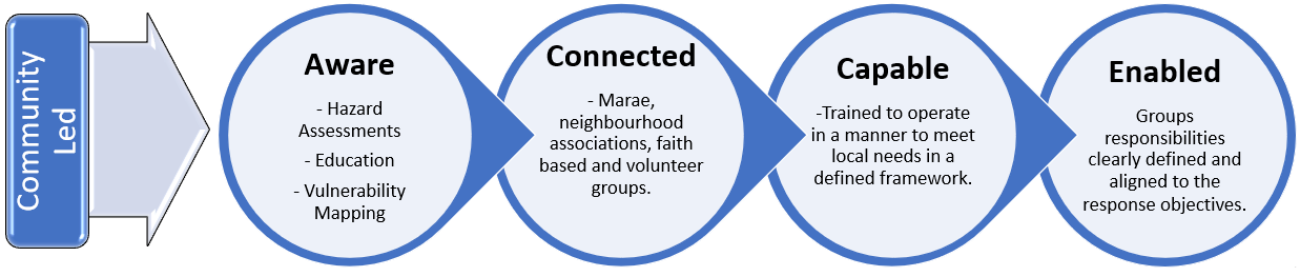


Figure 3: Community-led Response

Strategy Outcomes

The successful delivery of this strategy would result in measurable improvements in:

- emergency preparedness planning in households, schools, and businesses
- community-driven activities to build capacity, increase connectedness and to enable and empower individuals, organisations, and communities
- community creation and ownership of Community Response Plans and community-driven mitigation activities
- territorial authorities clearly state the balance of Council-led and community-led response needs for their district / city.
- councils and communities have resilient buildings and structures used for community response to emergencies.

Appendix 1 Community Engagement Principles

This Strategy is underpinned by the following principles that guide how Emergency Management Otago engages with the community to build trusting relationships and implement great projects with community leaders.

- Listen first – Understand and abide by the interests and needs of individuals, organisations, councils and communities before offering specific solutions.
- Support local ideas – Each community generates unique and innovative ideas to their challenges. Emergency Management Otago will encourage and support local initiatives.
- Encourage ownership – Facilitate activities that enhance resilience while still maintaining the responsibility of preparedness on the individual, organisation and/or community.
- Focus on end-users – Resilience activities must be meaningful, applicable, and easy to adopt. Public messaging and related tools will be framed in a manner that supports positive outcomes.
- Be informed by evidence – Draw upon current good practices in Community Development and Emergency Management, and incorporate the evidence into expert advice, project development and facilitated activities.
- Innovate – Think differently and experiment to develop better outcomes.
- Engage proactively – Actively seek out community leaders and follow up on opportunities to bring people together.
- Be inclusive – Include a cross-section of diverse stakeholders in a decision- making process, with particular emphasis on vulnerable communities.
- Be transparent – Be clear about intentions and all proposed activities.
- Be hospitable – Provide a friendly and welcoming environment when people come together. Appropriate food and beverages should always be provided.
- Collaborate – Team up with community leaders, other practitioners, and researchers from the outset to develop great resilience solutions together.
- Act ethically – Act in a manner that reflects the Golden Rule maxim and is in line with the Otago Regional Council's Code of Conduct.
- Have fun! – Treat every single engagement as an opportunity to have fun. Good energy creates great outcomes.

Appendix 2 Continuum of Engagement

Individuals and organisations have competing priorities for their time and energy. In most cases, emergency preparedness does not rank highly on their list.

Consequently, the approach does not aim for total preparedness by the public. It allows, and supports, small steps towards preparedness. As people become increasingly engaged, they can access many other opportunities to connect with their community and enhance their resilience.

By facilitating a range of opportunities, some of which are entirely driven by the community, Emergency Management Otago can connect with diverse interests and build resilience with distinct groups and at various levels. Further, by empowering individuals and organisations to decide what resilience solution is best for them, greater ownership of the outcome is produced. To achieve this, Emergency Management Otago leverages off existing networks as well as seek out new partnerships across the region to provide a wide range of opportunities.

For example, some people will have a natural affinity towards preparedness, and will engage in activities that require considerable time or money, such as joining a community response group or investing in strengthening their home. Others will have minimal interest in preparedness. Following a Facebook page, signing up for an emergency alert, or simply knowing a tsunami evacuation zone might be the highest level of engagement a person is interested in taking.

This strategy supports each person's level of engagement as the right one for them. The responsibility of Emergency Management Otago is to provide a way for every person to engage in a way that is appropriate for their interests and needs.

Importantly, any level of engagement activity should be agreed to by the Territorial Authority responsible for managing the response within its area.

This concept is represented below as Emergency Management Otago's Continuum of Engagement.

