

Otago Emergency Management Committee 18 September 2026



**Emergency
Management Otago**
Te Rākau Whakamarumarū Ōtākou

Meeting will be held in the
Te Puna Mahara Cromwell Memorial Events Centre
36 Melmore Terrace, Cromwell

This meeting will be livestreamed and available on the Otago Regional Council YouTube channel.

Members:

Cr Neil Gillespie (Chair, Otago Regional Council)
Mayor Jock Martin (Deputy Chair, Clutha District Council)
Cr Jon Mitchell (Queenstown Lakes District Council)
Mayor Melanie Tavendale (Waitaki District Council)
Mayor Tamah Alley (Central Otago District Council)
Mayor Sophie Barker (Dunedin City Council)

Meeting Support: Kylie Darragh, Governance Support Officer, Otago Regional Council

18 September 2026 01:00 PM - 03:00 PM

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KARAKIA TIMATANGA

WHEN TO USE IT >> To start the day • To open a meeting

**Tuia ki runga
Tuia ki raro
Tuia ki waho
Tuia ki roto
Tuia ki te here tangata
Ka rongo te pō
Ka rongo te ao
Haumi e, hui e
Tāiki e!**

**Unite above
Unite below
Unite without
Unite within
Unite as one
Listen to the night
Listen to the world of light
We can now come together
as one!**



Otago
Regional
Council



**Emergency
Management Otago**
Te Rākau Whakamarumaru Ōtākou

**Civil Defence Emergency Management Otago
Joint Committee
MINUTES**

**Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Otago
Joint Committee held in the Queenstown Lakes District Council Chamber, 10 Gorge
Road, Queenstown on Friday 22 May 2026, commencing at 12:50 pm.**

JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cr Neil Gillespie (Chair)	<i>(Councillor, Otago Regional Council)</i>
Mayor Sophie Barker	<i>(Mayor, Dunedin City Council)</i>
Mayor Tamah Alley	<i>(Mayor, Central Otago District Council)</i>
Mayor Jock Martin (Deputy Chair)	<i>(Mayor, Clutha District Council)</i>
Cr Jon Mitchell	<i>(Councillor, Queenstown Lakes District Council)</i>
Mayor Melanie Tavendale	<i>(Mayor, Waitaki District Council)</i>

1. KARAKIA TĪMATANGA - OPENING

Chair, Mayor Tamah Alley, welcomed Joint Committee members, guests and staff to the meeting at 12.50 pm with a karakia. Attendees included Mayor Sophie Barker, Mayor Melanie Tavendale and Cr Jon Mitchell (online).

Guests and staff in attendance were Deputy Mayor Michelle Kennedy (Clutha DC), Richard Saunders (Chief Executive ORC), Michelle Morss (Chief Executive QLDC), Alex Parmley (Chief Executive WDC), Sandy Graham (Chief Executive DCC), Matt Alley (Group Manager Emergency Management Otago (EMO)) and Roderick Francis (Team Leader Group Office EMO).

Online were Mauriri Kimura McGlinchey (Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki), Simon Chambers (NEMA), Chris Booker (Emergency Management Advisor EMO), Danny Fountaine (Emergency Management Advisor EMO), Dave Grimes (Emergency Management Advisor EMO), Emily Williamson (Admin Support Coordinator EMO), Erica Andrews (Stakeholder Engagement Advisor EMO), Glenn Mitchell (Principal Advisor EMO), Jason Michie (Emergency Management Advisor EMO), John Mawhinney (Readiness and Response Advisor EMO), Mel Banks (Lifelines Program Lead), Paula Cathie (Team Leader EMO), Taylor Hendl and Cara Jordan (Governance Support Officer ORC).

2. APOLOGIES

Resolution: Mayor Tamah Alley Moved, Mayor Melanie Tavendale Seconded:

That the apologies for Cr Neil Gillespie, Mayor Jock Martin and Cr Jon Mitchell (for lateness) be accepted.

MOTION CARRIED

3. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

The agenda was confirmed as published.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Resolution: Mayor Melanie Tavendale Moved, Cr Jon Mitchell Seconded

That the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting held on 5 March 2026 be received and confirmed as a true and accurate record.

MOTION CARRIED

5. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee Terms of Reference were noted.

6. ACTION ITEMS

There were no open actions for the Joint Committee.

7. REPORT ITEMS

7.1. Coordinating Executive Group Chair Report

[You Tube 1:45] An update was provided on key matters arising from the Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management Coordinating Executive Group (CEG) meeting held on 24 April 2026. It outlined current system reform, proposed work for the 2026/2027 financial year and work activity completed for the year-to date 2026. The CEG endorsed the continuation of the mana

whenua emergency management facilitator role. Richard Saunders (CEG Deputy Chair) was available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-118: Mayor Tamah Alley Moved, Mayor Seconded

That the Joint Committee:

- 1) **Notes** this report.

MOTION CARRIED

7.2. Group Manager Report

[YouTube 4:02] This report focused on current national emergency management reform, implementation activity, sector developments and the Emergency Management Otago work programme for the 2025/26 year-to-date. Emergency management improvement programmes have been utilising a lot of staff time and resource, impacting work plan delivery. There has been a change in terminology from EMSIP (Emergency Management System Improvement Programme) to Strengthening Emergency Management Roadmap. Otago CDEM is participating in an assurance pilot to test a self-assessment tool. A regionwide emergency management training Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite was completed on 20 May 2026, which was very successful, noting some software challenges with the D4H system. Excellent feedback was received from participating groups. Matt Alley (Group Manager EMO) was available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-119: Mayor Melanie Tavendale Moved, Mayor Sophie Barker Seconded

That the Joint Committee:

- 1) **Notes** this report.
- 2) **Notes** the continuing progress of Emergency Management Otago against the 2025/26 annual work programme.
- 3) **Notes** that NEMA has sought CDEM Group representation on the National Emergency Management Plan Review Steering Group and **approves option 2**, as defined in the letter to Joint Committee Chairs dated 8 May 2026, that the CDEM Special Interest Group Chair and Deputy Chair act as the CDEM representatives on the Steering Group.
- 4) **Notes** that Emergency Management Otago will continue to engage in relevant national consultation, implementation and sector development processes.
- 5) **Supports** the proposed 2026/27 Emergency Management Otago work programme.

MOTION CARRIED

7.3. Finance Report

[YouTube 25:15] This report updated the Emergency Management Group's financial performance for the period from July 2025 to February 2026. It included actuals against budget, identified key variances and updated the previously reported position to reflect year to date data. The current underspend is deliberate achieved from internal cost savings, noting that EMO will be funding the mana whenua emergency management facilitator role going forward. Matt Alley (Group Manager EMO) was available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-120: Mayor Tamah Alley Moved, Mayor Melanie Tavendale Seconded

That the Joint Committee:

- 1) **Notes** this report.

MOTION CARRIED

7.4. Otago Lifelines Update

[YouTube 26:50] This report outlined activity undertaken at the Otago Lifeline Utilities Group meeting on 13 March 2026. In response to the fuel response plan 2026, the critical customer list has been updated and is live. Cr Jon Mitchell confirmed that he will step down as co-Chair of the

Otago Lifelines group. An alternate communications plan for the Otago Lifelines Group should be in place by June 2026. Mel Banks (Lifelines Program Lead) was available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-121: Mayor Tamah Alley Moved, Mayor Sophie Barker Seconded

That the Joint Committee:

- 1) Notes this report.**
- 2) Notes the updates from the Otago Lifelines Group meeting.**

MOTION CARRIED

7.5. NEMA Update

[YouTube 31:45] This report updated the latest activity and matters NEMA is working on. The Emergency Management Bill is pending in parliament. The upcoming budget announcement will impact programmes. NEMA's role in outlining potential CDEM structures under a unitary council model was discussed. Simon Chambers (NEMA) was available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-122: Mayor Sophie Barker Moved, Mayor Melanie Tavendale Seconded

That the Joint Committee:

- 1) Notes this report.**

MOTION CARRIED

7.6. Controller Appointment

[YouTube 37:30] This report made recommendations for the appointment of two local controllers and two alternative group controllers. Matt Alley (Group Manager EMO) was available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-123: Mayor Sophie Barker Moved, Mayor Melanie Tavendale Seconded

That the Joint Committee:

- 1) Approves the appointments of Lisa Baillie and Andrew Bardsley as Local Controllers for Waitaki, and Rod Francis and Glenn Mitchell as Alternative Group Controllers.**

MOTION CARRIED

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

Chair Alley gave a vote of thanks to the EMO team for the 20 May exercise, highlighting the value of practice events in emergency management.

9. KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA - CLOSING

There was no further business and Chair Alley declared the meeting closed with a karakia at 1:32 pm.

Chairperson

Date

7.1. Emergency Management Committee (EMC) Terms of Reference Endorsement and Adoption

Prepared for: Otago Emergency Management Committee
Report No. CDEM2652
Activity: Emergency Management Otago
Author: Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago)
Endorsed by: Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago)
Date: 18 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] This paper seeks the Committee's endorsement and adoption of updated Terms of Reference, aligning the Committee's constitutional and operating basis with the Emergency Management Act 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 has been repealed and replaced by the Emergency Management Act 2026 (2026 No 53), which came into force generally on 4 September 2026.
- [3] The Act renames Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups as Emergency Management Committees. It updates the Committee's functions (now set out in section 29), membership provisions (sections 26 to 28), and the titles of its appointed office holders (Regional and District Controllers and Recovery Managers).
- [4] The Otago Committee's Terms of Reference, last updated in August 2023 based on the 2002 Act, have been revised accordingly and are attached (Attachment 1) for the Committee's endorsement and formal adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Otago Emergency Management Committee:

- 1) **Notes** that the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 has been repealed and replaced by the Emergency Management Act 2026, under which Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups continue in existence as Emergency Management Committees; and
- 2) **Endorses** the updated Terms of Reference for the Otago Emergency Management Committee, as set out in Attachment 1; and
- 3) **Adopts** the updated Terms of Reference for the Otago Emergency Management Committee, effective from the date of this meeting.

BACKGROUND

- [5] The Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group Joint Committee was established under section 12 of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 and has operated under Terms of Reference adopted in August 2023.
- [6] The Emergency Management Act 2026 received Royal assent on 3 September 2026 and came into force generally on 4 September 2026. It repeals the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 and replaces Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups with Emergency Management Committees, which continue in existence under section 25 of the new Act without a break in their legal status, membership, or decisions.
- [7] The Otago Committee's Terms of Reference accordingly need to be updated to reflect the Committee's new title, its functions under section 29 of the Act, and other changes introduced by the Act, including provision for associate members (section 27(3)) and the ability for members to attend meetings by audio or audiovisual link (section 37).

DISCUSSION

- [8] An updated Terms of Reference (Attachment 1) has been prepared. It retains the Committee's existing membership, meeting practice, and quorum arrangements, while updating legislative references and terminology throughout to align with the Emergency Management Act 2026.
- [9] The Committee's title changes from the "Otago CDEM Group Joint Committee" to the "Otago Emergency Management Committee"; it continues as a multi-member Emergency Management Committee and a joint committee under Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002 (sections 25 and 27(4) of the Act).
- [10] The Committee's functions, previously set out in section 17 of the 2002 Act, are now set out in section 29 of the Act. The substance of the functions is materially unchanged, but the wording and section numbering have been updated.
- [11] "Group Controller" and "Recovery Coordinator" become "Regional Controller" and "Regional Recovery Manager" respectively (sections 56 and 65 of the Act).
- [12] The Act introduces a new ability for the Committee to appoint associate members (section 27(3)) and for members to attend meetings by audio or audiovisual link (section 37); both have been reflected in the updated Terms of Reference.
- [13] No change is proposed to the Committee's membership, quorum, or meeting frequency.

OPTIONS

- [14] Option 1 (recommended): Endorse and adopt the updated Terms of Reference (Attachment 1), bringing the Committee's constitutional basis into line with the Emergency Management Act 2026 with immediate effect.
- [15] Option 2: Retain the August 2023 Terms of Reference. This is not recommended, as it continues to reference a repealed Act (the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002) and an outdated committee title, creating a legal and administrative inconsistency.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [16] The updated Terms of Reference is a housekeeping update required to align the Committee's constitutional documents with the Emergency Management Act 2026. It does not change the Committee's strategic direction, priorities, or the Otago Group Plan.

Financial Considerations

- [17] There are no financial implications. No change is proposed to the Committee's budget at this stage; the 26-27 work programme remains unchanged.

Significance and Engagement

- [18] This is an internal governance and administrative matter of low significance under the Committee's significance and engagement framework. No external consultation is required, as the changes give effect to matters already settled by Parliament in the Emergency Management Act 2026.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [19] The key legislative driver for this paper is the Emergency Management Act 2026, which repeals the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. The principal risk is reputational and administrative: continuing to operate under Terms of Reference that reference a repealed Act and an outdated committee title. Adopting the updated Terms of Reference removes that risk.

Climate Change Considerations

- [20] None. This paper does not relate to climate change mitigation or adaptation.

Communications Considerations

- [21] Member local authorities and the Committee's secretariat will be advised of the updated Terms of Reference following adoption. No wider public communication is required.

NEXT STEPS

- [22] Update the Committee's records, website, and induction material to reflect the new title and Terms of Reference.
- [23] Monitor further guidance from the National Emergency Management Agency on the implementation of the Emergency Management Act 2026 and report back to the Committee on any further consequential changes required.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Otago Emergency Management Committee - Terms of Reference 2026 [7.1.1 - 3 pages]



Otago Emergency Management Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Reviewed September 2026 to reflect the Emergency Management Act 2026; originally created August 2023)

The Otago Emergency Management Committee (the Committee), a multi-member Emergency Management Committee comprising elected representatives of local authorities within the region, continues in existence under section 25 of the Emergency Management Act 2026 (the Act) as the successor to the former Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management Group, which was formed under the Local Government Act 2002 pursuant to section 12 of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. The Committee is a joint committee under clause 30(1)(b) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002 (section 27(4) of the Act).

Members of the Committee are the mayor or chairperson (or delegated councillor) from Waitaki District, Queenstown Lakes District, Central Otago District, Clutha District, Dunedin City and the Otago Regional Council. Although Waitaki District falls within the boundaries of both the Canterbury and Otago Regional Councils, Waitaki District Council's membership of the Otago Committee — originally elected under section 14(2) of the former Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 — continues under the transitional provisions in section 25 of, and Schedule 1 to, the Act.

The Committee may also appoint one or more associate members who are not elected members of a local authority but who, in the Committee's opinion, have skills, attributes, or knowledge that will assist its work; associate members are treated as non-voting members in relation to certain matters (sections 27(3) and 33 of the Act).

The Committee may invite observers to attend its meetings. The Committee exercises governance and determines emergency management policy for member authorities in relation to the reduction of, readiness for, response to, and recovery from, hazards and risks.

The powers and duties of local authority members of the Committee are set out in section 32 of the Act.

The functions of the Committee, as set out in section 29 of the Act, are to:

- take the lead in identifying and assessing hazards and risks within the Committee's area, co-ordinate the management of those hazards and risks, identify and implement cost-effective risk reduction, and assist each local authority member to identify and assess relevant hazards and risks and to consult and communicate with its communities about them.
- ensure suitably trained and competent personnel, including volunteers, are available and that there is an appropriate organisational structure for effective emergency management in its area.
- respond to and manage the adverse effects of emergencies in its area.
- in advance of an emergency, plan for recovery activities in its area.

- in the event of an emergency, carry out recovery activities in its area.
- when requested, assist other Emergency Management Committees with emergency management in their areas.
- promote and raise public awareness of, and compliance with, the Act and relevant emergency management legislation.
- monitor and report on compliance within its area with the Act and relevant emergency management legislation.
- develop, approve, implement, and monitor the Otago Group Plan (the Committee's regional emergency management plan) and regularly review it.
- participate in the development of the national emergency management strategy and the national emergency management plan, and
- promote emergency management in the Otago region that is consistent with the purpose of the Act.

The Committee will:

- provide strategic direction through the Otago Group Plan, the Committee's regional emergency management plan under section 97 of the Act.
- approve the Committee's budget.
- approve and monitor the Committee's annual work programmes.
- appoint Regional Controllers and District Controllers and delegate powers as required (sections 56, 57 and 60 of the Act),
- appoint a Regional Recovery Manager, and District Recovery Managers as required (sections 65, 66 and 69 of the Act)

The Committee should meet each quarter or as required. Procedure for the conduct of meetings will be in accordance with the Local Government Act 2002 and any standing orders adopted under clause 27 of Schedule 7 of that Act (section 36 of the Act). Members may attend meetings by audio link or audiovisual link unless lawfully excluded (section 37 of the Act).

Meetings are held in public (Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987; section 182 of the Act).

A quorum will consist of three members.

A chairperson and deputy chairperson will be appointed from the representatives of the Committee's local authority members, usually following local body elections (section 35 of the Act).

Should the chairperson or deputy chairperson resign or otherwise not be available, a replacement will be appointed at the next Committee meeting.

The Committee will not be discharged by a local body election (section 25(2) of the Act).

Following a local body election, any previous delegated authority given by a local authority to its representative must be renewed or rescinded (section 28 of the Act).

In accordance with local government procedures, decisions made by the Committee are binding on all members.

In accordance with section 31(1) of the Act, the Committee may delegate any of its functions, duties, or powers to a local authority member of the Committee, the Regional Controller, the Regional Recovery Manager, or any other person. These delegations are made by resolution at a Committee meeting.

Common Emergency Management Acronyms

CDEM	Civil Defence Emergency Management — the historic term under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, now Emergency Management (EM) under the Emergency Management Act 2026
CEG	Emergency Management Co-ordinating Executive Group
CIMS	Coordinated Incident Management System
COP	Common Operating Picture
D4H	Emergency Operations Platform
DIA	Department of Internal Affairs
ECC	Emergency Coordination Centre
EM	Emergency Management
EMC	Emergency Management Committee
GEM	Group Emergency Manager
EMA	Emergency Management Advisors
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
FENZ	Fire and Emergency New Zealand
GIS	Geographic Information System
IMT	Incident Management Team
TLA	Territorial Local Authority
LUC	Lifelines Utility Coordination Group
MPI	Ministry of Primary Industries
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
NCC	National Coordination Centre
NCMC	National Crisis Management Centre
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NEMDG	National Emergency Management Development Group
NZ - EMAT	NZ Emergency Management Assistance Team
RAG	Rural Advisor Group
R & R	Readiness and Response Group
SIG	CDEM Special Interest Group
WCG	Welfare Coordination Group
4Rs	Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery

7.2. Coordinating Executive Group Chair Report

Prepared for: Otago Emergency Management Committee
Report No. CDEM2643
Activity: Emergency Management Otago
Author: Matt Alley, Group Manager Emergency Management
Endorsed by: Richard Saunders, Deputy Chair, Coordinating Executive Group (CEG)
Date: 18 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] This report provides an update to the Emergency Management Committee on key matters arising from the Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management CEG meeting held on 21 August 2026. It outlines work programme progress, readiness and response activity, financial performance, and agency partner updates since the previous meeting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] The Committee received the Group Manager's report, which highlighted delivery against the annual work plan, staffing movements, the response to the July severe weather event in coastal Otago, and work sequencing to meet the new legislation. Financial updates confirmed year-to-date performance with a forecast surplus within 1% of budget.
- [3] The ORC Natural Hazards team presented on the regional exposure study and hazards priorities framework, with nine locations in Otago identified for future hazard work.
- [4] The Group Plan Update recommends transitioning from the current draft Group Plan to a new 2026-2036 Regional Emergency Management Plan to ensure compliance with the new Emergency Management Act, which introduces new consultation, engagement, and assurance requirements. Key work ahead includes identifying and engaging with disproportionately affected communities, strengthening partnerships with iwi and Māori, and aligning regional planning with the new legislative framework before public consultation begins.
- [5] A paper on LTP resourcing highlighted the increased cost implications of the new Emergency Management Act and the need to consider the cost implications in the current LTP planning.
- [6] Committee updates were provided from the Otago Lifelines, Welfare Coordinating, and Readiness and Response groups. These all included briefs on their respective activities in the May exercise and the July flood response.
- [7] Partner agency updates reinforced ongoing health response activity, welfare support coordination, mana whenua engagement developments, and emergency service operational pressures. The next CEG meeting is scheduled for 23 October 2026.
-

RECOMMENDATION

That the Otago Emergency Management Committee:

- 1) **Notes** this report.

DISCUSSION

Regional Exposure Study and Hazards Prioritisation

- [8] The Regional Exposure Study and Prioritisation Framework.docx uses a region-wide exposure analysis and prioritisation framework to identify where natural hazard management effort is most needed, based on hazard exposure levels, historical impacts, existing hazard management work, vulnerable populations, and opportunities for risk reduction and collaboration.
- [9] The study found that flooding and liquefaction create the highest levels of exposure across Otago and used this evidence to classify 52 communities into priority categories for future investigation, adaptation, and hazard management planning.
- [10] Nine locations were identified as the highest priorities for future hazard work programmes: Omakau, Lawrence, Pounawea, Harwood and Otakou-Harington Point, Karitane, Purakaunui, Waikouaiti, and Waitati-Doctors Point, while region-wide assessments of flood, tsunami, coastal inundation, landslide, and wildfire hazards are also proposed for the next Long-Term Plan.

Long-Term Plan Funding

- [11] The Long-Term Plan Funding and Resourcing report outlines how the new Emergency Management Act significantly expands the responsibilities of emergency management committees and councils, including hazard and risk leadership, workforce training, recovery planning, engagement with disproportionately affected communities and essential infrastructure, and ongoing compliance monitoring and reporting.
- [12] The report notes that only 40% of the current work programme is fully budgeted, with 43% currently unfunded, and concludes that additional resources will be required to meet the new legislative obligations and avoid compliance, reputational, and financial risks.
- [13] The estimated cost implications include a national implementation cost of \$82.8 million over four years for emergency management groups and a local requirement for Emergency Management Otago to add an estimated rates increase of \$1.2 million to \$1.4 million.
- [14] At the CEG meeting the committee resolved to request Otago CDEM to complete a briefing on the new legislative requirements to support Long-Term Plan planning.

2026 Community Resilience Survey

- [15] The 2026 Community Resilience Survey results were reported on. The survey gathered responses to assess hazard awareness, emergency preparedness, and preferred information sources, helping identify resilience strengths, gaps, and priorities for future public education campaigns.
- [16] A significant finding was the continued improvement in community preparedness and awareness, knowledge of where to find hazard information, and a rise in households with an emergency plan, although preparedness barriers such as cost, time, and low uptake of grab bags remain.

COMMITTEE UPDATES**Readiness and Response Update**

- [17] The report from this group highlights ongoing efforts to strengthen regional readiness and response capability, including fuel contingency planning, preparation for and delivery of Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite, and coordination across partner agencies. Key updates included lessons from the July severe weather event, and the successful participation of more than 300 personnel in the exercise, which provided valuable opportunities for testing coordination and identifying areas for improvement.

Otago Lifelines Update

- [18] The Committee received the Lifelines update, outlining the work done on updating the Otago/Southland Fuel Plan, the Otago Communications, and Generator Plans, and a Lifelines desktop exercise.

Welfare Coordinating Group Update

- [19] The Committee were told that the Otago Welfare Coordination Group have strengthened regional welfare preparedness by confirming a shared vision, refining its activation Standard Operating Procedure through Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite, expanding membership, and developing welfare field assessment training capability.
- [20] The report also highlights the Group's activation during the July severe weather event, where member agencies coordinated intelligence gathering and welfare support to improve shared situational awareness and meet community needs.

NEMA Update

- [21] The Committee received an update on national emergency management initiatives, including ongoing reform and sector engagement.

MEMBER UPDATES

- [22] **Te Whatu Ora Southern** reported ED is dealing with record numbers with winter illnesses, with a national Coordination Centre setup in response.

- [23] **Ministry of Social Development** reported that MSD has been involved in recent weather events providing Civil Defence payments
- [24] **Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ):** Deane Chalmers reported that Phil Marsh has medically retired. FENZ is planning for the potential implications of a super El Niño summer and the associated fire risks.
- [25] **Hato Hone St John** reported that the workload is up for Otago with a busier winter compared to previous years as well as staff illness challenging ambulance availability.
- [26] **Te Rūnanga o Moeraki** reported that they have been supporting whanau with cost of living support, and they now have Te Au Roa rangers which may be a resource in an emergency.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [27] No new matters arising.

Financial Considerations

- [28] No new matters arising

Significance and Engagement

- [29] No new matters arising.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [30] Ongoing involvement in Emergency Management Bill development.

Climate Change Considerations

- [31] No new matters arising.

Communications Considerations

- [32] Focus on community preparedness and internal coordination across partners.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Minutes Coordinating Executive Group meeting 21 August 2026 [7.2.1 - 6 pages]



**Emergency
Management Otago**
Te Rākau Whakamarumaru Ōtākou

**Civil Defence Emergency Management Otago
Coordinating Executive Group
MINUTES**

**Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Otago
Coordinating Executive Group held in the Council Chamber, Aonui, 180 High Street, Dunedin
on Friday 21 August 2026, commencing at 1:00 pm.**

MEMBERSHIP

Peter Kelly (Chair)	Central Otago District Council
Steve Hill	Clutha District Council
Sandy Graham	Dunedin City Council
Richard Saunders (Deputy Chair)	Otago Regional Council
Michelle Morss	Queenstown Lakes District Council
Alex Parmley	Waitaki District Council
Matt Scoles	New Zealand Police
Deane Chalmers	Fire and Emergency New Zealand
Mallory Wood	Te Whatu Ora Southern
Trevor McGlinchey	Te Rūnanga o Moeraki
Andrew Rouvi	Te Rūnanga o Ōtakau
Suzanne Ellison	Kati Huirapa Rūnaka Puketeraki
Steph Voight	Ministry of Social Development
Shaun O'Halloran	National Emergency Management Agency
David Milne	Hato Hone St John
Matt Alley (non-voting)	Emergency Management Otago

1. KARAKIA TĪMATANGA - OPENING

Chair Richard Saunders (Otago Regional Council) welcomed Coordinating Executive Group members and staff to the meeting at 1:00 pm with a karakia.

Members attending were Steve Hill (Clutha District Council), Alex Parmley (Waitaki District Council), Dylan Rushbrook (Central Otago District Council), Steph Voight (Ministry of Social Development), Lisa Little (Ministry of Social Development), Mike Gillooly (National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)), David Milne (Hato Hone St John), Trevor McGlinchey (Te Rūnanga o Moeraki) and Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago (EMO)). Members online were Sandy Graham (Dunedin City Council), Deane Chalmers (Fire and Emergency New Zealand) and Mallory Wood (Te Whatu Ora Southern).

Staff attending and online were Claire Charleton (Emergency Management Advisor Dunedin), Danny Fountaine (Emergency Management Advisor Waitaki), Emily Williamson (Admin Support Coordinator), Erica Andrews (Stakeholder Engagement Advisor), Glenn Mitchell (Principal Advisor, EMO), John Mawhinney (Readiness and Response Advisor), Mauriri Kimura-McGlinchey (Araiteuru Emergency Facilitator), Mel Banks (Lifeline Programme Lead), Paula Cathie (Team Leader Coastal), Taylor Hendl (Emergency Management Advisor Dunedin), Roderick Francis (Team Leader Group Office), Jean-Luc Payan (Manager Natural Hazards), Tim van Woerden (Senior Natural Hazards Analyst) and Cara Jordan (Governance Support).

2. APOLOGIES

Resolution: Steve Hill Moved, Alex Parmley Seconded:

That the apologies for Peter Kelly and Michelle Morss be accepted.

MOTION CARRIED

3. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

A late attachment for paper 7.1 Group Manager Report was noted. The late attachment was distributed by email and hard copy on the 21 August 2026. The agenda was then confirmed as published.

4. MINUTES

It was noted that the CEG representative for Te Whatu Ora was incorrect. Murray Halbert should be replaced with Mallory Wood.

Resolution: Richard Saunders Moved, Alex Parmley Seconded

That the minutes of the Coordinating Executive Group meeting held on 24 April 2026 be received and confirmed as a true and accurate record with a minor amendment.

MOTION CARRIED

5. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee Terms of Reference were noted.

6. ACTION ITEMS

There were no open actions for the Coordinating Executive Group.

7. REPORT ITEMS

7.1. Group Manager Report

This report provided an update on current system reform, proposed work for the 2026/2027 financial year, and work activity completed for the year-to-date 2026. There has been an assurance that the Emergency Management Bill will pass in this triennium. Matt Alley (Group Manager EMO) was available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-125: Alex Parmley Moved, Steve Hill Seconded

That the Coordinating Executive Group:

1) Notes this report.

2) Endorses the EM Otago Team delivery plan sequencing around the two statutory deadlines.

MOTION CARRIED

7.2. Finance Report

This report provided an updated overview of the Emergency Management Group's financial performance for the period from July 2025 to June 2026. It included actuals against budget and key variances. As of June 2026, there is a year-to-date operating surplus of \$177,000 which will be treated as a reserve. Matt Alley (Group Manager EMO) was available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-126: Steve Hill Moved, Dylan Rushbrook Seconded

That the Coordinating Executive Group:

1) Notes this report.

MOTION CARRIED

7.3. Regional Exposure Study and Prioritisation Framework

A presentation was given on the key findings of the Otago Regional Council natural hazards exposure and prioritisation work programme which highlighted the alignment between this work and the new functions for local government emergency management described in the Emergency Management Bill. Tim van Woerden (Senior Natural Hazards Analyst), Jean-Luc Payan (Manager Natural Hazards) and Matt Alley (Group Manager EMO) were available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-127: Richard Saunders Moved, Dylan Rushbrook Seconded

That the Coordinating Executive Group:

1) Notes this report.

MOTION CARRIED

7.4. 2025-2035 Group Plan Update

This report outlined how the Emergency Management Bill changes content and consultation requirements for regional plans and how these changes will impact the progress of the 2026-2036 Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan. Roderick Francis (Team Leader Group Office EMO) and Matt Alley (Group Manager EMO) were available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-128: Alex Parmley Moved, Steve Hill Seconded

That the Coordinating Executive Group:

1) Notes this report.

2) Endorses staffs' recommended approach which is to work on the 2026-36 Otago Regional Emergency Management Plan in conformance with the forthcoming Emergency Management Act.

MOTION CARRIED

7.5. Long-Term Plan Funding and Resourcing

Resourcing and financial implications of the Emergency Management Bill were highlighted and the need for appropriate planning in the current Long-Term Planning round was discussed. More detail on potential costs is required. Glenn Mitchell (Principal Advisor Group Office EMO) and Matt Alley (Group Manager EMO) were available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-129: Richard Saunders Moved, Alex Parmley Seconded

That the Coordinating Executive Group:

- 1) Notes this report.**
- 2) Request Otago CDEM to complete a briefing on the new legislative requirements to support Long-Term planning.**

MOTION CARRIED

7.6. 2026 EMO Community Resilience Survey

Insights into the results of the 2026 Emergency Management Otago Community Resilience Survey were presented. Opportunities for future activities to support a targeted increase to community resilience, prior to and during emergencies, were discussed. Erica Andrews (Stakeholder Engagement Advisor EMO) was available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-130: Dylan Rushbrook Moved, Richard Saunders Seconded

That the Coordinating Executive Group:

- 1) Notes this report.**
- 2) Notes that the report will be forwarded to the Joint Committee.**

MOTION CARRIED

7.7. Readiness and Response Committee Update

Activity undertaken at the Readiness and Response Committee meetings held on 15 April and 23 July 2026 was reviewed. During the early stages of the fuel crisis there was a large amount of concern about access to fuel for critical services. The status and implications of the Emergency Management Bill was highlighted. Roderick Francis (Team Leader Group Office EMO) was available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-131: Steve Hill Moved, Alex Parmley Seconded

That the Coordinating Executive Group:

- 1) Notes this report.**

MOTION CARRIED

7.8. Otago Lifelines Update

This report outlined activity undertaken by the Otago Lifelines Group, including an update from the most recent meeting on 3 June 2026. The Otago alternative communication plan has been reviewed and will be incorporated into the EMO Group Plan. Mel Banks (Lifelines Program Lead EMO) was available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-132: Richard Saunders Moved, Alex Parmley Seconded

That the Coordinating Executive Group:

- 1) Notes this report.**
- 2) Notes the updates from the Otago Lifelines Utilities Group meeting.**

MOTION CARRIED

7.9. Welfare Coordination Group Update

Activities undertaken by the Otago Welfare Coordination Group (WCG) were presented including the 28 May 2026 WCG meeting, participation in Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite, coordination functions during the early July severe weather response, and progress in strengthening welfare assessment capability. The new Emergency Management Bill will require a representative from the Rural Advisory Group on the CEG. Steph Voight noted ongoing non-attendance from a Ministry of Social Development representative at the WCG meetings and will address it for the next WCG meeting on 18 September 2026. Claire Charleton (Interim Group Welfare Manager EMO) and Matt Alley (Group Manager EMO) were available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-133: Dylan Rushbrook Moved, Steve Hill Seconded

That the Coordinating Executive Group:

1) Notes this report.

MOTION CARRIED

7.10. NEMA Update

This report updated the latest activity and matters that NEMA is working on. The timeline for the Emergency Management Bill through parliament was highlighted. It was noted that EMLG will be inviting Chief Executives to participate in working groups for the development of EMS-OS. Mike Gillooly (NEMA) was available for questions.

Resolution CDEM26-134: Richard Saunders Moved, {seconded} Seconded

That the Coordinating Executive Group:

1) Notes this report.

MOTION CARRIED

8. PARTNER AGENCY UPDATES

Hato Hone St John

David Milne reported on behalf of Hato Hone St John. Current workload is at record levels for this winter, and it has been difficult to maintain service delivery targets.

Araiteuru Emergency Facilitator

Mauriri Kimura-McGlinchey reported on work with resilience groups at the marae which has included USAR training. Input has also been provided for the Group Plan development.

Ministry of Social Development (MSD)

Steph Voight reported on involvement in recent weather events and civil defence payments. Household resilience levels are dropping with cost of living. El Nino support funds for rural communities were noted.

Te Rūnanga o Moeraki

Trevor McGlinchey reported on work with whanau regarding cost of living and food resilience support. The Te Au Roa rangers are now established in the south eastern marine authority protection area and will be a further resource in an emergency.

Te Whatu Ora Southern

Mallory Wood reported increased winter pressure demands with record numbers presenting to ED, further compounded by high levels of staff illness. Health New Zealand has activated the National Coordination Centre in response to winter pressures. There has been several recent weather event responses causing difficulty for staff to access hospitals. Adverse weather and business continuity plans are being reviewed. Work is underway on a regional South Island health emergency plan which flow into the Southern District health emergency plan.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand

Deane Chalmers reported that Phil Marsh has been medically retired. Fire and Emergency New Zealand has significant ongoing challenges with industrial action stretching resources. Super El Nino implications are a major focus for upcoming planning. AF8 is also in focus with respect to emergency plans. Further staff changes will be passed onto the CEG.

9. GENERAL BUSINESS

The date for the next meeting is scheduled for 16 October 2026 from 1:00 - 3:00 pm with the venue to be confirmed.

Chair Saunders acknowledged the contributions of Michelle Morss and Sandy Graham to the CEG and noted that their replacements would be welcomed at the next CEG meeting.

10. KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA - CLOSING

There was no further business and Chair Saunders declared the meeting closed at 2:30 pm.

Chairperson

Date

7.3. Group Manager Report

Prepared for: Otago Emergency Management Committee
Report No. CDEM2647
Activity: Emergency Management Otago
Author: Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago)
Endorsed by: Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago)
Date: 18 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] To update the Otago Emergency Management Committee (EMC) on current system reform, proposed work for the 26/27 financial year, and work activity completed for the year 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] This report covers recommended sequencing for Otago's implementation of the Emergency Management Act 2026, progress against the 2025-26 Annual Workplan, and operational activity for the quarter.
- [3] A weather event over 5-6 July 2026 tested response arrangements in Dunedin and Waitaki; both were managed within existing local response levels, with a local declaration made in Waitaki.
- [4] Workplan delivery remains largely on track across risk management, response and recovery, workforce capability and community resilience, with two items - the stalled Te Wai Pounamu regional planning group and delayed D4H Request for Assistance automation - flagged as behind schedule.
- [5] Staffing vacancies have been filled, the Mana Whenua Emergency Facilitator role has been extended for 2026-2027, and EMO is participating in the NEMA Capability Self-Assessment Tool pilot.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Otago Emergency Management Committee:

- 1) **Notes** this report.
- 2) **Notes** the EM Otago Team delivery plan sequencing around the statutory deadlines.

DISCUSSION

Staffing

- [6] At the time of writing this report two vacancies, Resilience Advisor Group Office and Emergency Management Advisor Clutha, within the team have been filled with new staff now on board.

Assurance Update

- [7] NEMA have commenced work to establish a National Assurance Programme over a 5-year period. The purpose of this programme is to assure the Government and the wider community regarding the preparedness and performance of Aotearoa's Emergency Management System. An Assurance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, alongside a Capability Self-Assessment Tool, are the first objectives of the programme being developed. The Capability Self-Assessment Tool aims to understand organisational preparedness regarding its emergency management responsibilities and identify improvement opportunities. It will be used to understand organisational strengths, identify gaps, and track improvement, and is currently in Phase 2; Prototype and Pilot initiation, with Sprint 1 and 2 completed.
- [8] Emergency Management Otago (EMO) is participating in the pilot to test the Capability Self-Assessment Tool prototype, as it currently stands. Over the next 4-6 weeks, EMO will be involved in reviewing the assessment approach, completing the self-assessment, participating in peer validation to discuss the results, and reviewing the report outputs. Feedback can be given to NEMA throughout each stage of the process which will help inform the final prototype development in Sprint 3, and later implementation.

Mana Whenua Emergency Facilitator – Āraiteuru update

- [9] Emergency Management Otago and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu have extended the fixed-term Mana Whenua Emergency Facilitator – Āraiteuru for 2026-2027. The role works with Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki and Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou to strengthen marae and whānau readiness, response and recovery capability, while building direct relationships with councils, CDEM, emergency services, health and welfare providers and other partner agencies. The role also maintains connections with mātāwaka, the wider Māori community, and other iwi and community networks where appropriate.
- [10] Representatives of Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki and Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou met with EMO in early July to discuss the role, how it fits in the 2026-2027 work plan, management of the position and how best to provide input into the draft 2025-2035 Group Plan. A commitment was made to meet at six-week intervals to provide support to the Emergency Facilitator – Mauriri McGlinchey.

Weather Event 5-6 July 2026

- [11] Two Councils responded to severe weather events across Otago over 5–6 July 2026. In Dunedin, the City EOC stood up in Mode One MONITOR from 16:30 on 5 July following heavy overnight rain that fell mainly on Mosgiel, with snow closing SH87 inland.

- [12] The response has remained at L1 (minor local CDEM response) with no declaration made, and by 09:30 on 6 July the situation was assessed as stable. Most rivers were falling by that point, though the Taieri had passed its second warning trigger and plateaued around 633 cumecs, still comfortably below its spill threshold.
- [13] Numerous roads across Mosgiel, the Peninsula, and West Harbour were closed by surface flooding, slips, and fallen trees, and wastewater overflows were reported in Mosgiel while South Dunedin's network held.
- [14] A short-lived evacuation centre at Taieri Bowling Club was stood up overnight for one family, with Forsyth Barr Stadium and university accommodation held in reserve.
- [15] The more significant response was in Waitaki, where the district EOC moved to Mode Two SUPPORT from 11:00 on 6 July and a local declaration was made.
- [16] This was classified as L2 (moderate local CDEM response). The event was driven by rainfall between 80–90mm confirmed at local gauges, alongside a Heavy Snow Watch inland.
- [17] All warnings were subsequently lifted by 14:30 on 6 July as rain turned to showers, though a further complex weather system was tracking in behind it. Impacts in Waitaki were considerably more extensive than Dunedin: multiple properties across Oamaru suffered flooding and sewage contamination (Arun, Nen, Lismore, Virgil, Caledonian, and Orwell Streets among others), with several households placed in temporary accommodation and food parcels arranged for three evacuated families.
- [18] Wastewater pump stations at Beach Road and Orwell Street were overflowing to storage, the Redcastle Road pump station lost the ability to pump to Ardgowan dam due to high turbidity, and the Lower Waitaki water supply remained on a boil-water notice.
- [19] State highways SH1 (Pukeuri–Glenavy) and SH83 were closed overnight, with numerous local road closures district-wide, and the Lindis Pass had a metre of snow preventing clearance.
- [20] In both instances Recovery activity was rolled back into Council BAU structures.

Emergency Management Act 2026

- [21] This note sets out recommended activity sequencing for Otago's implementation of the Emergency Management Bill (No 2).
- [22] It is important to note that the items listed below are not exhaustive but are considered the most pressing in terms of potential risk.
- [23] For a fuller context, there are an excess of 120 legislative changes that have varying degrees of impact.

Sequencing recommendations

- [24] 0–12 months after Royal Assent
- Formalise EMC partnership agreement supported by Council resolutions across all Otago territorial authorities and ORC, as soon as practicable after Assent.
 - Update terms of reference for committees to reflect legislative change.
 - Begin implementation Controller and Recovery Manager appointment and delegation arrangements with each territorial authority Chief Executive well ahead of the 12-month deadline, rather than leaving this to the final months of the window.
 - Begin engagement with essential infrastructure providers on their expanded duties and likely contribution to sector response plans (NEMA defined), so relationships and processes are in place before obligations bite.
- [25] 12–24 months after Royal Assent
- Complete the Controller and Recovery Manager appointment refresh before the 12-month deadline lapses, closing out any transitional gaps.
 - Track the national plan review process, which will settle the lead agency provisions coming into force at the 2-year mark, and adjust Otago's arrangements accordingly.

Annual Workplan Report

Managing Risks

- [26] The Regional Vulnerability Assessment is being integrated into the Group Plan 2026-36. The Group Manager continues to sit on the AF8 Project steering group. The Lower Taieri integrated flood modelling project plan is in place, with data gathering underway alongside ORC Natural Hazards.

Effective Response and Recovery

- [27] Lifelines projects (Alternate Communications, Fuel, Generator and GIS viewer plans) are progressing as a multi-year programme, see the separate Lifelines report. The ECC has updated the tsunami and local earthquake response plans; the Q4 severe weather plan review did not proceed due to time constraints. The GIS Strategy's Common Operating Picture tool was well tested during Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite, and the Website Response Page and an initial three-vehicle Deployable Capability project are both underway. The Group Recovery Toolkit has been updated with lessons from the Auckland 2023 severe weather events, and the draft 2026 Group Recovery Plan is nearly complete.
- [28] Two items need to be flagged as behind schedule: the Te Wai Pounamu regional planning group has not met since late 2025, stalling that workstream (largely due to the availability of other participating groups); automation of Requests for Assistance into D4H is delayed pending ORC GIS staff availability.

Workforce Capability

- [29] Tier 2 exercises were delivered to all Otago councils and Lifeline Utilities. Training uptake was strong ahead of Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite, with CODC alone recording around 350

attendances. Coastal districts remain below the Group Workplan target of an 80% trained and capable response workforce, and the most significant capability risk identified across districts is a shortage of qualified Function Managers and experienced personnel for leadership roles during extended responses.

Community Resilience

- [30] A strong engagement quarter: 34 Community Resilience Group activities were delivered, the new Health and Safety module for CRGs is complete and being rolled out, and the 2026 Annual Community Preparedness Survey and household preparedness campaign were both completed. Clued Up Kids concluded in Waitaki, Clutha, Central Otago and QLDC, the last year in this format, to be replaced by an in-school programme piloted in Dunedin. Facebook followers reached 19,343 by the end of Q4.

Governance and Management

- [31] The first draft of the Group Plan review will be out for consultation later in 2026; this has been impacted by impending legislation. EM Otago is participating in the NEMA Assurance Framework pilot. A Career Progression Framework for EM Otago staff is to be incorporated as part of wider reform implementation. The Coastal Otago NZ Response Team is in weekly training, with an MoU between the team and the Otago CDEM Group approved in April 2026.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [32] No matters arising.

Financial Considerations

- [33] No matters arising.

Significance and Engagement

- [34] No matters arising.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [35] No matters arising.

Climate Change Considerations

- [36] No matters arising.

Communications Considerations

- [37] No matters arising.

ATTACHMENTS

1. EMO Workplan Report Jul 2026 [7.3.1 - 25 pages]



Emergency Management Otago

Te Rākau Whakamarumarū Ōtākou

Jun 2026

Work Plan Report



Clutha
District Council



DUNEDIN
CITY COUNCIL | kaunihera
a-rohe o
ōtepoti



Otago
Regional
Council



QUEENSTOWN
LAKES DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Waitaki
DISTRICT COUNCIL
TE KAUNIHERA A ROHE O WAITAKI

Who we are

Emergency Management Otago (EMO) is the dedicated body responsible for managing and coordinating responses to natural disasters, emergencies, and significant events across the Otago region. Our mission is to ensure the safety, resilience, and well-being of our communities, minimizing risks and enhancing preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

- **Our Mission:**

To lead the region in emergency management by providing effective coordination, proactive planning, and community-focused support during emergencies. Through collaboration, education, and innovation, we ensure that Otago remains a safe, prepared, and resilient place for everyone.

- **Our Vision:**

To make Otago the most resilient and well-prepared region in New Zealand, where communities, local government, and emergency services work together to manage risks and respond effectively to any crisis.

- **What We Do:**

Emergency Management Otago (EMO) oversees all aspects of emergency preparedness and response within the Otago region. Our work is guided by the principles of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 and align with national frameworks such as the National Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Plan.

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Emergency Management Otago Team

Group Office Team

Matt Alley - Group Manager
Rod Francis - Group Office Team Leader
Erica Andrews – Stakeholder
Engagement Advisor
Glenn Mitchell – Principal Advisor
John Mawhinney – Readiness and
Response Advisor
Mel Banks – Lifelines Program Lead
Jasmine Weston – Resilience Advisor
(from 31/8)
Emily Williamson – Administrative
Support Coordinator

Inland Team

Courtenay Jamieson – Inland Team
Leader
Craig Gibson – Emergency Management
Advisor Queenstown
Dave Grimes – Emergency Management
Advisor Queenstown
Derek Shaw – Emergency Management
Advisor Central Otago
Jacqui Lambeth – Emergency
Management Advisor Upper Clutha

Coastal Team

Paula Cathie – Coastal Team Leader
Chris Brooker – Emergency
Management Advisor Dunedin
Claire Charleton – Emergency
Management Advisor Dunedin
Danny Fountaine – Emergency
Management Advisor Waitaki
Jess Craik – Emergency Management
Advisor Clutha (from 7/9)
Taylor Hendl – Emergency Management
Advisor Dunedin

Our Values



Collaboration:

We work closely with local government, emergency services, businesses, and community groups to build a more resilient Otago.



Integrity:

We act with transparency, accountability, and honesty in all our actions.



Readiness:

We emphasize the importance of planning ahead to minimize the impact of emergencies.



Compassion:

We prioritize the welfare of our communities, supporting them before, during, and after emergencies.



Innovation:

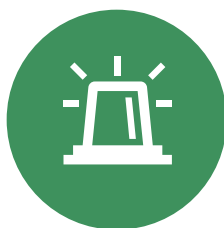
We strive to continuously improve our emergency management practices, using the latest technologies and methodologies to stay ahead of emerging risks.

2025-2026 Work Plan Tasks

Workstream Areas of Focus



Managing Risks



Effective Response to and Recovery from Emergencies



Enabling, Empowering, and Supporting Community Resilience



Managing Risks

Hazard Research

Activity	Tracking	Progress Update
Regional Vulnerability Assessment Integration (Q1-Q2)		Regional Vulnerability Assessment is being incorporated into the Group Plan 2026-36
Continued support for the AF8 Project (Q1-Q4)		Ongoing membership in the project steering group by the Group Manager.
Integrated Flood Modelling (Lower Taieri)		Project plan in place, and work is underway to gather and refine data in conjunction with ORC Natural Hazards

LEGEND



COMPLETED



IN PROGRESS



NOT STARTED



UNLIKELY TO COMPLETE

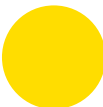
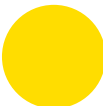


Effective Response to and Recovery from Emergencies

Operating Systems

Activity	Tracking	Progress Update
Lifelines projects (Q1 – Q4)		• Alternate Communications Plan • Fuel Plan • Generator Plan • GIS viewer integration This is a multi-year project. See the separate Lifelines report paper.
Hazard Planning - One hazard-specific plan completed each quarter per response/ coordination facility. (Q1-Q4)		The ECC has updated the tsunami response plan, support to another lead agency plan, and a local (in-region) earthquake plan. A Q4 review of the severe weather response plan did not go ahead as planned due to time constraints.
Hazard Planning - Regional /Local Support for the Te Wai Pounamu Planning Group (Q1-Q4)		The initial focus is on Mass Relief planning, with some work towards a GIS tool for rapid population-based Needs Assessments. No progress has happened in this space since late 2025, as the planning group has not met since.
Auditing and Assurance - Equipment audits have been completed, along with the auditing and review of D4H Plays and the regional warning system. (Q1-Q4)		Equipment inspections in D4H are ongoing. D4H plays were to be audited in Q4 but did not occur due to time constraints.

LEGEND COMPLETED IN PROGRESS NOT STARTED UNLIKELY TO COMPLETE

Activity	Tracking	Progress Update
Operational Systems - GIS Strategy is developed and implemented. (Q1- Q2)		A GIS for CDEM Strategy has been developed to ensure work in this space is focused on priorities. The roadmap to success for year 1 is now being implemented. The Common Operating Picture GIS tool is well developed and tested during Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite.
Operational Systems - Impact Assessment workflow. (Q1- Q4)		The Wide Area damage assessment tool developed by FENZ is integrated into the Common Operating Picture GIS tool under development as part of year 1 of the GIS Strategy work. Welfare Needs Assessment automation is operational. Work to automate initial requests for assistance into D4H using the Request for Assistance form is delayed due to ORC GIS staff availability.
Operational Systems - Website Response Page (Q1 – Q2)		Web Response page has been implemented with training underway
Operational Systems - Deployable Capability (Q1 – Q2)		Project plan underway, with an initial three-vehicle project started.
Group Recovery Toolkit (Q2)		The development of the Group Recovery Toolkit is now available for district Recovery teams to use, with a range of templates and tools. Updates to the toolkit are ongoing, with the most recent additions comprehensive lessons learned reports from the Auckland 2023 severe weather events.
Group Recovery Plan Review (Q4)		A draft 2026 Recovery Plan is nearly completed and will be supplementary to the new Group Plan.
LEGEND  COMPLETED  IN PROGRESS  NOT STARTED  UNLIKELY TO COMPLETE		

Operational Workforce Capability

Activity	Tracking	Progress Update
Training and Capability Strategy - All Council Response Teams to maintain a cohort (80%) of trained / capable staff. (Foundation Training) (Q1-Q4)		See Appendix 1.
Training and Capability Strategy - material is developed for quarterly function training (Q1-Q4)		Ongoing development across Q1-Q4
Tier 3 Exercise – All Otago Councils (Q4)		Full-day exercise is delivered for each council that is consistent with the approved exercise concept and instructions.
Tier 2 Exercise – Lifeline Utilities (Q3)		D4H exercise delivered to Otago Lifeline Utilities group members who are not part of the districts EOC's.

LEGEND



COMPLETED



IN PROGRESS



NOT STARTED



UNLIKELY TO COMPLETE



Enabling, Empowering, and Supporting Community Resilience

Community Resilience Strategy

Activity	Tracking	Progress Update
Community Resilience Strategy - Community Resilience Groups (Q1-Q4)		Groups are developed to be operational as defined in the Community Resilience Strategy. See Appendix 3. This is a multi-year project.
Community Resilience Strategy - Community Training Support – material is developed to support the delivery of the Community Resilience Strategy (Q1-Q4)		Community Resilience Group engagement activities continued throughout the quarter with 34 activities this quarter. Development of a Health and Safety module for Community Resilience Groups is complete and being presented to CRGs. See Appendices 2 & 3.
Community Resilience Strategy – Public education. (Q1-Q4)		2026 Annual Community Preparedness Survey completed Household plan Regional Community Preparedness Campaign completed
EQ Trailer Concept / Design		Project underway with initial meetings with international vendor.

LEGEND



COMPLETED



IN PROGRESS



NOT STARTED



UNLIKELY TO COMPLETE

Activity	Tracking	Progress Update
Clued Up Kids		Waitaki – Completed in Q1 Clutha – Completed in Q1 Central Otago – Completed in Q4 QLDC – Completed in Q4 This is the last year this activity will be undertaken. Dunedin City piloted, and it will be rolled out next year a targeted in-school education programme.
Social Media Growth		Facebook followers as at end of Q4 19,343 This is a multi-year project.

LEGEND



COMPLETED



IN PROGRESS



NOT STARTED



UNLIKELY TO COMPLETE



Governance and Management

Group Plan

Activity	Tracking	Progress Update
Group Plan Review (Q1 – Q4)		First draft of the plan will be available for consultation in May 2026.
Group Assurance Framework (Q4)		The NEMA assurance tool is almost ready for a pilot trial. Otago CDEM is planning to be part of the pilot.
Career Progression Framework		Establish and Implement a Career Progression Framework for EM Otago Staff
NZ Response Team – Coastal Otago		Weekly training is underway, focusing on the initial strands – Foundation, Welfare and Flood response. An MoU with the Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management Group was approved in April 2026. This is a multi-year activity

LEGEND



COMPLETED



IN PROGRESS



NOT STARTED



UNLIKELY TO COMPLETE

October 2024 After-Action Review Recommendation Progress

Recommendation	Tracking	Progress Update
Confirm all EOC/GECC shifts, identify staff, and communicate expectations. (Q1 - Q2)		Awaiting CEG decision.
Build familiarity with D4H, develop response playbooks, and use D4H as the training foundation.		This activity is ongoing, however, findings from Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite show that council staff still require training in D4H and that some modules need clarity around their use of them.
Double annual training from 8 to 16 hours for EOC/GECC staff.		Unable to deliver with current resourcing, awaiting CEG decision.
Full Group-wide exercise including all EOCs, the GECC, and partners.		The regional exercise was held on 20 May 2026.
Prioritise deployments and secondments for EMO staff.		Maintain the current practice of sector surge deployment when available, evidenced by recent Nelson and interregional Clutha deployments.
Increase communication, shared understanding, and clarity of roles.		EMO is well-positioned to support this recommendation through existing committee forums (e.g. Readiness & Response, Welfare Coordination Group) and integration into upcoming exercises and training. Efforts to embed this into the Group Plan and refresh protocols are already underway.

LEGEND



COMPLETED



IN PROGRESS



NOT STARTED



UNLIKELY TO COMPLETE

Appendix 1

Training Overview

Quarter 4 2025- 2026 (1 April – 30 June 2026)

1. Training and Capability Outcomes

Training delivered during Quarter 4 contributed positively to emergency management capability across Otago districts, with districts reporting increased confidence, competence and preparedness among personnel undertaking Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) functions.

The most visible outcome was the successful application of training during Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite and other operational activities. Central Otago District Council (CODC) reported approximately 350 training attendances before the exercise, supported by strong executive leadership endorsement. Exercise outcomes indicated staff felt more confident undertaking EOC roles than in previous exercises, and the district demonstrated its ability to staff more than two complete EOC shifts, assuring that response operations could be sustained over an extended period.

Across the Coastal districts, participation in D4H, welfare and function-specific training continued to build capability. Feedback from exercising and recent response activity identified improved familiarity with emergency management systems, CIMS processes and functional responsibilities. Waitaki reported increased confidence following both the regional exercise and a recent heavy rain response, while Dunedin and Clutha continued to strengthen capability through training and exercising programmes.

These outcomes align with the objectives of the EMO Training and Capability Development Strategy by supporting the development of a trained workforce capable of performing EOC functions and participating effectively in emergency responses.

While capability outcomes were positive overall, some areas for further development were identified. CODC reported a need to strengthen Planning capability, while Coastal districts highlighted the limited number of qualified Function Managers and personnel progressing through advanced leadership pathways.

2. Training Pathway Progression and Readiness Trends

Training participation during the quarter was strongly influenced by preparation for Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite, which generated high levels of engagement across districts and provided an opportunity to validate capability development activity.

A consistent trend across the region is that personnel engage most readily with practical and function-specific training. Exercises, operational activations and role-based learning opportunities continue to reinforce knowledge gained through formal training and support the development of confidence in response roles.

Districts also reported growth in the size of their response teams and increased participation across elements of the EMO training pathway. This has strengthened the foundation from which future capability can be developed.

Despite this positive progress, readiness challenges remain. Coastal districts reported that they remain below the Group Workplan target of maintaining an 80 percent trained and capable response workforce, while multiple districts identified a limited number of qualified Function Managers and experienced personnel available to fill leadership positions during responses.

The evidence suggests that overall capability is improving; however, continued focus will be required by TAs to support their teams' attaining foundation training completion, leadership development, competency maintenance and succession planning to ensure capability gains are retained over time.

3. Strategic Challenges, Risks and Opportunities

The most significant strategic risk identified across districts is the limited depth of leadership capability within functions. While the number of trained personnel is increasing, several districts reported a shortage of qualified Function Managers and experienced personnel able to undertake key leadership roles. This may reduce organisational resilience during prolonged or complex emergency responses where sustained leadership capacity is required.

A second capability risk relates to Planning functions. CODC identified an opportunity to strengthen planning capability following observations from training and exercising activities. Although not considered a critical deficiency, further development is required to build confidence and proficiency in planning processes and support effective decision-making during extended responses.

Other challenges reported by districts include competing organisational priorities, staff availability, workforce turnover, onboarding requirements for new personnel and maintaining engagement with training programmes over time. Clutha also faces a short-term capability challenge following the resignation of its Emergency Management Advisor; although regional arrangements are in place to support continuity of training delivery during the recruitment process.

Districts have identified several actions to address these risks, including targeted Planning function development, increased opportunities for function-specific and leadership training, strengthening emergency management content within staff induction programmes, identifying future function leaders, and maintaining forward-planned training programmes.

Overall, Quarter 4 demonstrated continued progress in workforce capability and operational readiness across Otago. Training, exercising and operational experience are contributing to increased confidence and preparedness, while the key areas requiring ongoing attention remain leadership depth, succession planning and the continued development of specialist functional capability.

Table 1

Quarter 4		April - June 2026				
Qualified	CDC	CODC	DCC	ORC	QLDC	WDC
% Team Members Qualified	38%	39%	29%	60%	42%	30%
% Function Managers Qualified	33%	31%	5%	50%	55%	0%
% Response Managers Qualified	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
% Recovery Managers Qualified	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
% Controllers Qualified	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
% of Response Team Qualified	39%	40%	28%	61%	44%	30%
<u>Agreed Target Qualified Numbers</u>						
-Team members (42)	28	48	44	27	55	29
	67%	114%	105%	64%	131%	69%
-Function Leads (14)	4	4	1	3	6	0
	29%	29%	7%	21%	43%	0%
-Controllers (4)	4	3	4	4	4	6
	100%	75%	100%	100%	100%	150%

***Note 1:** Table 1 captures Territorial Authority staff only. It does not include Emergency Management Otago staff.

Table Key:

- **Team Member “Foundation Qualified”** – Have completed the four introductory “Foundation Suite” courses comprising the:
 - ‘Integrated Training Framework (ITF) Introduction to Emergency Management’ course
 - ‘Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) Basics’ course
 - ‘D4H – Part 1’ course
 - ‘D4H – Part 2’ course

“Foundation Qualified” indicates a team member has covered the minimum level of knowledge to understand the basics of how an emergency response works under the Coordinated Incident Management System. It does not measure their competency within their designated function.

- **Function Manager “Foundation Qualified”** – Have previously gained “Foundation Qualified Team Member” and completed the three Function Manager Foundation courses comprising the:
 - ‘Coordinated Incident Management (CIMS) 4’ course
 - ‘Function Leadership’ course
 - Their relevant ‘1-Day Function’ course
- **Controllers** – The Joint Committee endorses controllers. Qualifications and training requirements are still under review. However, they do need a sound grounding in ‘CIMS’ and competency with D4H.

Appendix 2

The Community Resilience Strategy applies to the Otago CDEM Group 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.

The Strategy focuses on four (4) objectives:

1. Creating Awareness
2. Increasing Connectedness
3. Building Capability
4. Enabling and Empowering

The Otago CDEM Group responsibilities in this area are defined in CDEM Act 2002, The Otago Group Plan 2018-28 (The Plan) and The National Disaster Resilience Strategy (NDRS).

The strategy is not proposing to be a 'one size fits all' approach to community resilience and community response groups, but rather a framework with relevant elements that councils and communities can utilise under a common set of principles with shared goals and outcomes.

Community Engagement Activities

District	Activity	Aware	Connect	Enable	Capable
Dunedin City	Festival of Ageing Expo				
	Silver Fern Farms				
	Brooklands Retirement Village				
	Enliven Mosgiel				
	Chatsford Lifestyle Village				
Central Otago	Wanaka 4 Square				
	Clued Up Kids				

District	Activity	Aware	Connect	Enable	Capable
	Grey Power				
	Salvation Army Coffee Group				
Queenstown Lakes	LaRGe Conference				
	Clued Up Kids				
	Massey University EM Students				
	Queenstown Family Trust				
	Leisurely walking group				
	Wanaka Interagency meeting				
	Kingston CRG Open Day				
Clutha	Clutha Health First				

Community engagement activities (1 April – 30 June 2026)**Dunedin City (Total Attendees:161)**

Dunedin City team hosted retirement village residents and staff, manned a stall at the Older Persons expo and provided preparedness advice to the public and engaged with Silver Ferns Farms to provide an overview of the work EMO does.

Central Otago District (Total Attendees: 212)

The final Clued Up Kids session was held with over 150 school children in attendance, the team delivered preparedness and business continuity activities to Grey Power and Salvation Army making up the bulk of other engagements.

Queenstown-Lakes District (Total Attendees 170:)

QLDC team delivered an AF8 preparedness talk undertaken with a local walking group, co presented with ORC Natural Hazards team at the LaRGe Conference and accompanied Massey University EM students on a field trip to Glenorchy.

Clutha District (Total Attendees: 10)

Clutha delivered business continuity planning to the Clutha Health First team.

Appendix 3

Community Resilience Groups

Community Resilience Group activities (1 April – 30 June 2026)

Each district is active in building community resilience through coordinated emergency planning, preparedness training, and local resource management. Here is a brief summary for each district based on recent CRG activities:

Central Otago District

Training was undertaken with the Maniototo basin (Ranfurly, Waipiata and Kyeburn) and Roxburgh groups on radio operation.

An initial meeting to start a Clyde/Earnscliffe West Group was held in June.

The Cromwell group planned future training.

Clutha District

The Clinton and Waipahi and Taieri Mouth groups have now undertaken all the required training set out in the strategy and are classified as “operational”.

AN initial meeting to form the Milton group was held in June.

Dunedin City

An initial meeting for the Karitane group in June also linked the group to the Puketeraki Marae.

The Waikouaiti group held a session on hazards, supported by the ORC Natural Hazards team. The Natural Hazards team also supported a hazards session for the newly formed Tomahawk/Ocean Grove group.

An initial public meeting to build the Waitati group was held in April with significant interest. Similarly, a meeting to re-invigorate the Outram group was held in June.

The Mosgiel-Taieri group held a tabletop exercise aligned to the regional exercise.

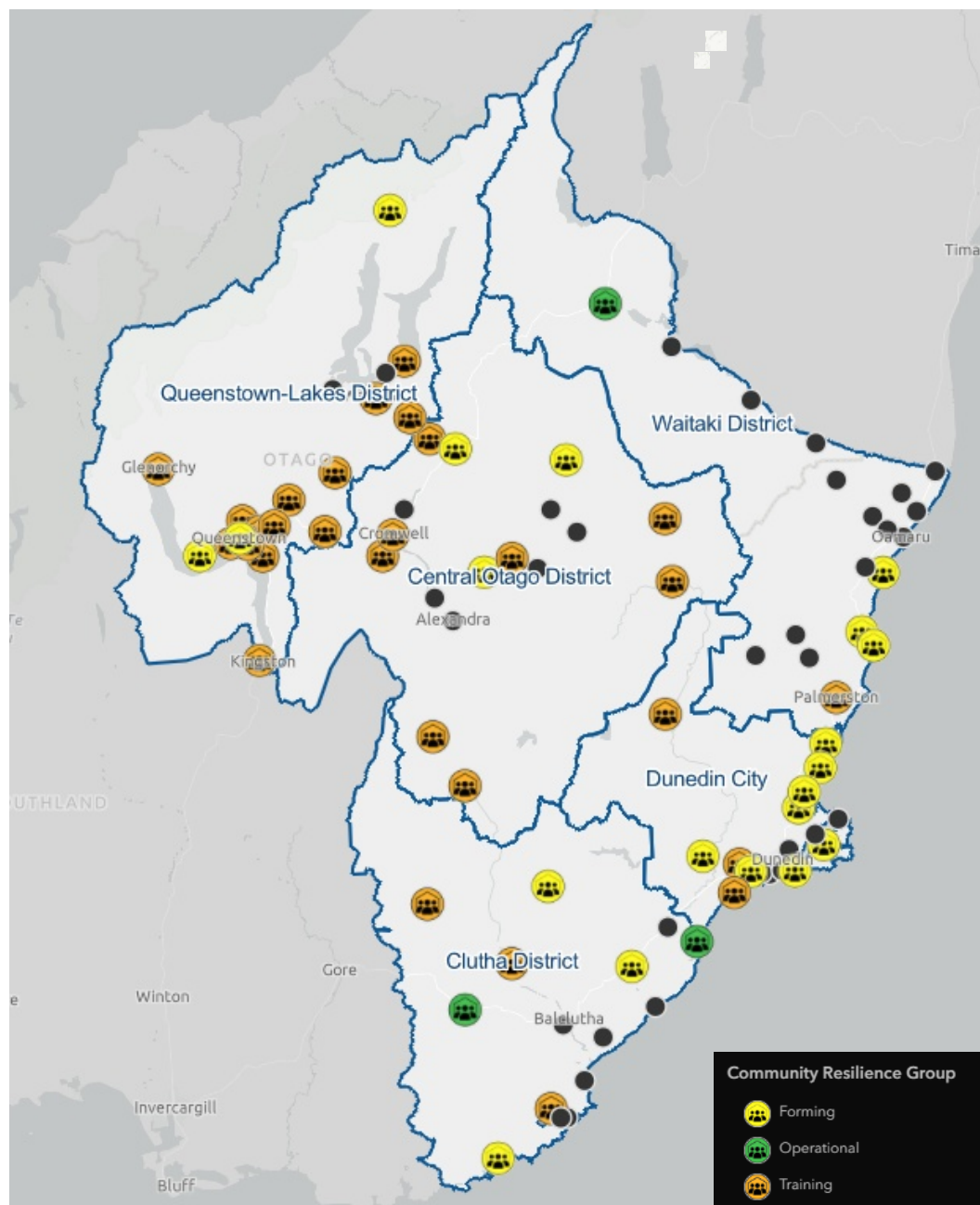
Queenstown-Lakes District

The Frankton group undertook three training sessions looking at the area’s hazards and status reporting. Kingston and Arthurs Point also undertook status reporting training as well as hub operations. Arrowtown received training on radio communications as well as undertaking a tabletop exercise. Wanaka had an operational exercise setting up the hub as well as dealing with the impacts of an Alpine Fault earthquake.

Waitaki District

The Omarama group has now undertaken all the required training set out in the strategy and is classified as “operational”.

Community Resilience Groups in Otago



Community Resilience Groups in Otago – Operational Capacity

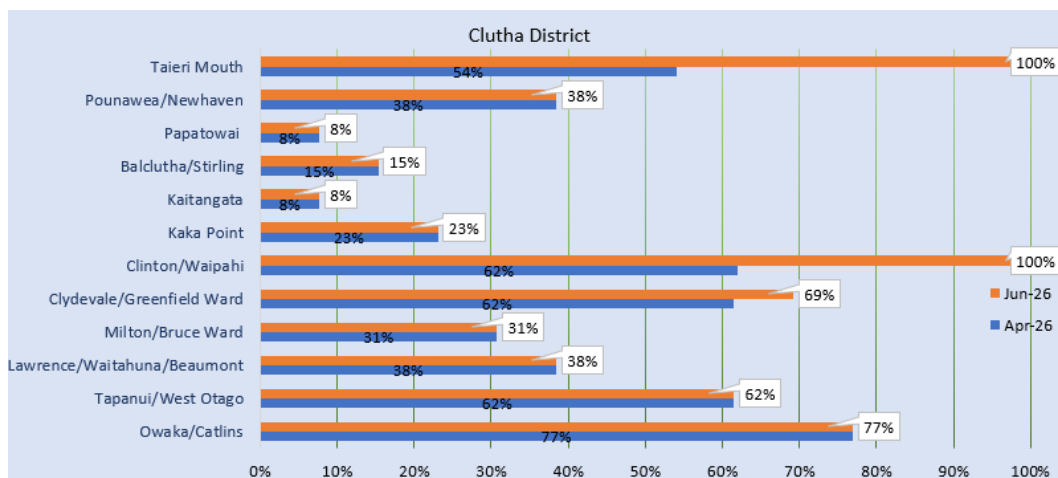
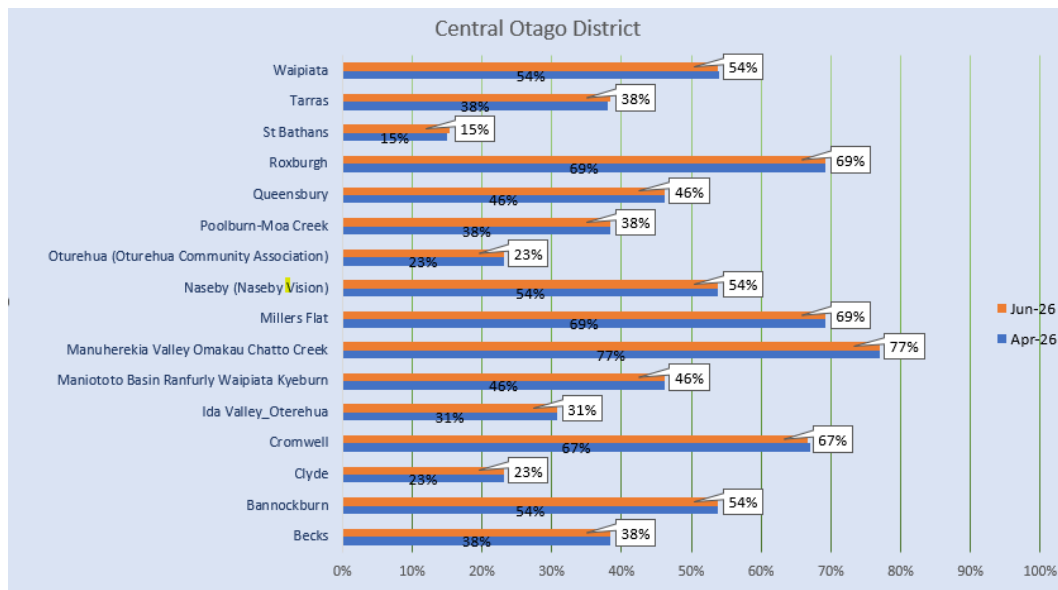
The map of Community Resilience Groups shows the location of the groups. The three categories of groups (Forming, Training, and Operational) are based on the stage of development as per the Otago Community Resilience Strategy.

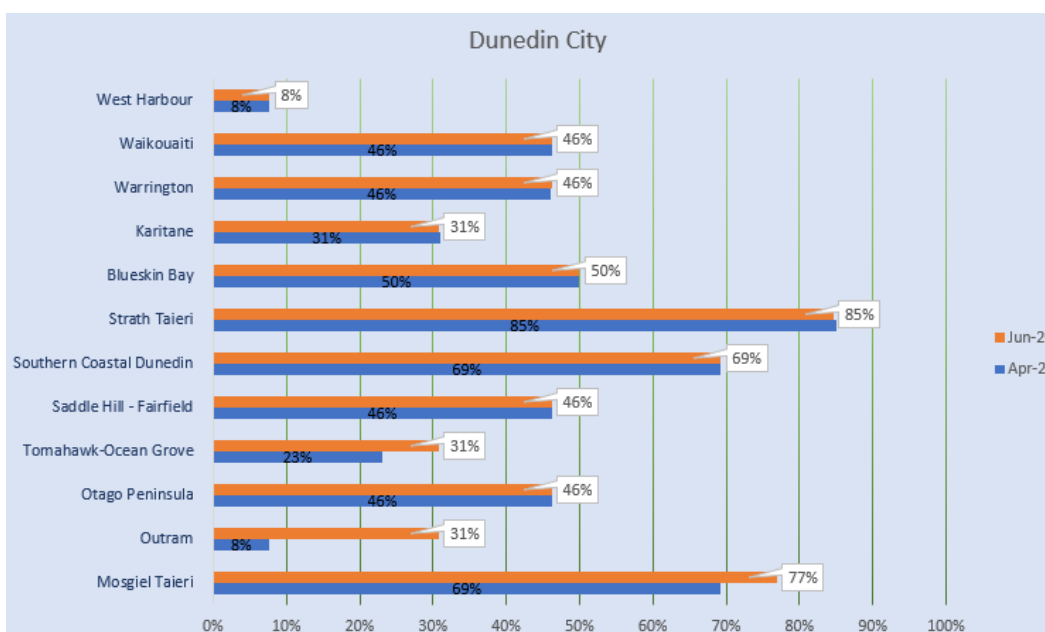
The black dots on the map are locations where community engagement activity is being planned or at a pre-forming stage of Community Resilience Group development. They can also represent

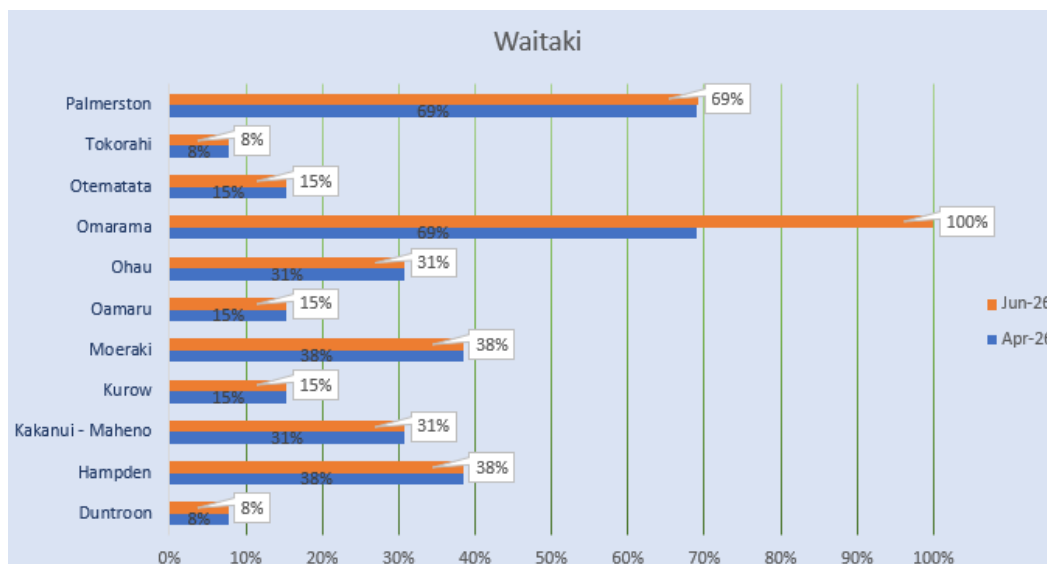
known pre-existing groups that are in the process of being connected as Community Resilience Groups have established relationships with district Emergency Operation Centres but fall outside of the Strategy.

As the Health and Safety Training module is delivered, many more groups will soon be able to be listed as fully operational.

It is worth noting that some of these groups are long-standing, functional, connected to the respective EOC, and well familiar with activating during emergencies, regardless of the relative level as described in the strategy.







7.4. Finance Report

Prepared for: Otago Emergency Management Committee
Report No. CDEM2648
Activity: Emergency Management Otago
Author: Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago)
Endorsed by: Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago)
Date: 18 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] This report provides an updated overview to the Emergency Management Committee of financial performance for the period from July 2025 to June 2026. It includes actuals against budget, identifies key variances, and updates the previously reported position to reflect year to date data.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] As of June 2026, the CDEM Group is reporting a year-to-date operating surplus of \$177,000.

Revenue

- [3] Total revenue is \$4,028m YTD, which is \$27,000 favourable to the budget. This is driven by:
- Rates revenue of \$4,014m, \$14,000 above budget; and
 - Other revenue (TEC Fund) of \$13,000

Expenditure

- [4] Total operating expenditure is \$3,871m YTD, which is \$129,000 favourable to the budget overall. This net underspend occurs despite overspends in two key lines:
- Employee benefit expenses are \$2,371 YTD, which is \$208,000 overspent against budget. This includes \$63,000 for unbudgeted staff time for last year's severe weather event.
 - Depreciation & amortisation is \$55,000 YTD, which is \$37,000 overspent against budget.
- [5] These overspends are more than offset by:
- Other expenses of \$444,000 YTD, which is \$129,000 underspent against budget; and
 - Internal charges/recoveries are \$1,000,000 YTD, which is \$168,000 favourable to budget (i.e., lower than budget) due to staff vacancies through the year.

Forecast

[6] The full-year forecast indicates a surplus of \$32,000; this is within 1% of allocated budget.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Otago Emergency Management Committee:

1) **Notes** this report.

BACKGROUND

[7] Emergency Management Otago operates under a shared service agreement to deliver regional civil defence and emergency management functions. Sound financial oversight supports the delivery of core services, resilience initiatives, and emergency readiness.

DISCUSSION

Finance (July 25 – June 26)					
		Actual YTD (000)	Budget YTD (000)	Variance (000)	Full Year Budget
Income	Targeted Rate	4,014	4,000	14	4,000
	TEC Fund	14	-	14	14
Total Revenue		4,028	4,000	28	4,028
Expenditure (Direct Costs)	Depreciation	55	19	(37)	19
	Staff Time / Expenses	2,371	2,162	(208)	2,162
	Internal Charges	1,000	1,168	168	1,041
	Operations	444	651	207	651
Total Operating Expenditure		3,871	4,000	129	4,000
Surplus/(Deficit)		177		177	32

Table 1: Year-to-date (July – June) financial consolidation.

CONSIDERATIONS**Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations**

[8] No matters arising.

Financial Considerations

[9] No matters arising.

Significance and Engagement

[10] No matters arising.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

[11] No matters arising.

Climate Change Considerations

[12] No matters arising.

Communications Considerations

[13] No matters arising.

NEXT STEPS

[14] N/A.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.5. Regional Exposure Study and Prioritisation Framework

Prepared for: Otago Emergency Management Committee
Report No. CDEM2649
Activity: Emergency Management Otago
Author: Tim van Woerden (Senior Natural Hazards Analyst)
Jean-Luc Payan (Manager Natural Hazards)
Endorsed by: Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago)
Date: 18 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] To update on the development and key findings of the Otago Regional Council natural hazard team's Otago region natural hazards exposure and prioritisation work programme and highlight the alignment between this work and the new functions for local government emergency management described in the Emergency Management Act 2026. These functions include a greater focus on leading the identifying and assessing hazards and risks and consulting and communicating with communities about those hazards and risks.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] In 2025 and 2026, the Otago Regional Council (ORC) Natural Hazards team have completed a natural hazards exposure analysis and a prioritisation assessment, carried out as part of a wider programme aiming to work towards a comprehensive, regional-scale, spatial understanding of Otago's natural hazards and risks.
- [3] The natural hazard exposure and prioritisation information and assessment outputs were primarily intended to be used as a project planning tool for the ORC Natural Hazards team, to assist with allowing ORC to systematically identify and define key projects and allocation of work within the overall Natural Hazards work programme.
- [4] The natural hazards exposure analysis and prioritisation approaches and findings can also be used and adapted, as a key step to supporting the hazards and risk management objectives of Emergency Management Otago (EMO), with responsibilities to identify, assess and manage natural hazards.
- [5] The ORC Natural Hazards team and Emergency Management Otago have a very strong alignment and a shared purpose in relation to management of natural hazards and risks. The Emergency Management Act 2026 strengthens and clarifies the responsibilities of EMO, and in order for EMO to fulfil those responsibilities, the already close working relationship between the ORC Natural Hazards team and EMO may need to become even more closely interlinked.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Otago Emergency Management Committee:

- 1) **Notes** this report.

BACKGROUND

- [6] The ORC Natural Hazards team have completed a natural hazards exposure analysis¹ and a prioritisation assessment,² carried out as part of a wider programme aiming to work towards a comprehensive, regional-scale, spatial understanding of Otago's natural hazards and risks. The background to the work programme is outlined in papers presented to the ORC Safety and Resilience committee in May 2023³ and November 2024.⁴
- [7] The natural hazard exposure and prioritisation information and assessment outputs were primarily intended to be used as a project planning tool for the ORC Natural Hazards team, to assist with allowing ORC to systematically identify and define key projects and allocation of work within the overall Natural Hazards work programme.
- [8] A well-defined proactive approach for prioritisation reduces the need for reactive or ad-hoc decision-making. This approach also adds transparency into decision-making processes as the prioritisation approach used is openly available, and the inputs into the resulting outcomes are clearly visible.
- [9] The prioritisation outputs are supporting the development of ORC's Natural Hazards work programme through the upcoming Long-Term Plan development process (LTP 2027-2037), by identification of higher priority locations, and recommendation of a natural hazards response for those locations.
- [10] In July 2026, an update on the natural hazards prioritisation work programme was presented to Council, who endorsed the use of natural hazards prioritisation findings as a basis for ORC Natural Hazards planning for the 2027-2037 LTP. The Natural Hazards team are in the process of developing our preliminary LTP work programme and have commenced engagement with the Otago territorial authorities on this programme.
- [11] Location-specific work programmes for these identified higher priority locations will form only one part of the overall ORC natural hazards work programme – it does not mean these will be ORC's sole area of focus in the coming years. Work will also continue in parallel on many other natural hazards projects, for example ongoing activities for existing hazard management and adaptation programmes, review and updates to ORC's regional-scale natural hazards datasets, flood response, and communication of natural hazards and risk information.

¹ van Woerden T and Welsh A, 2025. [Otago Region Natural Hazards Exposure Analysis](#). May 2025.

² van Woerden T, Welsh A and Payan J, 2026. [Natural Hazard Prioritisation](#). Report S&R2617 to Otago Regional Council, 29 July 2026.

³ van Woerden T, 2023. [Otago Region Natural Hazards Risk Assessment](#). Report to the Otago Regional Council Safety and Resilience Committee, 10 May 2023.

⁴ van Woerden T, Welsh A and Payan J, 2024. [Otago Region Natural Hazards Prioritisation](#). Report HAZ2405 presented to the Otago Regional council Safety and Resilience Committee, 7 November 2024.

- [12] This paper presents a summary of the Otago natural hazards exposure analysis and prioritisation framework and their key findings, and demonstrates how this information supports ORC and EMO work in hazard and risk management.

ALIGNMENT WITH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- [13] The natural hazards prioritisation assessment was undertaken for the specific purpose of informing development of ORC Natural Hazards LTP. The assessment approach, key input datasets and overall findings also have value for other key stakeholders, including EMO.
- [14] The ORC Natural Hazards team has had regular engagement with EMO throughout the process of undertaking the natural hazards exposure assessment and prioritisation programme, in order to keep them updated, and allow for input regarding the scope and direction of the programme.
- [15] The natural hazards exposure analysis and prioritisation approach can be used and adapted, as a key step to supporting the hazards and risk management objectives of EMO. However, it is expected the approach will require some adjustment to fit any new purpose, as it cannot be picked up and used 'as-is' without confirming its suitability for that purpose.
- [16] ORC and EMO responsibilities are outlined in the partnership agreement between the CDEM Group, ORC and the Otago territorial authorities. These responsibilities are also presented in the new Emergency Management Act 2026.
- [17] Common threads in both the partnership agreement and EM Act are the need to identify, assess and manage natural hazards.
- [18] The natural hazards exposure analysis and prioritisation approach developed by ORC enables a systematic approach to hazard identification, and to assessing the relative prioritisation for planning of natural hazard management activities. This information can be applied to LTP and EMO Group Plan preparation, and is a key step towards achieving an evidence-based approach for work planning and decision-making.

Partnership agreement

- [19] The natural hazards prioritisation work programme has a strong alignment with the responsibilities specified in the 'Hazard and Risk Management' section of the Otago Civil Defence and Emergency Management Partnership Agreement.
- [20] These responsibilities are stated in the partnership agreement as;
"In relation to relevant hazards and risks: identify, assess, and manage those hazards and risks; consult and communicate about risks; identify and implement cost-effective risk reduction. Identification of the hazards and risks in a Group area that may result in an emergency that requires national-level support and co-ordination."

Emergency Management Act 2026

- [21] There is also a strong alignment with the Emergency Management Act, where responsibilities in relation to managing hazards and risks are listed in Table 1.

- [22] The natural hazards exposure analysis and prioritisation information assists with identification of natural hazards and risks and is one input towards management of those risks.

Table 1: Responsibilities in relation to managing hazards and risks under proposed Emergency Management Act 2026.

Local authorities	Emergency Management Committee
• <i>Identify</i> and assess hazards and risks. • <i>Report</i> to the committee on the assessment of hazards and risks. • <i>Manage</i> hazards and risks. • Identify how to <i>reduce risks</i> and implement cost-effective risk reduction. • <i>Consult and communicate</i> with communities about those hazards and risks.	• <i>Take the lead</i> in identifying and assessing those hazards and risks. • <i>Co-ordinate</i> the management of those hazards and risks. • <i>Identify</i> and implement cost-effective risk reduction. • <i>Assist</i> each local authority member of the Committee to identify, assess, consult and communicate with the communities about those hazards and risks.

NATURAL HAZARDS EXPOSURE ANALYSIS

- [23] In 2025, ORC completed an analysis of natural hazard exposure for the region, where “exposure” is the people, infrastructure, buildings, the economy, and other assets that are exposed to a hazard. Analysis was completed for nine natural hazard types where region or district-wide hazard mapping coverage was available, and the exposure analysis was then updated in 2026 to include four additional natural hazards datasets.
- [24] The analysis provides a stocktake and baseline of the current understanding of natural hazard exposure for the region and was a first iteration of analysis to quantify and map natural hazards exposure in Otago at a regional scale. The exposure analysis was presented as a technical report¹, a summary committee report², and an interactive online map portal³.
- [25] Two tables presenting a high-level summary of natural hazards exposure results are included here, as examples of the type of findings which can be generated through this analysis.
- Table 2 is a summary of natural hazard exposure in the region for each hazard type considered.
 - Table 3 identifies the ‘Top 10’ urban areas or rural settlements with highest exposure (by population count) for each natural hazard type.

¹ van Woerden T and Welsh A, 2025. [Otago Region Natural Hazards Exposure Analysis](#). May 2025.

² van Woerden T, Welsh A and Payan J, 2025. [Otago Region Natural Hazards Exposure](#). Report HAZ2503 presented to the Otago Regional council Safety and Resilience Committee, 4 June 2025.

³ [Otago Region Natural Hazards Exposure Analysis Map Viewer](#).

Table 2: Natural hazards exposure summary for the Otago Region, showing the estimated count and percentage of those elements within Otago potentially exposed to impact from the named natural hazard types. Results are those presented in ORC's 2025 exposure analysis, with the addition of coastal erosion from the 2026 update.

<i>Hazard type</i>	<i>Population exposed</i>		<i>Buildings exposed</i>				<i>Critical Community Facilities (CCF)</i>		<i>Count of community areas in each exposure class</i>					<i>Count of community areas in region</i>
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent of population in region</i>	<i>Count (all buildings)</i>	<i>Percent of total buildings in region</i>	<i>Count (Dwellings)</i>	<i>Percent of total dwellings in region</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent of total CCF in region</i>	<i>Very Low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Very High</i>	
River and lake flooding	38,778	16.1	33,898	16.1	12,776	14.4	23	25.6	121	26	45	99	60	351
Liquefaction	46,047	19.1	43,029	20.4	17,459	19.7	37	41.1	142	18	45	68	78	351
Active Faults	21,949	9.1	20,096	9.5	8,371	9.4	10	11.1	203	19	21	68	40	351
Landslide	8,038	3.3	6,592	3.1	2,844	3.2	3	3.3	225	14	51	41	20	351
Alluvial fan	5,473	2.3	5,904	2.8	1,996	2.3	3	3.3	272	10	18	38	13	351
Coastal Erosion	2,457	1.0	2,942	1.4	1,225	1.3	2	2.2	309	9	7	16	10	351
Rockfall	1,234	0.5	1,056	0.5	377	0.4	0	0	290	14	29	14	4	351
Tsunami	504	0.2	1,130	0.5	266	0.3	0	0	327	4	7	12	1	351
Storm surge	504	0.2	1,122	0.5	230	0.3	0	0	325	7	8	10	1	351

Table 3: Natural hazards exposure summary for the Otago Region, showing the ‘Top 10’ urban areas or rural settlements with highest exposure for each hazard type, identified and ordered by the estimated population exposed to the hazard within that urban area/settlement. The population exposed within each urban area/settlement is indicated by the cell shading (see legend). Results are those presented in ORC’s 2025 exposure analysis, with the addition of coastal erosion from the 2026 update.

<i>Hazard type</i>									<i>Legend</i>
<i>River and lake flooding</i>	<i>Liquefaction</i>	<i>Active Faults</i>	<i>Landslide</i>	<i>Alluvial fan</i>	<i>Coastal erosion</i>	<i>Rockfall</i>	<i>Tsunami</i>	<i>Storm surge</i>	<i>Population exposed</i>
Mosgiel	Dunedin	Dunedin	Dunedin	Queenstown	Dunedin	Queenstown	Pounawea	Dunedin	>5,000
Dunedin	Mosgiel	Mosgiel	Wanaka	Dunedin	Harwood	Dunedin	Taieri Mouth	Waikouaiti	1000-5000
Oamaru	Wanaka	Alexandra	Warrington	Wanaka	Otakou-Harington Point	Arrowtown	Purakaunui	Purakaunui	500-1000
Queenstown	Queenstown	Wanaka	Queenstown	Roxburgh	Karitane	Wanaka	Brighton	Pounawea	100-500
Balclutha	Milton	Lake Hawea	Mosgiel	Palmerston	Kaka Point	Roxburgh	Waikouaiti	Taieri Mouth	20-100
Outram	Balclutha	Roxburgh	Moeraki	Waikouaiti	Pounawea	Aramoana	Karitane	Waitati-Doctors Point	≤20
Milton	Outram	Kaitangata	Roxburgh	Glenorchy	Brighton	Purakaunui	Waitati-Doctors Point	Brighton	
Luggate	Kingston	Waihola	Brighton	Arrowtown	Waikouaiti	Lake Roxburgh	Kaka Point	Karitane	
Glenorchy	Glenorchy	Allanton	Karitane	Kingston	Waitati-Doctors Point	Oamaru	Kaitangata	Kakanui	
Waihola	Brighton	Queenstown	Waitati-Doctors Point	Harington Point	Taieri Mouth	Moeraki	Kakanui	Moeraki	

NATURAL HAZARDS PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK

- [26] The ORC Natural Hazards prioritisation approach is summarised in Figure 1. This approach defines three priority groupings (higher, medium and lower), each with a recommended actions for natural hazard management.
- [27] The prioritisation process and methods are presented in more detail in the 29 July 2026 Council paper, and its appended technical report, *Otago Region Natural Hazards Prioritisation Method*.⁸
- [28] The three primary classification factors informing the prioritisation are:
- Level of natural hazard exposure,
 - History of natural hazard impacts, and
 - Whether any hazard management or adaptation work programme has already been completed.
- [29] These factors were used only as a starting point for priority classification, and some judgment has been applied based on review of all knowledge and context for a particular location, which may also include:
- a. The type, scale, and characteristics and likelihood of natural hazards exposures, with consideration of:
 - The potential for multi-hazard impacts, or cascading natural hazard events,
 - Anticipated timing of future natural hazards exposure (e.g. for events driven by sea level rise),
 - The confidence/uncertainty and level of detail in the natural hazards' information supporting assessments of natural hazard exposure.
 - b. The type, scale, severity and frequency of the known previous natural hazard event impacts, and information on how they directly impacted the affected community, and any wider or indirect impacts caused by these events.
 - c. The secondary assessment factors assessed:
 - Exposure of community vulnerabilities, such as schools or rest homes.
 - Consideration of 'enabling factors' such as potential for opportunities for collaboration (e.g. with territorial authorities), or to inform land-use planning processes.
- [30] This prioritisation approach and criteria are intended to assist with identification of locations where a new hazard management or adaptation work programme may be required. This assessment is aiming to identify where else a new natural hazards work programme is most needed, beyond the current or in-progress natural hazard management or adaptation work programs in the region; i.e. where are the locations of currently less-managed, poorly-known, natural hazard risks, which have higher exposure and are anticipated to again impact these communities in future?

⁸ van Woerden T and Welsh A, 2026. Otago Region Natural Hazards Prioritisation Method. Appendix 1 of ORC Council Report S&R2617, [Natural Hazard Prioritisation](#), 29 July 2026.

- [31] This approach therefore classifies as a relatively lower priority those locations which have already had significant investment in improving hazard risk understanding and in hazard management or adaptation planning (e.g. Taieri Plains, Roxburgh, Lindsay Creek, Glenorchy). In these locations, the natural hazard risks are generally clearly identified and better understood, and the work programmes are more well-established.
- [32] In addition to the prioritisation outcomes, there is also a high value in the significant amount of natural hazards information has been compiled for use in the prioritisation analysis, this has included:
- Updating of ORC's previous (2025) natural hazard exposure analysis with inclusion of four additional natural hazard datasets.
 - Completion of natural hazard exposure screening to identify communities where vulnerable populations (schools, early childhood education, hospitals and rest homes) may be exposed to potential natural hazard impact.
 - Documentation of all locations in the region where location-specific natural hazards management or adaptation work programmes have been undertaken. This information was previously piecemeal among many sources and had not been compiled into a single document.
 - Compilation of existing ORC information and news media to summarise the location and type of past natural hazards impacts in the region.
 - Review of the Natural Hazards Commission⁹ damage claim records for the Otago region, this dataset comprises >5,000 settled damage claims, dating from the late 1990s to mid-2025. This review has included assessment of the type, spatial distribution and timing of claims for natural hazards damages.

⁹ NHC, formerly the Earthquake Commission (EQC).

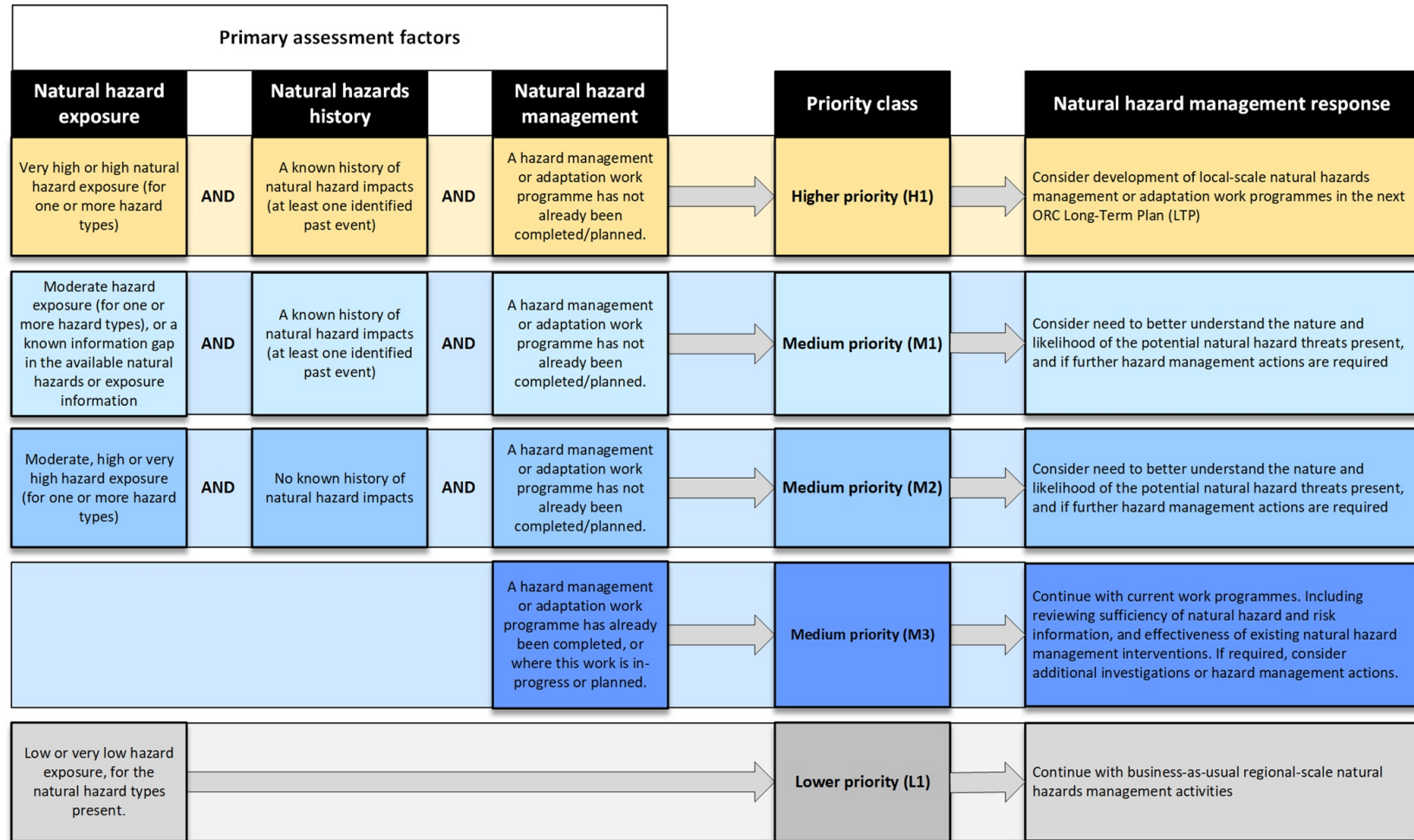


Figure 1: Definition criteria and process for natural hazards priority classification, and the type of response recommended for each priority class.

NATURAL HAZARD MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

- [33] A generalised natural hazards response has been recommended for locations within each priority class, which will help inform the development of a location-specific workplan for each location.

Higher priority locations

- [34] Higher priority locations are recommended for consideration as locations for development of local-scale natural hazards management or adaptation work programmes during the development of the next ORC Long-Term Plan (LTP) for 2027-2037.

Medium priority locations (priority class M1 and M2)

- [35] For locations with an M1 and M2 priority class, the development of a comprehensive natural hazards management or adaptation work programme is not necessarily required. However, further natural hazard investigation may be required to better understand the nature and likelihood of the potential natural hazard threats present, and determine if these are plausible natural hazard risks which will require management actions to reduce risk levels. These investigations will be considered in the ORC Long-Term Plan (LTP) for 2027-2037.

Medium priority locations (priority class M3)

- [36] For locations with an M3 priority class, a substantial amount of natural hazard management or adaptation has generally already been undertaken, and include many of the larger-scale and higher-profile natural hazards risks in the region. For these locations, the key actions which may be required are to:
- Continue with implementation of existing natural hazard management or adaptation work programmes, such as maintenance of flood protection infrastructure, civil defence preparedness and response planning, and integration of natural hazards considerations into land use planning frameworks.
 - Review the effectiveness of existing natural hazard management interventions and determine if additional natural hazard mitigation is required beyond the scope of the completed or in-progress work programme.
 - Identify any information gaps which should be addressed, and carry out further assessments to improve natural hazards and risk understanding, as required.

Lower priority locations (priority class L1)

- [37] For locations in the lower-priority class, no new hazards management activities are recommended, but ORC should continue with their business-as-usual regional-scale natural hazards management activities, such as:
- Environmental monitoring for rainfall and river flows.
 - Collaboration with Emergency Management Otago for communication of weather forecasting information, natural hazards preparedness and response advice.
 - Maintaining and making updates to ORC's regional-scale natural hazard mapping datasets.
 - Making natural hazards publicly available through the ORC Natural Hazards Portal.
 - Responding to public enquiries regarding natural hazards information.

NATURAL HAZARDS PRIORITISATION OUTCOMES

- [38] The spatial long-list for the prioritisation exercise comprises a total of 52 locations, developed from the region's urban centres and rural settlements. Each of these long-list locations has been assigned a priority classification following the criteria in Figure 1, and the resulting classifications are shown in Table 4 and Figure 2.
- [39] Nine locations are identified as 'higher priority' and therefore recommended for consideration in the next ORC Long-Term Plan (LTP 2027-2037) for development of local-scale natural hazards management or adaptation work programmes.
- [40] A number of local-scale natural hazards management or adaptation work programmes will also be proposed for selected 'medium' priority locations, where there is an identified need for those activities.
- [41] In addition to these location-specific natural hazards programmes, region-wide natural hazards assessments will also contribute to an improved information base more broadly across the region. Within the proposed LTP work programme these are anticipated to include review and updating of regional-scale flood hazard information, assessments for coastal tsunami, coastal inundation (storm surge), landslide and wildfire hazards.

Table 4: The 52 long-list locations classified by priority for flooding, coastal and debris flow hazards. Dunedin City landslide hazards are also identified as a high priority, but for a collective grouping of long-list locations in the city area (see Table 4).

Priority class	Central Otago (11)	Clutha (9)	Dunedin City (15)	Queenstown Lakes (10)	Waitaki (7)
Higher	Omakau	Lawrence Pounawea	Harwood and Otakou- Harington Point Karitane Purakaunui Waikouaiti Waitati-Doctors Point	-	-
Medium (M1 or M2)	Clyde Cromwell and Bannockburn Ettrick Naseby Millers Flat Pisa Moorings	Kaka Point Owaka Taieri Mouth	Aramoana Brighton Dunedin (Kaikorai) Dunedin (Peninsula) Dunedin (West Harbour) Warrington	Arrowtown and Millbrook Hawea Flat Lake Hawea Luggate	Hampden Kakanui Maheno
Medium (M3)	Alexandra Roxburgh	Clutha Delta Milton	Dunedin (Leith) Dunedin (South Dunedin) Middlemarch Taieri Plains	Glenorchy Kingston Queenstown (Central) Queenstown (Frankton) Queenstown (Remarkables) Wanaka	Moeraki Oamaru Palmerston
Lower	Lake Roxburgh Village Ranfurly	Clinton Tapanui	-	-	Herbert

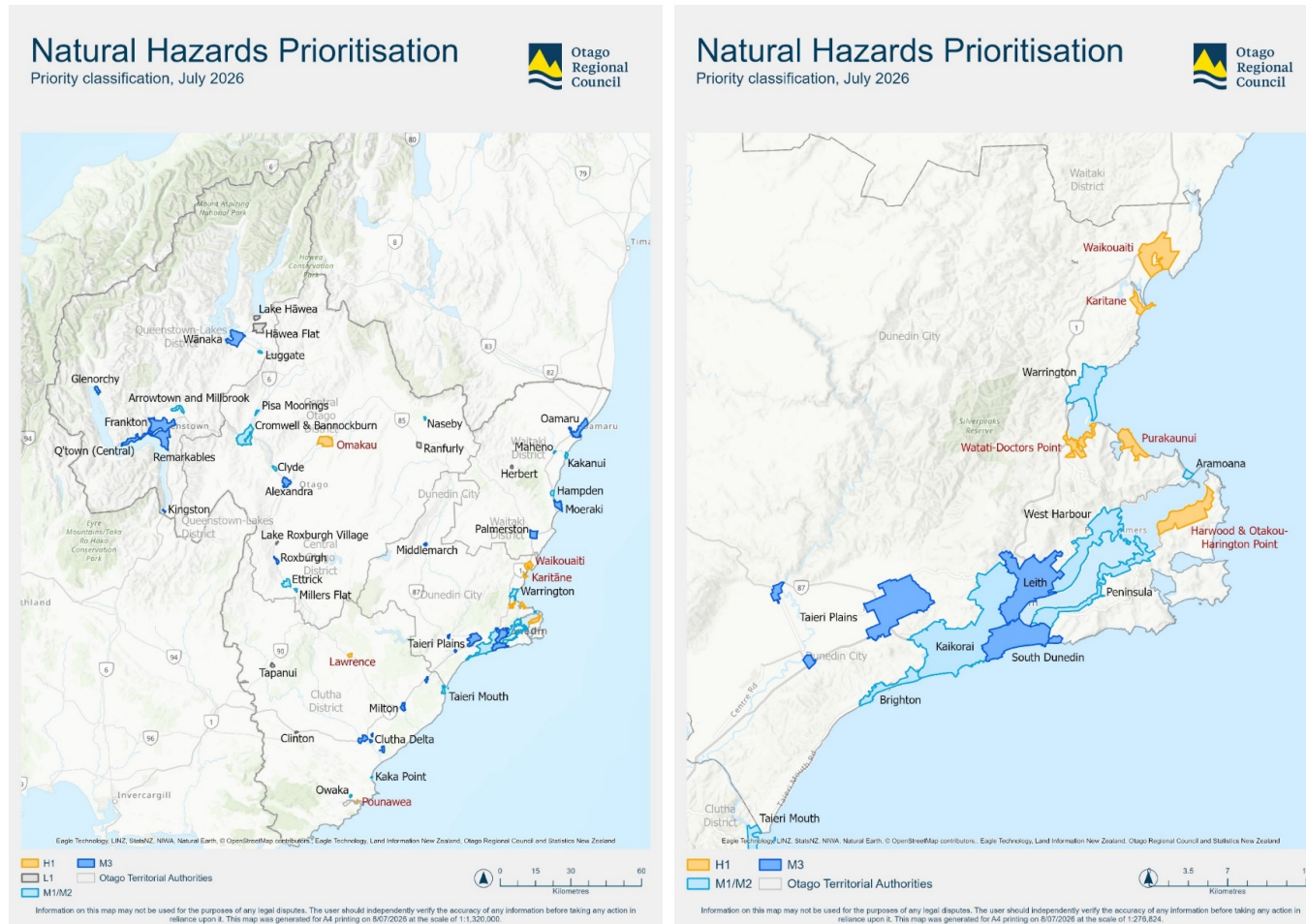


Figure 2: The 52 long-list locations classified by priority for flooding, coastal and debris flow hazards. Dunedin City landslide hazards are also identified as a higher priority, but for a collective grouping of long-list locations in the city area.

- [42] Another key outcome for this prioritisation was identification of the known location-specific natural hazard management, adaptation, or flood protection work programmes in the region, listed in Table 5.
- [43] These locations have been classified as medium (M3) priority, with recommended actions to review the effectiveness of existing natural hazard management interventions, identify any information gaps, and (if needed) carry out further assessments to improve natural hazards and risk understanding, or implementation of additional hazard management interventions.

Table 5: Natural hazard management, adaptation or flood protection work programmes led by ORC or an Otago territorial authority.

Location	Programme status	Reference
Hazard management or adaptation (ORC-led)		
Milton and Tokomairiro Plain (Milton 2060)	Completed	ORC and CDC, 2012. Milton 2060: Flood Risk Management Strategy for Milton and the Tokomairiro Plain
Lake Wanaka community	Completed	ORC and QLDC, 2006. Learning to Live with Flooding: A Flood Risk Management Strategy for the communities of Lakes Wakatipu and Wanaka
Lake Wakatipu communities (Queenstown, Kingston and Glenorchy)	Completed	ORC and QLDC, 2006. Learning to Live with Flooding: A Flood Risk Management Strategy for the communities of Lakes Wakatipu and Wanaka
Head of Lake Whakatipu	Completed	ORC, 2025. Head of Lake Whakatipu Natural Hazards Adaptation Strategy
Teviot Valley, including Roxburgh	Ongoing	Debris flood hazard in Roxburgh
Clutha Delta, including Balclutha and Kaitangata	Ongoing	Clutha Delta Natural Hazards Adaptation
South Dunedin	Ongoing	South Dunedin Future
Middlemarch	Ongoing	Middlemarch flood risks and interventions
Oamaru (Muddy Creek)	Ongoing	Muddy Creek Flood Study
Palmerston	Ongoing	Palmerston flood hazard investigation
Lindsay Creek	Ongoing	ORC, 2024. North East Valley Flood Risk Mitigation
TA-led hazard management, or land-use plan with a natural hazards consideration		
Gorge Road (Brewery Creek and Reavers Lane), Queenstown	Completed	Brewery Creek and Reavers Lane natural hazards (QLDC)
Southern Corridor (Jacks Point area)	Completed	Te Tapuae Southern Corridor Structure Plan (QLDC)
Frankton	Ongoing	Frankton Structure Plan (QLDC)
Wanaka	Ongoing	Wanaka Structure Plan (QLDC)
Moeraki	Ongoing	Moeraki land instability overlay and geotechnical rules in the Natural Hazards chapter of the draft district plan (WDC)

ORC Flood Protection and Drainage Schemes		
Alexandra	Ongoing	Alexandra Flood Protection Scheme
Clutha Delta	Ongoing	Lower Clutha Flood Protection and Drainage Scheme
Water of Leith	Ongoing	Leith Flood Protection Scheme
Taieri Plain	Ongoing	Lower Taieri Flood Protection Scheme , East Taieri Drainage Scheme and West Taieri Drainage Scheme
Tokomairiro Plain	Ongoing	Tokomairiro Drainage Scheme
West Wanaka	Ongoing	Stoney Creek Flood Protection Scheme
Waitaki Plain	Ongoing	Lower Waitaki River Control Scheme

DISCUSSION

- [44] The ORC Natural Hazards team and Emergency Management Otago have a very strong alignment and a shared purpose in relation to management of natural hazards and risks. The ORC Natural Hazards team also provides support and advice for other internal ORC teams (e.g. Engineering, Policy) and the Otago territorial authorities.
- [45] The Emergency Management Act strengthens and clarifies the responsibility of EMO to identify, assess and manage natural hazards. In order for EMO to fulfil those responsibilities, the already close working relationship between the ORC Natural Hazards team and EMO may need to become even more closely interlinked.
- [46] The recently completed natural hazards prioritisation assessments help to build an information base for informed decision-making in terms of natural hazards characteristics. This work is however only a starting point and will require updating as new or refined natural hazards information is available (e.g. for natural hazard types where regional-scale hazards mapping is not yet available). It is also noted that the range of hazards considered by EMO is wider than the natural hazards assessed by the ORC Natural Hazards team, which do not include some other hazard types such as pandemic.
- [47] This natural hazard information will need to be complemented by the work required under the EM Act to identify ‘disproportionately affected communities’, and together these datasets will build a fuller picture of the region’s natural hazards exposure and vulnerabilities.
- [48] A related driver for natural hazards management in Otago is that natural hazards are a mandatory matter to be included in regional spatial planning under the proposed Planning Act, and the Planning Bill states that the content of regional spatial plans must include priority locations for adaptation plans.
- [49] Although there are multiple factors and legislative drivers influencing the ORC responsibilities in relation to natural hazards management and adaptation, they all have a consistent overall purpose and intended outcome – improved resilience to natural hazards impact for Otago’s communities.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [50] The information resulting from the natural hazards exposure analysis and prioritisation assessments report align with Council's Strategic Directions, where the 'Resilience' focus area has the aspiration that "Otago builds resilience in a way that contributes to community and environmental wellbeing through planned and well-managed responses to shocks and stresses, including natural hazards".

Financial Considerations

- [51] The budget for this work was approved through the 2024-2034 Long-Term Plan and comes from the Climate Change and Resilience activity budget.

Significance and Engagement

- [52] ORC has engaged with EMO and the Otago territorial authorities to provide updates on the natural hazard's exposure assessment completed in 2025, and more recently to discuss the preliminary Natural Hazards LTP work programme for 2027-2027, including outcomes of the prioritisation assessments.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [53] The work described in this paper helps ORC fulfil its responsibilities under sections 30 and 35 of the RMA.
- [54] This work is consistent with relevant central government policy and direction. Specifically, it aligns with the current resource management reform programmes, which seeks to meet the objective of "Adapting to the effects of climate change and reducing risks from natural hazards", and the proposed Planning Act has a goal to "Keep communities safe from intolerable risks and effects of natural hazards and climate change".¹⁰
- [55] Natural hazards are a mandatory matter to be included in regional spatial planning under the proposed Planning Act. The Planning Bill states that the content of regional spatial plans must include priority locations for adaptation plans prepared under the Climate Change Response Act 2002.¹¹
- [56] This work also supports the natural hazards and risk management responsibilities of ORC and EMO under the proposed Emergency Management Act, as described in Table 1.

Climate Change Considerations

- [57] The influence of climate change is a key factor to be considered in assessment of natural hazard risks, and in development of natural hazards management or adaptation work programmes. Climate change is a factor considered in natural hazards prioritisation.

Communications Considerations

- [58] The 2025 natural hazards exposure findings are available publicly as a digital data viewer which presents the spatial data outputs. This data viewer is accessible through a web page on the ORC website, which also includes plain language summary information explaining the project purpose and approach, and a link to the supporting technical

¹⁰ Report from the Expert Advisory Group on Resource Management Reform. [Blueprint for resource management reform: A better planning and resource management system 2025](#).

¹¹ [Planning Bill](#): 3(1)(f).

report. It is planned to update this website and data viewer with findings of the updated 2026 exposure analysis.

- [59] Natural hazards prioritisation findings are presented only in the July 2026 Council paper, and this paper to the CE Group, at this stage. When the natural hazards prioritisation findings have been documented in more detail as a technical report, it is expected that this will be made public through the ORC Natural Hazards Portal or another ORC webpage.

NEXT STEPS

- [60] Next steps for the ORC Natural Hazards team are to:
- Engage with key stakeholders, including EMO and Territorial Authorities, on the proposed Natural Hazards 2027-2037 LTP work programme. This engagement has started and is expected to continue within August 2026.
 - Complete a technical report documenting the Natural Hazards prioritisation findings in more detail, and consider approaches for communication of these findings publicly.
- [61] Next steps for Emergency Management Otago are to take the ORC natural hazards prioritisation process and findings and further develop and adjust this approach for application to Emergency Management purposes, including the identification of disproportionately affected communities.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.6. 2025-2035 Group Plan Update

Prepared for: Otago Emergency Management Committee
Report No. CDEM2650
Activity: Emergency Management Otago
Author: Roderick Francis (Team Leader Group Office), Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago)
Endorsed by: Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago)
Date: 18 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] This paper describes how the Emergency Management Act 2026 (Act) changes content and consultation requirements for regional plans and how these changes impact progress of what is now known as the 2027-2037 Otago Emergency Management Committee Regional Emergency Management Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] The current draft of the plan meets the requirements of the CDEM Act 2002 and aligns with the 2019-2029 National Disaster Resilience Strategy. The current draft reflects input gathered from internal review conducted in late April - May 2026. NEMA has informally reviewed Part Four – Hazards, risk assessment and exposure analysis to verify that our approach will satisfy the NEMA technical review. These technical standards are not affected by the new legislation.
- [3] Under the new Emergency Management Act 2026, Regional Emergency Management Plans will replace CDEM Group Plans. The new plan requirements apply to any plan publicly notified after Royal assent. Because the current plan has not yet been publicly notified under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act it must comply with the new legislative requirements before consultation can begin.
- [4] The Emergency Management Act 2026 introduces additional content, engagement, consultation and assurance requirements. Some of these provisions take immediate effect following Royal assent. Other provisions come into effect either 12- or 24-months following enactment.
- [5] Additional work includes developing new plan content describing how we have identified disproportionately affected communities and engaging with partners and representatives of disaffected communities, and other stakeholders on this work as required by the Act.
- [6] We expect to seek approval to release a draft regional emergency management plan for the purposes of public consultation at the November meeting of the Emergency Management Committee.

- [7] Staff recommend that we discontinue work on 2025-2035 Group Plan, and that we now commence working on ensuring the 2027-37 Otago Regional Emergency Management Plan conforms to the requirements of the forthcoming Emergency Management Act 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Otago Emergency Management Committee:

- 1) **Notes** this report.
- 2) **Endorses** staffs' recommended approach which is to work on the 2026-36 Otago Regional Emergency Management Plan in conformance with the Emergency Management Act.

BACKGROUND

- [8] The Emergency Management Act 2026 replaces the CDEM Act 2002. The 2023 North Island Severe Weather Events and the subsequent Government inquiry highlighted shortcomings in the current system and contributed to calls for legislative action.
- [9] The Act came into effect on 4 September 2026 and is the legislative driver for emergency management in New Zealand.
- [10] Regional Emergency Management Plans will replace CDEM Group Plans enabled under the CDEM Act 2002. Regional Emergency Management Plans are a key instrument for implementing responsibilities of the Emergency Management Committee (formerly group) by driving action across the 4Rs of risk reduction, readiness, response, and recovery.

DISCUSSION

- [11] The Emergency Management Act 2026 includes mandatory consultation requirements for representatives of disproportionately affected communities, representatives of iwi and Māori in the Emergency Management Committee area, and those with roles under the plan.
- [12] Emergency Management Otago has been informally engaging with iwi representatives facilitated by the mana whenua emergency facilitator – Araiteuru. As the plan develops there will be opportunities for continued informal engagement with the management group of the mana whenua emergency facilitator – Araiteuru prior to formal partner consultations across the sector.
- [13] The Emergency Management Act calls for emergency management committees to engage with representatives of disproportionately affected communities to ensure that the needs of these communities are considered in local emergency planning. To do this Emergency Management Otago must first develop guidance to assist the Otago Emergency Management Committee in identifying disproportionately affected communities.

- [14] The Emergency Management Act defines disproportionately affected communities as “communities that, if an emergency occurs:
- will or is likely to be significantly more affected by the emergency than other communities, and
 - because it is significantly more affected will, or is likely to have, increased vulnerabilities or specific needs during or after the emergency. “
- [15] Drawing on the ORC Community Areas Exposure Report 2025 and data available from the [Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand](#) (EHINZ) work has commenced on how best to combine social and natural hazard data. ORC Natural Hazards Team has completed assessments of the social and economic impacts of natural hazards in a number of Otago communities.
- [16] The Welfare Coordination Group and Rural Advisory Group include agency members that either work with representatives of disproportionately affected communities or are themselves representatives of disproportionately affected communities. The engagement programme will workshop the identification of disproportionately affected communities in Otago with these governance groups and seek recommendations on extending and focusing our consultation.
- [17] The Emergency Management Act includes other requirements which come into effect on 4 September 2027. It is hoped we can satisfy these requirements now to avoid the cost of making amendments to the plan within the first year of operation. These are:
- a. Making care arrangements for animals during an emergency reduces the potential for trauma and stress for human and animal populations.
 - b. Ensuring offers of assistance from individuals and groups are managed during an emergency.
- [18] As noted in 7.5 the Emergency Management Act calls for closer alignment with local government planning. The Act limits the scope of local authorities’ public engagement under the Local Government Act when considering requirements imposed under a Regional Emergency Management Plan. Under the Emergency Management Act local authorities may only include options consistent with the Regional Emergency Management Plan when engaging the public under the Local Government Act. Similarly, the Emergency management Act grants the Minister and/or Director General to direct changes to plans and set planning standards. These changes signal a stronger approach to assurance and compliance from central government. These provisions will also be included in consultation on the plan with member local authorities.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [19] The Emergency Management Act introduces significant structural changes to emergency management in New Zealand. The increased emphasis on compliance and assurance along with more prescriptive requirements around engagement and consultation will have direct impacts on plan development and consultation.

- [20] Strategic and policy instruments including the Regional Emergency Management Plan, the EMO Training and Capability Strategy and the Community Areas Exposure Report 2025 all need to align with the structure of the new Emergency Management Act.

Financial Considerations

- [21] Additional costs will be incurred in preparing the draft 2027-2037 Regional Emergency Management Plan. ORC and Emergency Management Otago staff time will be used to refine and develop methodologies for identifying communities that conform to the definition of 'disproportionately affected' laid out in the legislation. Additional resources will be needed to undertake engagement with disproportionately affected communities as required by the Bill.

Significance and Engagement

- [22] The Regional Emergency Management Plan is the key policy and guidance document for the Otago Emergency Management Committee and Emergency Management Otago as its agent.
- [23] The Emergency Management Act places greater emphasis on engagement than the current legislation. This will require more sustained and targeted engagement with partners, stakeholders and representatives of disproportionately affected communities throughout plan development. There will be an ongoing commitment through the life of the plan to improved partnership with iwi and Māori representatives and improved engagement with the representatives of disproportionately affected communities.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [24] The Emergency Management Act makes amendments to other legislation such as the Local Government Act. This will require greater involvement from member local authorities during plan development and consultation.

Climate Change Considerations

- [25] No matters arising.

Communications Considerations

- [26] The engagement plan for the Regional Emergency Management Plan is being revised considering the legislative changes. Ensuring focused engagement with partners and stakeholders will be needed to meet proposed deadlines.

NEXT STEPS

- [27] The work programme for the Regional Emergency Management Plan will be revised in response to the provisions of the new legislation. Once the methodology for identifying disproportionately affected communities has been finalised focused engagement with partners stakeholders and representatives of disproportionately affected communities will proceed, concluding in late September 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Emergency Management Act 2026 Topic Information Sheet 8 [7.6.1 - 9 pages]

Emergency Management Act 2026

TOPIC INFORMATION SHEET 8



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING

This information sheet summarises key differences between **emergency management planning provisions** in the Emergency Management Act 2026 (EM Act) and the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (CDEM Act) which the EM Act replaces.

Many provisions in the EM Act are the same or similar to those in the CDEM Act and these are not covered here. Readers should refer to the [Emergency Management Act 2026](#) for complete information about what the Act provides for and requires.

Information sheets related to other topics and roles under the EM Act can be found at www.civildefence.govt.nz

Provisions described in this information sheet are in force unless otherwise stated.

Information about:

- Regional Emergency Management Plans
- Regional Planning Standards
- The National Emergency Management Plan
- National Emergency Management Strategy

Regional Emergency Management Plans

Many emergency management responsibilities are devolved to local government. Under the EM Act, CDEM Groups are renamed and continue as Emergency Management Committees (EMC) made up of elected local government representatives (and associate members, if any) who govern emergency management at the local level.

Each EMC must have a Regional Emergency Management Plan (Regional Plan), aligned with a national emergency management strategy, currently the [2019-2029 National Disaster Resilience Strategy](#).

Regional Plans replace CDEM Group Plans made under the CDEM Act. Regional Plans are a key instrument for implementing EMC responsibilities and driving action across the 4Rs of risk reduction, readiness, response, and recovery.

A CDEM Group Plan in place before the EM Act was enacted continues as if it has met the planning requirements in the EM Act until its five-year period expires (but will be renamed a Regional Plan). If, before the EM Act was enacted, a CDEM Group has publicly notified that it proposes to review its Group Plan, the review will continue to progress under the CDEM Act provisions.

The EM Act changes some content and consultation requirements for Regional Plans. These provisions come into force at different times as set out below.

Engaging and involving iwi and Māori representatives

What has changed?

In developing its Regional Plan, the EMC must engage with and involve iwi and Māori representatives from its area, give notification of the proposal to representatives of iwi and Māori in its area, and have regard to any comments made by iwi and Māori on a proposed Plan.

Why has this changed?

Iwi and Māori have unique knowledge, skills, and resources to contribute to emergency management across the 4Rs of risk reduction, readiness, response, and recovery which come from their experience responding to and recovering from emergencies in New Zealand for centuries.

Engagement with iwi and Māori during the development of a Regional Plan will drive better and consistent involvement of iwi and Māori and strengthen their role in emergency management.

DISCLAIMER: Readers should refer to the [Emergency Management Act 2026](#) for complete information about what the Act provides for and requires. This information sheet should not be relied on as legal advice.

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Emergency Management Act 2026

TOPIC INFORMATION SHEET 8: PLANNING

When is this happening?

These requirements are in force. However, if a CDEM Group Plan was notified under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before the EM Act was enacted, the plan review must be completed by following the requirements of the CDEM Act. A CDEM Group who has begun preparatory work on a review but has not notified their proposed Plan as above must follow the requirements of the EM Act.

While the CDEM Act did not specifically require engagement with representatives of iwi and Māori, this engagement should occur as a matter of good practice.

Engaging and involving disproportionately affected communities

What has changed?

Regional Plans will need to state and provide for the arrangements for the needs of any community the EMC considers to be a disproportionately affected community in its area.

In developing its Regional Plan, an EMC must engage with and involve representatives of the identified disproportionately affected communities in its area.

Disproportionately affected communities are defined in the EM Act to mean a community that, if an emergency occurs:

- will or is likely to be significantly more affected by the emergency than other communities, and
- because it is significantly more affected will, or is likely to have, increased vulnerabilities or specific needs during or after the emergency.

Why has this changed?

Some communities are disproportionately affected by emergencies and may experience worse immediate life-safety outcomes and increasing vulnerabilities in the long term.

The outcomes for such communities often depend on their connectedness with their wider communities or representative groups, and whether their representative groups have information and resources to support them effectively.

Requiring EMC to engage with representatives of disproportionately affected communities will ensure that the needs of their communities are considered in local planning.

When is this happening?

The requirement to include arrangements for meeting the needs of disproportionately affected communities in Regional Plans comes into force 12 months after Royal assent of the EM Act. This means any Regional Plan that is approved by an EMC from that date must include arrangements for meeting the needs of disproportionately affected communities.

The requirement for an EMC to engage with representatives of disproportionately affected communities when developing its Regional Plan is now in force. This means the requirement will apply even if an EMC begins reviewing its Regional Plan within the first 12 months after Royal assent.

However, if a CDEM Group Plan was notified under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before the EM Act was enacted, the plan review must be completed by following the requirements of the CDEM Act. A CDEM Group who has begun preparatory work on a review but has not notified their proposed Plan as above must follow the requirements of the EM Act.

While the CDEM Act did not specifically require engagement with representatives of disproportionately affected communities, similar engagement is likely to be needed to achieve consistency with the National Disaster Resilience Strategy.

DISCLAIMER: Readers should refer to the [Emergency Management Act 2026](#) for complete information about what the Act provides for and requires. This information sheet should not be relied on as legal advice.

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Emergency Management Act 2026

TOPIC INFORMATION SHEET 8: PLANNING

Consulting those who would have roles and responsibilities under a Regional Plan

What has changed?

In developing or amending a Regional Plan, EMC will be required to consult persons and agencies who would have roles and responsibilities under any new or amended Plan that is being proposed.

Why has this changed?

Regional Plans may impose duties on any person. It is important that those who would have mandatory responsibilities are aware and consulted during the planning process.

When is this happening?

These requirements are in force. However, if a CDEM Group Plan was notified under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before the EM Act was enacted, the plan review must be completed by following the requirements of the CDEM Act. While the CDEM Act did not specifically require consultation with those who would have roles and responsibilities under the CDEM Group plan, this consultation should occur as a matter of good practice.

A CDEM Group who has begun preparatory work on a review but has not notified their proposed Plan under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before Royal assent must follow the requirements of the EM Act.

Managing animals during an emergency and offers of assistance

What has changed?

A Regional Plan will need to include arrangements for:

- managing animals during an emergency, and
- managing offers of assistance from individuals and groups during an emergency.

Why has this changed?

The loss of animals during emergencies can cause distress and trauma for individuals and negatively impact communities. Individuals may also put themselves and first responders in harm's way due to concern about their animals. Research shows that the integration of animals into emergency management planning and arrangements is critical to human health and safety, as well as to the economy, biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Ensuring offers of assistance are planned for means in an emergency those resources are already known and can be called upon immediately, as well as enabling the community to be usefully involved in the response and recovery effort.

When is this happening?

These requirements are in force. This means any Regional Plan that is approved by an EMC from that date must address these arrangements. However, if a CDEM Group Plan was notified under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before the EM Act was enacted, the plan review must be completed by following the requirements of the CDEM Act. A CDEM Group who has begun preparatory work on a review but has not notified their proposed Plan as above must follow the requirements of the EM Act.

Regional Plans may impose duties on any person

What has changed?

The EM Act also clarifies that Regional Plans may impose duties on any person to provide for the matters required in a Regional Plan. This includes public service agencies, EMC, local authorities, emergency services, and essential infrastructure providers.

Why has this changed?

This was already the case under the CDEM Act, but the EM Act makes it more explicit.

DISCLAIMER: Readers should refer to the [Emergency Management Act 2026](#) for complete information about what the Act provides for and requires. This information sheet should not be relied on as legal advice.

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Emergency Management Act 2026

TOPIC INFORMATION SHEET 8: PLANNING

Strengthening alignment with local government planning

What has changed?

The EM Act creates an explicit statutory link between Regional Plans under the Act, and local authorities' long-term plans under the Local Government Act 2002. The EM Act amends the Local Government Act to require long-term plans to set out steps to implement or progress requirements imposed on a local authority in the relevant Regional Plans; to the extent that the local authority is reasonably able to do so and having regard to competing demands and any other relevant circumstances.

Local authorities' public engagement under the Local Government Act on requirements imposed under a Regional Plan must only include options that are consistent with the Plan.

Why has this changed?

The EM Act formalises an expectation that local authorities will address their emergency management responsibilities through the local government long-term planning process.

Ministerial oversight of Regional Plans

What has changed?

The Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery (the Minister) may direct amendments to proposed Regional Plans and may also direct an EMC to undertake a partial or full review of a Regional Plan. The Minister must provide reasons.

Why has this changed?

The ability to direct amendments to proposed Regional Plans ensures that Plans meet the requirements of the EM Act and are integrated with hazard risk management arrangements at the national level. The ability to direct a full or partial review of a Regional Plan is a backstop power and could be used to ensure that critical issues, such as those identified in reviews and inquiries, are addressed in a timely way.

Targeted amendments to Regional Plans

What has changed?

EMC may make targeted amendments to Regional Plans that are limited in scope and impact without following the full review process set out in the EM Act. They can cover (but are not restricted to) new hazards and risks and updating changes to the identification of lead agencies.

The EMC must undertake consultation on targeted amendments in accordance with the principles in section 82 of the Local Government Act.

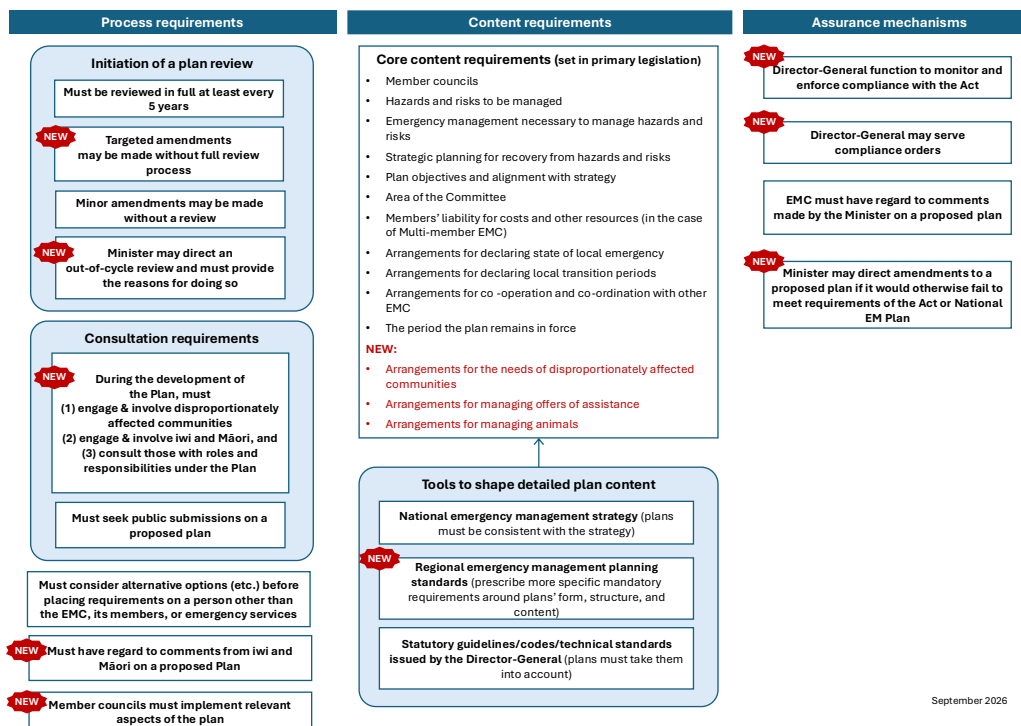
Why has this changed?

Changing hazards and risks, or lessons from emergencies, may need to be addressed before the five yearly cycle review of a Regional Plan. EMC can more easily update parts of a Regional Plan to ensure arrangements are not left out of date.

Emergency Management Act 2026

TOPIC INFORMATION SHEET 8: PLANNING

The diagram below outlines the process and content requirements for Regional Plans under the EM Act, and the assurance mechanisms.



September 2026

Regional Emergency Management Planning Standards

What has changed?

The EM Act enables the Minister to issue regional emergency management planning standards (Regional Planning Standards) which Regional Plans must meet. These standards may prescribe the structure, format, or content of Regional Plans.

Regional Emergency Management Planning Standards

A Regional Planning Standard may be issued by the Minister and apply to the Regional Plan of all EMC, a particular EMC, or a class of EMC.

In preparing or amending a Standard, the Minister must have regard to:

- whether it is desirable to have national consistency
- whether the Standard should allow for local variation and to what extent
- whether it is appropriate for the Standard to apply to one or more EMC, or all EMC, and
- any other relevant legislative requirement.

In preparing a Standard, the Minister must consult the Director-General of Emergency Management, give public notice of the draft, and establish a process that the Minister considers gives the public, local authorities, and EMC adequate time and opportunity to make submissions.

A Standard, once issued, can be amended or withdrawn in part or in full. The Minister must give public notice and reasons for a withdrawal. Amendments do not need to go through the consultation process in some circumstances.

DISCLAIMER: Readers should refer to the [Emergency Management Act 2026](#) for complete information about what the Act provides for and requires. This information sheet should not be relied on as legal advice.

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Emergency Management Act 2026

TOPIC INFORMATION SHEET 8: PLANNING

Why has this changed?

Regional Plans are key tools to drive action at the local government level across the 4Rs of risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery. Regional Planning Standards will make planning expectations clear and ensure that there is national consistency where needed, while retaining local flexibility to determine the most appropriate way to manage hazards and risks.

When is this happening?

This provision is in force, however, there is no timeframe for the Minister to issue Regional Planning Standards.

National Emergency Management Plan

The National Emergency Management Plan (National Plan) will replace the National Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Plan.

The current National CDEM Plan will continue in place until a new National Plan is approved by the Governor-General, on the recommendation of the Minister.

The Minister has up to two years from when the EM Act was enacted to complete the review.

Seeking advice on Māori interests and knowledge

What has changed?

The Director-General must seek advice on Māori interests and knowledge (by engaging with representatives of appropriate national-level Māori organisations) to inform the development of the proposed National Plan.

Why has this changed?

This requirement provides a formal mechanism for Māori interests and knowledge to be considered at the national level to recognise the important role that Māori play in emergency management. It supports the Māori-Crown relationship established under the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Disproportionately affected communities

What has changed?

In developing the National Plan, the Director-General must identify any community that they consider to be a disproportionately affected community and engage with representatives of those communities who operate at a national level.

Why has this changed?

Some communities are disproportionately affected by emergencies and experience worse immediate life-safety outcomes and increasing vulnerabilities in the long term. The outcomes for such communities often depend on their connectedness with their wider communities or representative groups, and whether their representative groups have information and resources to support them effectively.

Requiring the Director-General to engage with national representatives of disproportionately affected communities will ensure that the needs of their communities are considered in national planning.

Emergency Management Act 2026

TOPIC INFORMATION SHEET 8: PLANNING

Lead agencies for emergencies

What has changed?

The EM Act enables a government agency to be identified as a lead agency in the National Plan, in respect of emergencies caused or contributed to by a particular hazard.

The lead agency has the primary responsibility for managing the response to an emergency relating to that hazard – whether or not there is a state of emergency. The lead agency responsibilities can be temporarily transferred to another government agency or to an EMC with the agreement of the agency or EMC receiving the transfer of responsibility.

The National Plan may specify arrangements for identifying lead agency or agencies in the case of an emergency that has been caused or contributed to by multiple hazards.

Why has this changed?

Clarifying who will lead emergencies at the national level will improve certainty and accountability before, during, and after emergencies. Identifying lead agencies in the National Plan provides greater flexibility for responding to future organisational changes.

When is this happening?

This provision comes into force by Order in Council or no later than two years after the EM Act is enacted.

Targeted amendments to the National Emergency Management Plan

What has changed?

The Governor-General (on the recommendation of the Minister) may make targeted amendments to the National Plan that are limited in scope and impact without following the full review process set out in the Act. They can cover (but are not restricted to) new hazards and risks, additional obligations due to new hazards and risks, and updates to changes in the identification of lead agencies. The Minister must consult with parties likely to be affected by any changes.

Why has this changed?

New risks and hazards or issues and opportunities may arise frequently and before the five yearly cycle review of the National Plan. The use of targeted amendments makes it easier to update parts of the Plan to ensure arrangements are up to date.

The National Plan may impose duties on any person

What has changed?

The EM Act also clarifies that the National Plan may impose duties on any person to provide for the matters required in the National Plan. This includes public service agencies, EMC, local authorities, emergency services, and essential infrastructure providers.

Why has this changed?

This was already the case under the CDEM Act, but the EM Act makes it more explicit.

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Emergency Management Act 2026

TOPIC INFORMATION SHEET 8: PLANNING

Consultation on the National Strategy with disproportionately affected communities, iwi and Māori, and rural communities

What has changed?

Before making, amending, or replacing the National Strategy, the Minister must consult representatives of:

- any community that the Director-General considers to be a disproportionately affected community
- iwi and Māori, and
- rural communities.

Why has this changed?

This provides a formal mechanism for the needs of disproportionately affected communities, iwi and Māori, and rural communities to be considered in the development of the National Strategy, which guides planning and activities across emergency management.

When is this happening?

Engagement requirements are in force and will apply when the Minister is making, amending or replacing the National Strategy.

Changes to the planning framework

The attached diagram sets out the plans, secondary legislation, and other instruments enabled under the EM Act, including what has been carried over from the CDEM Act.

[09/26 v1]

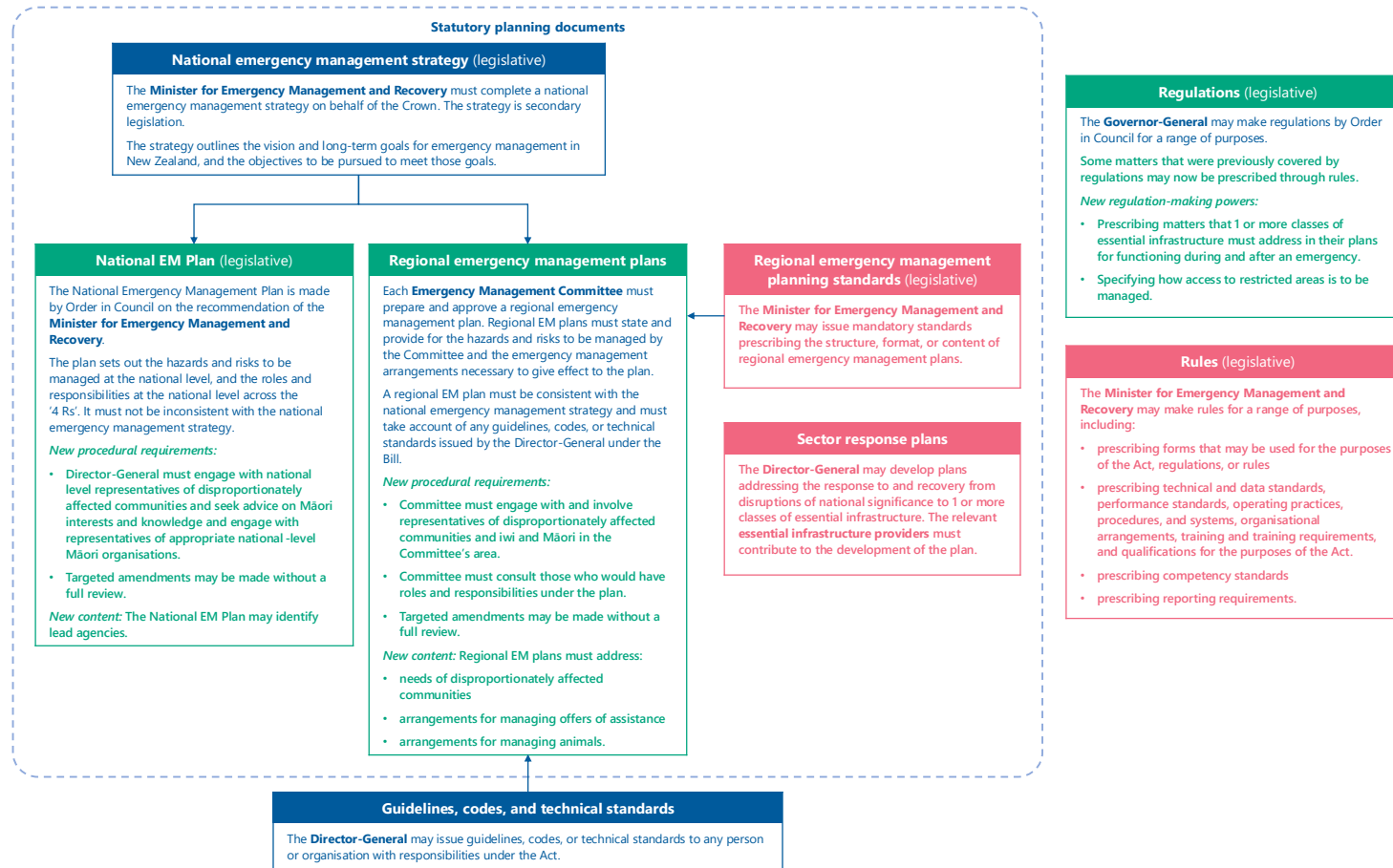
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Emergency Management Act 2026

TOPIC INFORMATION SHEET 8: PLANNING

Secondary legislation and other instruments enabled by the Emergency Management Act September 2026



DISCLAIMER: Readers should refer to the [Emergency Management Act 2026](#) for complete information about what the Act provides for and requires. This information sheet should not be relied on as legal advice.

7.7. Long-Term Plan Funding and Resourcing

Prepared for: Otago Emergency Management Committee
Report No. CDEM2644
Activity: Emergency Management Otago
Author: Glenn Mitchell (Principal Advisor Group Office)
Endorsed by: Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago)
Date: 18 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] This paper seeks to highlight the resourcing implications of the Emergency Management Act and the need for appropriate planning in the current Long-Term Planning round.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] Section 29 of the Emergency Management Act - passed into law on Friday 4 September, amongst others, creates more explicit requirements on Emergency Management Committees (previously known as Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups).
- [3] In particular, there are more requirements in the areas of:
- a. Leading hazards and risk assessment and management.
 - b. Ensuring suitably trained and competent personnel, including volunteers.
 - c. Planning for Recovery in advance.
 - d. More extensive work in developing and consulting on the Regional Emergency Management Plan.
 - e. Greater interaction between emergency management and essential infrastructure.
 - f. Continuous assurance monitoring and reporting, including areas relevant to emergency management in other legislation.
- [4] The Act amends the Local Government Act, requiring each local authority's Long-Term Plan to set out steps to implement or progress the requirements imposed on it by the regional emergency management plan. This is a substantial structural change that ties Emergency Management Committee plan requirements directly to councils' 10-year budgeting and funding cycles.
- [5] Greater emphasis is put on council chief executives' role in emergency management, from appointing district controllers and recovery managers (instead of recommending to and appointments confirmed by the Emergency Management Committee) to responsibility for the coordination of resources and personnel outside of a state of emergency.
- [6] The Act also places consequences for non-compliance in meeting duties under the legislation, imposing monitoring and reporting requirements.

- [7] To ensure Otago is in a good place to meet its commitments to the new legislation and give chief executives confidence that obligations under the legislation are being met, additional resourcing will need to be in place and established in time to competently deliver the required outputs.
- [8] At the 21 August 2026 CEG meeting the committee resolved to request Otago CDEM to complete a briefing on the new legislative requirements to support the 27-37 Long-Term Plan.
- [9] This workshop is planned to occur prior to the 23 October 2026 CEG meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Otago Emergency Management Committee:

- 1) **Notes** this report.

BACKGROUND

- [10] The Emergency Management Act is the legislative response to twenty years of operational experience under the previous CDEM Act, with the 2023 North Island Severe Weather Events and the subsequent Government Inquiry providing the final impetus for a rebuild of New Zealand's emergency management framework.
- [11] The Act achieved royal assent and became the legislative driver for emergency management in New Zealand on Friday 4 September 2026.
- [12] The Minister has the power to set rules prescribing, amongst other things, performance standards, operating practices and training, and training requirements.

DISCUSSION

- [13] The Act has implications for additional workloads not only for Emergency Management Otago as an agent of the Committee, but also the member local authorities of the Committee, emergency services and essential infrastructure providers.
- [14] The 2027-28 proposed annual workplan for Emergency Management Otago, based upon the new CDEM Act, has budget for 41% of the activities, partially budgeted for 17% of activity, and currently 43% is unbudgeted.
- [15] It is anticipated that an increase of circa 20% of the uniform targeted rate will be required to adequately resource EM Otago to meet the needs of the Act.

Hazards and Risk Management

- [16] In relation to managing risks, local authorities are required within their district to:
 - a. *Identify* and assess hazards and risks.
 - b. *Report* to the committee on the assessment of hazards and risks.
 - c. *Manage* hazards and risks.
 - d. Identify how to *reduce risks* and implement cost-effective risk reduction.
 - e. *Consult and communicate* with communities about those hazards and risks.

- [17] The Emergency Management Committee is required to:
- Take the lead* in identifying and assessing those hazards and risks.
 - Co-ordinate* the management of those hazards and risks.
 - Identify* and implement cost-effective risk reduction.
 - Assist* each local authority member of the Committee to identify, assess, consult and communicate with the communities about those hazards and risks.
- [18] This is a step forward in terms of setting priorities for hazard and risk management. To date, this activity has been disjointed, with no reporting to the committee and no prioritisation. The Act pushes the Committee into an active role to lead the hazards and risk management identification and assessment as well as to support individual member councils' engagement work, not just collective planning.
- [19] The Community Areas Exposure Report 2025, prepared by the ORC Natural Hazards team, goes some way to identify and assess some hazards and identify some priorities for identifying ways to reduce or manage the risks. This report was based upon existing hazard knowledge, however, and is missing some key hazards for Otago such as wildfire and the impact of an Alpine Fault Earthquake.
- [20] The Committee will need to actively set priorities for work in the hazards and risk area and ensure there are the resources to undertake this work.

Workforce/Personnel

- [21] The Act explicitly requires the Committee to ensure that suitably trained and competent personnel, including volunteers, are available and that there is an appropriate organisational structure for those personnel for effective emergency management in its area.
- [22] The Otago CDEM Training and Capability Strategy outlines the currently agreed minimum training requirements for council staff working in the Emergency Operations Centres or Emergency Coordination Centre.
- [23] For several reasons, no centre has yet met the target of 80% of the coordination centre staff training to the minimum standard.
- [24] It is likely that rules set by the Minister prescribing training standards are likely to be to a higher standard than our current strategy prescribes.
- [25] Sustained under-delivery in this area is a concern, with changes to the way EMO delivers training needed to meet minimum standards.

Planning for Recovery

- [26] The previous CDEM Act required Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups to plan and carry out recovery activities. This has at best been an activity undertaken during the transition from responding to an emergency to active recovery.
- [27] Section 29 of the Emergency Management Act explicitly requires an Emergency Management Committee to, in advance of an emergency, plan for recovery activities in its area.

- [28] The Act requires the appointment of both Regional and District Recovery Managers, the former appointed by the Committee, the latter appointed by council Chief Executives.
- [29] The Committee will need to determine how it delegates its recovery duties to these appointments, particularly in the areas of pre-emergency recovery planning, and ensure that they are resourced appropriately to undertake these duties.

Engagement With Disproportionately Affected Communities

- [30] The revised Otago Regional Emergency Management Plan must identify what the Committee considers disproportionately affected communities and arrangements for their needs.
- [31] This will be a significant piece of work, not only in identifying these communities, partially achieved by the Community Areas Exposure Report 2025, but also in the engagement with these communities and ongoing work to address their needs.
- [32] Community engagement is something the Emergency Management Otago team undertake already, but with limited scope and often reactive to public requests.

Essential Infrastructure

- [33] Like disproportionately affected communities, the Act imposes a greater need for engagement with essential infrastructure in the development of the Regional Emergency Management Plan.
- [34] In addition, there is an expectation that emergency management committees will work closely with essential infrastructure in developing sector-level planning.

Compliance - Assurance Monitoring and Reporting

- [35] The Act introduces new requirements relating to compliance and requires Emergency Management Committees to monitor and report on compliance with the Act and its legislative instruments, such as rules.
- [36] This requirement will impose a significant amount of work programme monitoring and reporting across not only the Committee and its delegated duties, but also local authorities and essential infrastructure.
- [37] Additionally, reporting will be required on how emergency management compliance is being undertaken in activities under other relevant legislation as outlined in Schedule 2.
- [38] These requirements are significant in that previous legislation has placed many duties on Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups and their predecessors; however, there has not previously been any consequence for failing to carry out legislated duties.
- [39] Reputational risk and financial consequence for non-compliance indicate this will become an important work programme for the Committee to manage and resource.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [40] The Act represents a fundamental shift in the strategic and policy environment for Emergency Management in Otago, moving the Committee from a largely discretionary, collectively planned function under the CDEM Act 2002 to one with explicit statutory duties backed by compliance and enforcement mechanisms.
- [41] This requires the Committee's strategic priorities and work programme to be realigned with the Act's more prescriptive requirements, particularly in hazards and risk leadership, workforce competency, recovery planning, and engagement with essential infrastructure.
- [42] Existing strategic and policy instruments will need to be reviewed for alignment with the new framework, including the Otago Regional Emergency Management Plan, the Otago CDEM Training and Capability Strategy, and the Community Areas Exposure Report 2025.
- [43] The Act's amendment to the Local Government Act also requires emergency management priorities to be explicitly reflected in each member council's Long-Term Plan, linking this work directly to councils' 10-year budgeting cycles.

Financial Considerations

- [44] The DPMC paper Proactive Release ECO-25-SUB-0117: Strengthening Emergency Management: Legislative Reform indicated the cost to CDEM Groups to implement changes resulting from the new legislation be \$82.8 million over 4 years. The table of costs is attached as appendix A.
- [45] LGNZ's submission on the Bill supports the reform's intent but flagged that the estimated \$82.8 million cost to local authorities over the first four years doesn't include the cost of actually meeting the higher standards the legislation could impose.
- [46] Resourcing estimates for Emergency Management Otago would include an estimated 20% targeted rate increase in the 2027-2037 LTP.

Significance and Engagement

- [47] The decision on resourcing options carries high financial significance for the Committee and member local authorities, given the scale of costs identified and the direct link to Long-Term Plan budgeting.
- [48] Wider community engagement is also required under the Act itself, particularly with disproportionately affected communities and essential infrastructure providers, in developing the Regional Emergency Management Plan. This engagement obligation should be factored into the resourcing option chosen, as it represents a new and significant work programme rather than business as usual.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [49] The Act considers the need for other legislation relevant to emergency management to be an integral part of local government's responsibilities to undertake and report on this activity.

- [50] Other legislation listed in Schedule 2 of the Act may not necessarily have compliance and penalty provisions; however, the Act may, by default, make the emergency management-relevant component subject to these provisions.

Climate Change Considerations

- [51] No matters arising.

Communications Considerations

- [52] Consideration should be given to how the Committee communicates any change in service levels or work programme priorities resulting from the option chosen, to manage expectations among local authorities and essential infrastructure providers regarding the pace of compliance with the new legislative requirements.

NEXT STEPS

- [53] Dependent upon the option chosen to proceed, work will need to be done on determining what resources will be required to implement the additional work programme introduced with the legislation, both for Emergency Management Otago and Committee members.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Appendix A Table of package of preferred options and costs/benefits [7.7.1 - 5 pages]

Appendix A: Table of package of preferred options and costs/benefits

The below table provides the package of preferred options for each issue and outlines costs and benefits associated with the preferred option.

There is no difference between the preferred package in the Minister's Cabinet paper and this RIS.

Notes to table:

- Shaded areas are where costs are n/a to that actor; (PL) = primary legislation; (NL) = non-primary legislation (i.e. guidance, forms, regulations/rules).
- Costs associated with NEMA's role as assurer are indicated and a total indicative estimate of assurance cost has been added.
- Figures indicate costs for initial implementation (over approximately four years). Where costs are expected to be ongoing this is indicated, but not quantified.
- Costs for iwi Māori, communities, and essential infrastructure providers are indicated qualitatively but not monetarised as the extent to which these actors will engage in the system (e.g. planning) will vary greatly.
- Costs for essential infrastructure providers to undertake business continuity planning requirements as this will be subject to separate regulatory impact analysis as new providers are identified and requirements developed through secondary legislation.

Costs and benefits are expressed where this is possible on the following basis:

Indicative estimated costs				Benefits		
H - High	M - Medium	L - Low	N - Negligible	H - High	M - Medium	L - Low
3xFTE \$600,000	2xFTE \$400,000	1xFTE \$200,000	Negligible – activity is required to happen, or happens already, and/or costs can be absorbed in current resourcing	Compared to the status quo, will likely make a significant ongoing positive difference for the outcomes of people generally, or for most communities, during and/or after an emergency	Compared to the status quo, will likely make a moderate ongoing positive difference for the outcomes of people generally, or for many communities, during and/or after an emergency	Compared to the status quo, will likely make some ongoing positive difference for the outcomes of people generally, or for some communities, during and/or after an emergency

ISSUES	OPTIONS (preferred package)	COSTS (additional cost to the status quo)								BENEFITS
		CDEM Groups	\$000 Averaged over x16 Groups (unless specified otherwise)	NEMA	\$000	Government Agencies	\$000	Essential infrastructure providers (incl. local government) (non-monetised indication of costs)	Iwi Māori and communities (non-monetised indication of costs)	
#1: Meeting the needs of disproportionately affected communities	#2: NEMA develops guidance for CDEM Groups and disproportionately affected communities to enable engagement and planning for the needs of disproportionately affected communities (NL)	L - (initial) input to guidance	3,200	H - (initial) develop guidance	600	L - (initial) input to guidance X5 key agencies	1,000		Engagement with NEMA on guidance	M
	#3: Require CDEM Group Plans to identify, engage with, and plan for the needs of disproportionately affected communities and to set out how this will be done in CDEM Group Plans (PL)	M (initial) (ongoing)	6,400	L - assurance	-				Engagement with CDEM Group on plans	M
	#4: Require the Director CDEM to consult with representatives of disproportionately affected communities to inform national planning (PL)			L - (initial) consultation (ongoing)	200	N - (initial) assistance to identify communities	0		Engagement with Director CDEM on plans	M
#2: Strengthening the role of iwi Māori in emergency management	#2: Develop guidance to strengthen engagement between CDEM Groups and iwi Māori (NL)	M - (initial) input to guidance	6,400	H - (initial) develop guidance	600	M - (initial) input to guidance X1 TPK	400		Engagement with NEMA on guidance	H
	#3: Require CDEM Groups to engage with and involve iwi Māori during the development of CDEM Group Plans (PL)	M - (initial) depending on current practice (ongoing)	6,400	L - assurance	-				Engagement with CDEM Group on plans, depending on current practice	H
	#4: Require CDEM Groups to appoint at least one member with knowledge of mātauranga Māori and the interests and values of local Māori communities on CEG (PL)	L (initial) appointment for x4 CEG – (most CEG have iwi members already)	800						Participation, depending on current practice	H

ISSUES	OPTIONS (preferred package)	COSTS (additional cost to the status quo)								BENEFITS
		CDEM Groups	\$000 Averaged over x16 Groups (unless specified otherwise)	NEMA	\$000	Government Agencies	\$000	Essential infrastructure providers (incl. local government) (non-monetised indication of costs)	Iwi Māori and communities (non-monetised indication of costs)	
		(ongoing – member expenses)								
	#6: Require the Director CDEM to seek advice on Māori interests and knowledge to inform development of the National CDEM Plan (PL)			M (initial) consultation (ongoing)	400				Engagement with Director CDEM on plans	M
#3: Strengthening the role of the community in emergency management	#2: Develop and update guidance and strengthen public education for managing community offers of assistance (NL)	L - (initial) input to guidance	3,200	M (initial) Some existing guidance	400	L – (initial) input to guidance X2 key agencies MSD/DIA	400		Engagement on guidance	M
	#3: Require CDEM Groups to include in CDEM Group Plans how offers of assistance from people and communities will be managed in an emergency (PL)	L - (initial) (ongoing)	3,200	L - assurance	-				Engagement on plan	M
	#4: Require CDEM Groups to appoint to the CEG at least one member who has knowledge, experience or expertise in the interests and needs of rural communities relevant to the Group's area (PL)	L - (initial) appointment for 14 CEG (some CEG already have rural members) (ongoing) member expenses	2,800	N - support for appointment	0				Participation, depending on current practice	M
	#5: Require CDEM Groups to consider coopting one or more members who have connections with communities relevant to emergency management in the Group's area (PL)	L - (initial) appointment (ongoing) expenses	3,200	N - support for appointment	0				Participation, depending on current practice	M
#4: Clearer direction and control during an emergency	#2: Clarifying the agency dealing with the specific hazard to be responsible for management response to the emergency (PL)	L – (initial) adjustment to operational practice and updates to Group plans	2,000	M-L – (initial) adjustment to operational practice and National CDEM Plan	200	M-L – (initial) adjustment to operational practice and lead agency response plans (ongoing)	200			M
#5.A: Resolving overlapping CDEM Group and local authority roles and responsibilities	#2: Provide distinct responsibilities for CDEM Groups and their local authority members (PL)	N - (initial) depending on current practice does not change overall responsibilities - some realignment may be needed	0							L- M depending on current practice
#5.B: Providing for clear and consistent organisation and accountability for emergency management	#4: Make the chief executive of each territorial authority responsible for coordinating resources within their own district (PL)	N – for accountability, does not change overall responsibilities	0							L
#6: Keeping emergency management plans up to date	#2: Enable targeted “more than minor” amendments to the National CDEM Plan and CDEM Group Plans (PL)	N - (aimed at reducing cost)	0							L

ISSUES	OPTIONS (preferred package)	COSTS (additional cost to the status quo)								BENEFITS
		CDEM Groups	\$000 Averaged over x16 Groups (unless specified otherwise)	NEMA	\$000	Government Agencies	\$000	Essential infrastructure providers (incl. local government) (non-monetised indication of costs)	Iwi Māori and communities (non-monetised indication of costs)	
#7: Emergency management responsibilities for Offshore islands	#4: Make the Minister of Local Government and the relevant CDEM Group jointly responsible for emergency management in relation to offshore islands (PL)	L - (initial) for relationship agreement development 1-2 CDEM Groups only	400	N - assurance		M – relationship agreement development X1 DIA	400		Input from mana whenua of affected islands to any agreements	L
#8.A: Strengthening the mandate to set expectations and monitor performance	#2: Increased guidance and strengthened governance (NL)	L - (initial) input to guidance (ongoing)	3,200	H (initial) develop priority guidance (ongoing)	600	L – (initial) input to guidance (will vary for agencies depending on topic and frequency)	200			H
	#3: Enable a wider range of mandatory standards to be set through rules (PL)	M - (initial) input to developing rules (ongoing implementation could be high depending on standards)	6,400	H (initial) if used frequently (ongoing to develop rules and additional cost for overall assurance of requirements)	600	M – (initial) input to guidance (will vary for agencies depending on topic and frequency)	400			H
#8.B: Strengthening the Director CDEM's power to intervene and address performance issues	#2: Provide the Director with the power to issue compliance orders (PL)	M – (initial) input to develop regulations and meeting requirements (will vary depending on current practice)	6,400	H (initial) develop regulations, process and design for enforcement; (ongoing) assurance	600	M – (initial) input to develop regulations and meeting requirements (will vary depending on current practice)	800	Input to regulations implementation of requirements - depends on current practice		M
#9: Strengthening local hazard risk management	#3: Strengthen assurance of CDEM Group Plans (NL)	M – input to assurance process (ongoing - every 5 years)	6,400	H - (initial), update guidance and design processes M - assurance	600 -	N – some review from agencies may be required ongoing	0			H
	#4 – Enable the form and content of CDEM Group Plans to be prescribed through secondary legislation (PL)	M - (initial) input to regulations	6,400	H - (initial) for regulations	600	L – (initial) input to regulations X4 key agencies	800			H
	#5: Strengthen the Minister's role in the CDEM Group planning process (PL)	N – assuring current quality expectations (ongoing)	0	M - (initial) (ongoing monitoring and advice)	400	N – some review from agencies may be required ongoing	0			M
#10 Considering taonga Māori and other cultural heritage during/after emergencies	#3: Strengthen planning expectations for taonga Māori and other cultural heritage through secondary legislation (PL)	L-M - (initial) (likely some groups already include this in their plans) (ongoing)	6,400	H - (initial) – develop regulations	600	M – (initial) input to regulations X 2 key agencies TPK/MCH	800		Input to regulations	H
#11: Considering animals during/after emergencies	#3: Require CDEM Group Plans to consider the management of animals (PL)	M - (initial) (likely that some groups already include this in plans) (ongoing)	6,400	L - assurance	-	M – (initial) input to guidance X2 agencies MPI/MBIE	800		Input to regulations	M
	#4: Expand emergency powers to enter premises to mitigate unnecessary pain or distress to animals (PL)	N	0	N	0					M

ISSUES	OPTIONS (preferred package)	COSTS (additional cost to the status quo)								BENEFITS
		CDEM Groups	\$000 Averaged over x16 Groups (unless specified otherwise)	NEMA	\$000	Government Agencies	\$000	Essential infrastructure providers (incl. local government) (non-monetised indication of costs)	Iwi Māori and communities (non-monetised indication of costs)	
12.A: Narrow definition of "lifeline utility"	#3: Replace the lifeline utilities framework with an expanded, principles-based definition of "essential infrastructure" (PL)			H - (initial) identify new providers and do Order in Council process	600			No immediate cost from enabling entities to be identified		H
12.B: Strengthening lifeline utility business continuity	#2: Increase assurance of lifeline utilities' business continuity plans (NL)			M - (initial) to produce guidance and establish monitoring processes); (ongoing) assurance	400	N - some review from agencies may be required ongoing	0	Engage in assurance process - depends on sector and current practice		H
	#3: Provide for detailed business continuity planning requirements to be set through regulations (PL)			H - (initial) do regulations and design enforcement processes L - assurance	600	L - (initial) input to regulations X2 agencies MBIE/TSY	400	Input to regulations Implement business continuity requirements - depends on current practice		H
12.C Barriers to cooperation and information sharing before and after an emergency	#4: Require essential infrastructure providers to contribute to sector response plans (PL)			N - BAU development of input to response plans	0	N - response plans are BAU intermittently developed by other government agencies	0	Input to plans		M
	#5: Strengthen information sharing protections (PL)			M - (initial)	400					L
	#6: Prescribe technical data standards through rules (NL)			M - (initial)	400	L - (initial) input to regulations X2 agencies MBIE/TSY	400	Input to standards		M
#13: Managing access to restricted areas	#2: Develop guidance and training on managing cordons (NL)	L - (initial) input to guidance Ongoing training costs	3,200	H - (initial)	600	L - (initial) input to guidance X4 key agencies MPI/MBIE/MSD/DIA	800	Input to guidance	Input to form	M
	#3: Prescribe the form of identification passes through regulations (NL)	N - (initial) input to form	0	L - (initial) develop form and Order in Council process	200	N - (initial) input to form)	0	Input to form	Input to form	L
	#4: Clarify that access can be restricted to any class or group of persons (PL)									L
#14: Modernising the process to enter a state of emergency or transition period	#2: Enable authorised persons to use electronic signatures (PL)	N	0	N	0					L
#15: Mayors' role in local state of emergency declarations and transition period notices	#2: Mayors have primary responsibility for declaring a local state of emergency or giving notice of a transition period for their district or wards (PL)	N	0	N	0					L
#16 Providing greater oversight of extended states of emergency	#2: Increase reporting requirements for states of emergency and transition periods (PL)	N	0	N	0					L

ISSUES	OPTIONS (preferred package)	COSTS (additional cost to the status quo)								BENEFITS
		CDEM Groups	\$000 Averaged over x16 Groups (unless specified otherwise)	NEMA	\$000	Government Agencies	\$000	Essential infrastructure providers (incl. local government) (non-monetised indication of costs)	Iwi Māori and communities (non-monetised indication of costs)	
and transition periods										
				Additional NEMA assurance (over 4 years)	2,000					
Indicative total monetised cost (over approx. 4 years)			82,800		11,600		7,800			

7.8. Emergency Management Otago 2026 Community Resilience Survey

Prepared for: Otago Emergency Management Committee
Report No. CDEM2651
Activity: Emergency Management Otago 2026 Community Resilience Survey
Author: Erica Andrews (Stakeholder Engagement Advisor)
Endorsed by: Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago)
Date: 18 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] This report is designed to provide insights into the results of the 2026 Emergency Management Otago Community Resilience Survey, and where gaps have been identified, highlight opportunities for future activities to support a targeted increase to community resilience prior to and during emergencies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] Emergency Management Otago (EMO) carried out the 2026 Community Resilience Survey from 15 June 2026 to 29 June 2026 using the Ask Your Team survey tool. 1029 people across Otago took part in this year's survey.
- [3] Thirty questions were used to gain insights into the community's awareness of hazards and potential impacts, measure levels of preparedness and gain a clear view of preferred information channels. Links to templates, websites and information were included throughout the survey to guide people to useful information sources.
- [4] The 5 – 10-minute survey was promoted using online channels, paid print, radio and apps advertising, stakeholder and partner agency communications and in person when engaging with communities, schools, and businesses.
- [5] People had an option to enter a draw at the end of the survey with 1 of 5 grab bags available to give away.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Otago Emergency Management Committee

- 1) **Notes** this report.

BACKGROUND

- [6] Emergency Management Otago undertakes an annual Community Resilience Survey to understand the levels of hazard awareness, personal preparedness and which information channels are used by residents during emergencies.
- [7] The survey activity aligns with objective 1 in the Emergency Management Otago Community Resilience Strategy, specifically understanding hazards, preparing for an emergency and preferred information channels.

DISCUSSION

- [8] The survey results reflect a growing awareness among participants of the risks posed by climate change and the need for emergency preparedness. Many respondents have taken initial steps—such as preparing emergency kits and investing in backup power sources—but also identified clear gaps in knowledge and accessible guidance.
- [9] While there is a strong sense of personal responsibility, practical barriers such as cost and limited time continue to hinder more comprehensive preparedness. Respondents expressed a desire for clearer, more consistent information—suggesting tools like regular reminders and checklists could help support ongoing action.
- [10] Community support emerged as another important theme, with many valuing local resilience networks and neighbourhood planning. However, communication challenges were commonly reported, particularly a lack of follow-up after expressions of interest in community initiatives.
- [11] Overall, the findings point to both strengths and areas for improvement. To strengthen individual and collective readiness, there is a pressing need for better public education, improved outreach and more accessible resources. By addressing these gaps and building on existing efforts, communities can enhance their resilience to future emergencies and climate-related events.
- [12] The Household Emergency Plan campaign was delivered in partnership with the Otago Highlanders and the ORC Communications and Marketing team. The collaboration helped extend the campaigns reach through the Highlanders strong regional profile and a coordinated mix of social media, digital advertise website content and internal channels. Using familiar Highlanders players and the theme of teamwork made household planning more engaging and reinforced that everyone has a role to play in preparing for an emergency.
- [13] The latest Community Resilience Survey showed a 2% increase in respondents who reported having a household emergency plan. While this change cannot be attributed solely to the campaign, it is a positive indication that ongoing public education and preparedness activities are helping build resilience across Otago.

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

Hazard awareness

- [14] 97% (up from 93% in 2025) of participants stated they understand that the likelihood and/or severity of some hazards may change due to climate change, 86 % (up from 83% in 2025) knew where to look for information about hazards that could affect their family and 92% (up from 90% in 2025) had heard about an Alpine Fault (AF8) earthquake.

"It's not "may" increase, it's "will" increase. Flooding, storms and wildfire in particular."

Emergency planning and supplies

- [15] In 2025 the number of respondents who had a household emergency plan was 44%. This year 46% of people answered yes and reassuringly, 53% said "they just want to be prepared".

"Living in a reasonably vulnerable coastal community with one road in & out, we are acutely aware that we have to be responsible for our household, neighbours & the local community."

- [16] Most people have some emergency supplies including an alternative means of cooking, stored nonperishable food and water, lighting or a first aid kit. Of note, is the low number of people who have a grab bag (296) although 43% stated getting a grab bag prepared was the one thing they will do in the next 12 months.

"We have 5000l rainwater tank plus solar panels and battery storage".

Information sources

- [17] Radio (77%) and Emergency Mobile Alerts (78%) continue to be the preferred method that people use to find information during an emergency followed by the Emergency Management Otago & Council websites. Additional sustained national public education campaigns are resonating with the respondents with most people knowing Drop, Cover and Hold and the Long or Strong, Get Gone messaging.

"If cell towers are down, it would be radio and word of mouth".

SURVEY RESULTS

[Clutha District](#)

[Central Otago District](#)

[Dunedin City](#)

[Queenstown Lakes District](#)

[Waitaki District](#)

[Otago Region](#)

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [18] This activity is in alignment with the National Disaster Resilience Strategy, the EMO Annual Plan 2025-2026 and the 2023-2026 Emergency Management Otago Community Resilience Strategy.

Financial Considerations

- [19] A budget of \$20,000 was allocated for the survey, with the total campaign coming in over budget at **\$23,532.52**

Significance and Engagement

- [20] No matters arising.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [21] The Otago Emergency Management Committee operates under the provisions of the Emergency Management Act 2026, this activity is in alignment with these provisions.

Climate Change Considerations

- [22] No matters arising.

Communications Considerations

- [23] No matters arising.

NEXT STEPS

- [24] Emergency Management Otago will identify an opportunity for a dedicated campaign in the coming year, aimed at improving results in one of the three areas: hazard awareness, preparedness or knowledge of trusted information sources.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.9. Otago Essential Infrastructure Report

Prepared for: Otago Emergency Management Committee
Report No. CDEM2646
Activity: Emergency Management Otago
Author: Mel Banks (Lifelines Program Lead)
Endorsed by: Matt Alley (Group Manager, Emergency Management Otago)
Date: 18 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] This report informs the Otago Emergency Management Committee of the activity at the Otago Essential Infrastructure meeting on 2 September 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] The Otago Essential Infrastructure Program, formerly the Otago Lifelines Program, exists and is owned by the members of the Otago Lifelines Group, in alignment with sections 76, 79 and 80 of the Emergency Management Act 2026. The group meets quarterly to enhance the connectivity of essential infrastructure providers across agency and sector boundaries to improve critical infrastructure resilience as per the Otago Lifelines Group ToR.
- [3] The Otago Lifelines Group is focused on delivering the recommendations that came from the Otago Vulnerability Assessment 2024, with an emphasis on business continuity planning to enable stronger resilience and capabilities in adverse situations, and to manage expectations.
- [4] The new name for the Otago Lifelines Group is yet to be agreed, and terms of reference are to be updated to align with the Emergency Management Act 2026.
- [5] In alignment with the Annual Plan, the recommendations from the Vulnerability Assessment are:
- a. Alternate Communication Plan - Completed
 - b. Fuel Plan - Completed
 - c. Generator Plan
 - d. Lifeline Utility Coordinator Exercise - Completed
 - e. Upgrade of the Otago Lifelines GIS Viewer

- [6] The membership of the group consists of representatives at a regional level from:
- a. Emergency Management Otago
 - b. Regional and District Councils
 - c. Electricity
 - d. Telecommunications
 - e. Transport
 - f. 3 Waters
 - g. Roding
 - h. NEMA

RECOMMENDATION

That the Otago Emergency Management Committee:

- 1) **Notes** this report.
- 2) **Notes** the updates from the Otago Lifeline Utilities Group meeting

BACKGROUND

- [7] Otago and Southland operate under a joint fuel plan. The plan update has been completed from the Emergency Management Otago perspective and aligns with the 2024 National Fuel Plan.
- [8] The Alternative Communication Plan has been renamed to Emergency Management Otago PACE Plan 2026; this has been completed. PACE stands for *Primary, Alternative, Contingency, Emergency*.
- Emergency coordination centres across Otago have robust Primary and Alternative means of communication and variable Contingency and Emergency means of communication. The different means and methods have been consolidated into the Plan.
- [9] The Otago Generator Management Plan first draft was issued in October 2025, with feedback from reviewers indicating the scope and content should be broadened to capture generator inventory held by rental equipment providers within Otago.
- [10] The Otago Lifelines Geographic Information System (GIS) Viewer has been retired. The utility layers have been integrated into the Emergency Management Otago Common Operating Picture (CoP) platform. ORC natural hazard layers have been integrated into the Lifelines tab in the CoP.
- [11] Emergency Management Otago staff members Mel Banks and Taylor Hendl have been invited to work with NEMA's System Capability and Infrastructure teams to develop a new Lifeline Utilities Coordination (LUC) training package for National, Regional and Local level LUCs. The NEMA training package will be heavily based on the training package developed by Taylor Hendl and Mel Banks for Otago's local EOCs and regional ECC LUCs.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

[12] The Otago Lifelines Group is in alignment with the Otago Group Plan.

Financial Considerations

[13] Costs associated with attending and contributing to committee meetings are met by participating agencies.

Significance and Engagement

[14] Engagement with members of the committee is active and ongoing.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

[15] Emergency Management Otago operates under the provisions of the Emergency Management Act 2026 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 Act. The Otago Lifelines Group is in alignment with these provisions.

Climate Change Considerations

[16] No matters arising.

Communications Considerations

[17] No matters arising.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Otago Lifelines Meeting 2 September 2026 Minutes [7.9.1 - 8 pages]
2. Otago Essential Infrastructure Workplan Report September 2026 [7.9.2 - 5 pages]

Otago Lifelines Group Meeting Minutes

DATE & LOCATION:

2 September 2026, via MS Teams

MEETING TIME:

10:00 am-12:00 Noon

Attendees

Rod Francis (EMO)	Mallory Wood (TWO)	Simon Faddes (PowerNet)
Nicole Felts (NZTA)	Mark Wilson (Transpower)	Jessica Cotton (Aurora)
Paul Lloyd (Meridian Energy)	Tania Cribb (Aurora)	Amy Francis (Network Waitaki)
Courtenay Jamieson (EMO)	Doug Tamatea (KiwiRail)	Glenn Hutton (Unifone)
Jasmine Weston (EMO)	Lisa Roberts (NZCL)	Alison Tomlinson (QLDC)
Mathew Scott (WDC)	Andrew Welsh (EMO)	Danny Fountaine (EMO)
Clare Dobson (TCF)	Vanessa Jones (FSSI)	Louis Perenara (Chorus)
Taylor Hendl (EMO)	Richard McKey (Contact)	Bill Nicoll (QLDC)
Mark Hardman (CODC)	Wayne Smith (Chorus)	Jon Mitchell (QLD)

Apologies

Matt Alley (EMO)	Glenn Mitchell (EMO)	Andrew Watson (CODC)
Mel Banks (EMO)	Erica Andrews (EMO)	Cynthia Wilson (DCC)
Tim van Woerden (ORC)	Dave Grimes (EMO)	Mark Tynan (ONE NZ)
John Coutts (DCC)	Roger Hughes (QLDC)	

1. Welcome and Apologies

Nicole Felts opened the meeting and noted apologies received.

2. Lifelines Work Programme Update (Nicole Felts on behalf of Mel Banks)

Emergency Management Otago PACE Plan

- The alternate communications plan has been renamed the **Emergency Management Otago PACE Plan**.
- PACE stands for **Primary, Alternative, Contingency and Emergency**.
- The plan is undergoing final review by Emergency Management Otago.
- Once approved, it will be shared with the Otago Lifelines group and can be used as a template by organisations developing their own PACE/BCP arrangements.

LUC training

- Emergency Management Otago, Hawke's Bay Emergency Management and NEMA are developing a revised **Lifelines Utility Coordinator (LUC) training package**.

- The package will support LUCs working in Emergency Operations Centres as well as utility organisations.
- Release is expected in **early 2027**.

3. NEMA Update (Nicole Felts on behalf of NEMA)

- Emergency Management Bill implementation.
- Review of the National Disaster Resilience Strategy/plan.
- Development of an Emergency Management sector operating system.
- National Emergency Management Facility.
- Public service transformation.

The NEMA Infrastructure Resilience Team is also progressing:

- Access management arrangements for emergency cordons.
- A self-assessment tool for sector coordinating entities and Lifelines groups.
- Rationalisation of requests for infrastructure vulnerability information.
- A stocktake and roadmap for GIS asset/status layers.
- Updated LUC training.
- Revision of the National Vulnerability Assessment.
- Ports and airports resilience research.

A future Emergency Management operating system is expected to provide a **common operating picture**, incorporating hazards, lifelines and outages to improve real-time situational awareness.

Other points noted:

- The National Lifeline Utility Forum will be held in **Hamilton in November**.
- NEMA has been undertaking readiness work for the forecast El Niño conditions.
- Initial warning system contact information is being maintained and updated.
- Regional fuel disruption plans have been refreshed.
- A new disaster waste management guideline has been published.

4. New Zealand Lifelines Council Update (Lisa Roberts)

The National Vulnerability Assessment is being reviewed, with work focusing on:

- Alignment with emerging critical/essential infrastructure definitions.
- Developing a maturity pathway for assessing overall sector resilience.

- Understanding differences between resilience standards for buildings and the horizontal infrastructure that supports them.
- Improving understanding of infrastructure connection and emergency generator issues.

The Lifelines Council's submission on the Commerce Commission Resilience Guide highlighted the need for:

- Greater guidance and proportionality.
- Recognition that some proposed resilience practices may be expensive or inappropriate for all projects.
- Better integration of resilience into existing risk and asset-management frameworks rather than creating another standalone management system.

The Otago Lifelines group was noted as performing strongly in maintaining core documentation and foundational risk/vulnerability assessment work.

5. Roading

NZ Transport Agency / NZTA (Nicole Felts)

- **State Highway 1 Kātiki rock armouring** continues to address coastal erosion.
- An AF8 national response plan has been drafted, based on priority routes and restoration-time work.
- Priority 1 bridge assessments are underway.

July and recent severe weather

- Coastal Otago experienced significant flooding and snow during the July event, although the network remained largely in business-as-usual operation.
- State Highways 88, 85 and 87 were affected.
- Communication during incidents should continue through the appropriate **regional ECC** channels.
- Local councils and their contractors do not have authority to independently close a state highway; the relevant emergency management process applies.

Central Otago / Haast severe weather

- More than 30 slip sites were reported.
- State Highway 6 through the Haast area was significantly affected.
- One lane has been reopened under controlled convoy arrangements, with three convoys per day.
- Two vehicles were stranded during the initial event but were safely recovered.
- Further rainfall could trigger additional slips and potentially require short-notice changes to convoy arrangements.
- Prolonged recovery work, including rock scaling, is expected.

Action: NZTA to consider sharing the AF8 work once formally approved, potentially through a future Lifelines meeting presentation.

Action: Consider stronger engagement with local community resilience groups to support communications during road closures and emergencies. A region-wide list of community groups may be circulated with the meeting notes.

6. Local authority updates

Waitaki District Council

- Coastal strategy work is progressing.
- July weather caused isolated flooding and snow-related impacts.
- State Highway 1 was closed on 6–8 July.
- Water services experienced boil-water and water-conservation notices due to high source-water turbidity.
- Some isolated stormwater surcharging and flooding occurred, but overall impacts were relatively limited.

Dunedin City Council — 3 Waters

- Capital expenditure is broadly on budget.
- Resilience-related projects are progressing.
- Replacement of the damaged **West Harbour water supply line**, affected by the 2024 rain event, is progressing; the temporary repair continues to perform well.
- Preparations have begun for potential impacts from the forecast El Niño conditions.

Central Otago District Council

- Recent work has largely been routine maintenance and renewals.
- A GIS integration is being developed between road closures/restrictions, council systems and ORC Civil Defence GIS to support the common operating picture.
- Water-sector resilience investment includes automation and electrical upgrades, remote monitoring/control and more resilient communications using fibre, Starlink and multiple cellular providers.
- Work is underway with Lisa Roberts to update the council's 2020 resilience/emergency response plan.

Queenstown Lakes District Council

- Wānaka wastewater conveyance scheme.
- Beacon Point Road water-main resilience work.
- Glenorchy, Frankton/Queenstown Road and other NLTP/minor improvement projects.
- Shepherds Hut Creek Bridge work.
- A forthcoming contract for monitoring road resilience against slope and geotechnical hazards.

Recent Queenstown Lakes weather event

- Significant stormwater impacts occurred, particularly around Fernhill and Gorge Road.
- Approximately **45 people** required welfare support.
- Stormwater cleanup remains underway.
- Numerous road impacts and some outages remain.
- Two Mile water treatment facilities were affected, resulting in water-conservation messaging.
- Lessons will be taken from the event, including review of stormwater network performance and required patch repairs.

Electricity Sector

Meridian (Paul Lloyd)

- Accelerometers/earthquake response systems installed across sites.
- Analysis of the Ostler Fault affecting the Ōhau canal system.
- Ongoing Benmore penstock strengthening project.
- Landslide analysis at West Arm, Manapōuri.
- An emergency response was initiated following an unprecedented trip of Manapōuri Power Station on 23 August.
- Lake Pūkaki was reported at 86% full, with above-average storage levels and potential for early spilling.

Transpower (Mark Wilson)

- Readiness planning exercises are underway, including plans covering the first **12–48 hours** following a major event.
- A specific plan is being developed for the **Cromwell–Frankton transmission line**, which supplies Queenstown.
- Investigation is underway into a potential second transmission supply to Queenstown.
- Additional work is examining resilience of transmission structures against scour associated with braided rivers.

Contact Energy (Richard McKey)

- Active water-level management is underway in response to current conditions and potential El Niño impacts.
- Hawea gate maintenance has been completed.
- The Clyde Transformer Project has been completed, with four transformers replaced and commissioned.
- Four of eight turbine replacements at Roxburgh have now been completed.

- Drawdown management plans are being developed for Lake Hawea, Lake Dunstan and Lake Roxburgh.

PowerNet (Simon Faddes)

- PowerNet won Energy Distributor of the Year at the Energy Awards
- 3 new GM's: Mark Watson (Data, Technology and IT Support, Adrian Nadan (Networks)
- Staff completed CIMS refresher with a strong focus on the October 2025 wind event.
- July weather event: ~400 customers in the Clarks Junction / Middlemarch area impacted, generators deployed. 34 broken poles and 20+ broken cross arms.
- 110Kv Hokonui Project

Aurora Energy (Jessica Cotton)

- Planning is underway for a **community battery trial in Glenorchy**, intended to provide additional resilience if the area is isolated from Queenstown.
- Two-day SIMS refresher training is planned.
- A business continuity exercise is being developed with a third-party provider, with field service providers potentially involved.
- Aurora experienced no major impacts from the July weather event.

Network Waitaki (Amy Francis)

- Ongoing maintenance and replacement work continues.
- El Niño preparedness discussions are underway.
- Vegetation risk surveys continue.
- The network performed well during recent flooding, although flooding highlighted a potential vulnerability around the Pukuri Zone substation when State Highway 1 was closed.
- NZTA and Network Waitaki are investigating potential drainage improvements.

Action: Electricity sector representatives to consider providing a presentation at a future meeting on lessons learned from recent emergency responses, including coordination with Lifelines and Civil Defence.

9. Telecommunications**Telecommunications Forum (Clare Dobson)**

- Progressing its Emergency Management Plan and supporting operations manual.
- Formalising its role as a sector coordinating entity.
- Developing a secure information-sharing tool based on lessons from the previous year's wind event.

The new tool will allow telecommunications organisations to provide asset information and enable electricity companies to use that information to support restoration prioritisation. Presentations/testing with electricity distribution businesses are planned.

Chorus (Louis Perenara)

- Network diversity work continues.
 - Additional Starlink kits and satellite phones are being prepared for vulnerable customers during weather events.
 - Previous fibre damage around the Makarora area has informed improved fibre installation practices around bridges.
 - The network generally stood up well during recent events.
-

10. Ports & Airport**KiwiRail (Doug Tamatea)**

- The Main South Line between Dunedin and Balclutha was closed for two days during the July heavy rain event.
- Closure was due to elevated water levels around several bridges.

Queenstown Airport (Bill Nicoll on behalf of)

- A significant mass evacuation planning project is underway in partnership with Queenstown Airport.
 - A future Lifelines meeting presentation was suggested, ideally involving the airport and project leads.
-

11. Health New Zealand (Mallory Wood)

- Completing business continuity plans for hospitals across the district.
- Updating the adverse weather plan following recent events.
- Snow caused significant staff and patient access challenges at Dunedin Hospital; approximately **40 people were transported using local 4WD support** to enable shift changes and access to care.
- Work is underway to identify aged residential facilities with on-site generators.
- The new Dunedin outpatient building has opened, with the first patients expected around mid-October.

Potential collaboration: Discussion was raised around batteries and solar resilience for healthcare facilities, particularly in the Queenstown Lakes area.

12. Food Supply Sector**Foodstuffs (Vanessa Jones)**

- Internal resilience planning, particularly for head office.
- Training new incident management team members.
- Internal scenario exercises.

- Backup communications planning.
- Building resilience at supermarkets through backup communications, power and network arrangements.
- Refreshing the supply-chain emergency response plan.

13. Natural Hazards

Otago Regional Council (Andrew Welsh)

ORC has completed a **region-wide prioritisation framework** to inform future Long-Term Plan investment and identify priority areas for resilience work. The work has been presented to ORC Council and Civil Defence stakeholders.

Other work includes:

- Roxburgh debris-flow and flood-hazard modelling.
- High-level options assessment for potential hazard mitigation at Roxburgh, with ongoing stakeholder involvement.
- Lindsay Creek flood-hazard assessment, with results to be presented to ORC Council and subsequently made publicly available.
- Regional LiDAR capture, with funding confirmed to achieve **100% regional coverage**.
- Approximately 91% of the Western Otago/Queenstown Lakes target area has been captured so far.
- Around 8,000 km of LiDAR data has been captured and is undergoing quality control, with the first data block expected to be available before the end of the year.

GIS

ORC is working towards applications that can be incorporated into the Emergency Management Otago common operating picture. Requirements and potential uses are still being discussed.

Other Business

Rewiring / electricity presentation

- A presentation previously given at the Southern Lifelines Forum was discussed as potentially useful for the Otago group.
- It was suggested that the electricity sector review the material and provide feedback.
- Nicole will discuss bringing this presentation to a future meeting.

MEETING CLOSED:

11:10 am 2 September 2026

Next meeting: 2 December, via MS Teams

Otago Lifeline Utilities Group

Work Plan Update: September 2026

Purpose

The Otago Lifeline Utilities Group is to enhance the connectivity of the Essential Infrastructure Providers across agency and sector boundaries to improve infrastructure resilience.

Reporting

The Otago Lifeline Utilities Group reports to the Otago Emergency Management Committee, with activity reported quarterly.

Meetings

The Otago Lifeline Utilities Group meets four times yearly, and otherwise as required. Membership of the group is defined in the National Plan Order 2015, though attendance and participation in activities have varied.

Membership

The Otago Lifeline Utilities Group has the following members:

- Otago Lifelines Chair
- Otago Lifelines Program Lead
- Representatives from:
 - Electricity Sector
 - Transportation
 - Roding
 - Telecommunications
 - 3 Waters
 - Otago Regional Council
 - National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
 - Emergency Management Otago
 - Fast Moving Consumer Goods
 - Health

Overview

The projects in Table 1 have been identified as risks in the [Otago Vulnerability Assessment](#) undertaken in 2024, as plans that are not currently in place.

The projects in Table 2 have plans and projects currently in place that require a review and updating.

Table 1

Recommended Projects from the 2024 Otago Vulnerability Assessment for the Otago Lifeline Utilities Group						
	Project	Plan Status	Project Brief / Context	Activity	Risk	Work Status
1	Lifeline Utilities Communications Plan <i>Refer to item #1 in Table 2: Joint Projects</i>	No plan currently in place	Communication in an emergency is critical for clear coordination and the sharing of information, this can be supported by several methods. Therefore, it is critical to understand where key communications equipment is located who owns and operates the resource, which agencies have access to which services (e.g. VHF / UHF / Satellite etc), which frequencies are currently being used and the contacts within each organisation (both personnel and call signs). This would enable a clear communications plan for use in emergencies to be established and provide prioritisation for restoration of critical sites to enable its enactment.	- Review the Otago Lifeline Utilities Coordinator Protocols (minor update required) - Creation of a Starlink information pack - Compile existing technology supporting alternate communications, i.e. One.NZ text to Satellite. - Encourage the Otago Lifeline Utilities Group to understand their Business Continuity Plans to support the development of the Communication Plan - An exercise with the Otago Lifeline Utilities Group to test the communications plan when completed.		Underway
2	Regional Generator Plan	No plan currently in place	There is a high reliance across lifeline utility providers for backup power generation. These resources are limited within the region and will require significant coordination to ensure their placement and use is prioritised for maximum effect	Feedback from the first draft indicated the scope of the plan to be broadened. Further data collection is required to capture the inventory of generators held by		Underway Increased scope of the plan and additional

			in response and recovery. An Otago Regional plan would identify the requirements across lifeline utilities and other key response organisations, coordination and logistical arrangements and prioritisation for specific hazards and their impacts.	- rental equipment providers within Otago. - Collaboration with WellSouth to assist with information gathering from private GP's and Pharmacies. - The National Fuel Data set has been issued by NEMA on behalf of MBIE, providing partial information surrounding Fuel stations' backup power supply. - Aurora Energy to look at options for mobile and fixed infrastructure to support the plan. - An opportunity to capture critical information on generator distribution during the October 2025 Clutha District Local State of Emergency to be incorporated into the plan - Investigate locations in Otago that have large-sized generators (200kVa +) - Meet with the Rural Support Trust who coordinated the distribution and rotation of generators on dairy farms during the Clutha weather event.		information collection required, delivery of the plan moved into Q2 ('26-'27)
3	Otago Lifeline Utilities training and exercising	No current training and exercise program for the Otago Lifeline	The coordination of lifeline utility providers in response is critical to ensuring an effective response and recovery. Familiarity with the systems and requirements of response, as well as the current plans and procedures, is vital to enable this to occur.	Integration of Otago Lifeline Utilities into D4H. D4H training session planned during the March Lifelines Meeting		Completed

		Utilities Group	Training and exercising are keyways to ensure readiness for response, and this should be encouraged across the Lifeline Group, both with utility providers to test their arrangements and across the wider Lifeline Group to ensure effective coordination. Where possible, collaboration should be sought between Otago Lifelines Group members when organising training events such as the Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS), to further develop relationships and reduce the cost of training to each participating organisation.	• D4H exercise delivered to Otago Lifeline Utilities group members, not part of the district EOCs • EMO working with NEMA to develop a Lifeline Utilities Coordinator (LUC) training package. Expected delivery Feb 2027.		
4	Impacts of lifeline infrastructure failures on the wider environment	No current assessment	The identification of the social, economic, and natural impacts of lifeline utility failures can provide Emergency Management Otago partner lifeline utility organisations with critical information to support the prioritisation of reduction and mitigation works and planning for service restoration in an emergency. This may include the use of systems such as Riskscape to provide an analysis of the impacts of outages and the identification of critical assets.	• Investigate if any New Zealand Universities have had master's or PhD studies on the consequences of infrastructure failure concerning Lifeline Utilities.		Planned

Table 2

Joint Projects (Otago Group Office, Otago Lifeline Utilities Group, Inter-Regional CDEM Groups)						
	Project	Plan Status	Activity this quarter	Activity planned	Risk	Work Status
1	Otago & Southland Fuel Plan 2019	The plan requires review and updating	Plan updated to reflect the National Fuel Plan 2024 and provided to key stakeholders and a separate critical customer list.	- Continue the review of the plan with support from the Fuel Sector Coordinating Entity from MBIE - Expression of interest received from Canterbury CDEM to meet and discuss the inter-region dependencies of the fuel.		Completed as a draft Otago Southland Fuel Plan 2026
2	Update Emergency Management Otago Alternative Communications Plan 2023	The plan requires a review	- NEMA PACE Plan received. - PACE Plans received from districts - Template created for plan, shared with WCG for their plan development - The Otago Lifeline Utilities Communications Plan and the update of the Emergency Management Otago Alternative Communications Plan (2023) have been combined into one document for ease and consistency. This document will be called: <i>Emergency Management Otago, Alternative Communication Plan (2026)</i>	- Plan to be completed Q1 ('26-'27) - Format district PACE plans for consistency. - Group office review - Renamed to: Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management PACE Plan		Completed in September.
3	Further development of the Otago Lifelines Geographic Information Systems Viewer 2018	The viewer requires review and update.	- Requested updated data sets, at a national level, from the telecommunications sector - Received CODC Vulnerability Assessment and supporting GIS layers around infrastructure	- ORC GIS team lead to attend OLG meeting to request updated GIS layers for district councils and utilities. - Integrate Otago Regional Council Hazard layers into EMO CoP.		Underway

Low Risk:  Medium Risk:  High Risk: 

7.10. NEMA Update

Prepared for: Otago Emergency Management Committee
Report No. CDEM2645
Activity: Civil Defence and Emergency Management
Author: Shaun O'Halloran (National Emergency Management Agency)
Endorsed by: Matt Alley, Group Manager (Emergency Management Otago)
Date: 18 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] This report is to update the Emergency Management Committee with the latest activities and matters that the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is working on.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] Details on the NEMA update are outlined in the attached report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Coordinating Executive Group:

- 1) **Notes** this report.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [3] Nothing arising.

Financial Considerations

- [4] Nothing arising.

Significance and Engagement

- [5] Nothing arising.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [6] Nothing arising.

Climate Change Considerations

- [7] Nothing arising.

Communications Considerations

- [8] Nothing arising.

ATTACHMENTS

1. NEMA Update Otago EMC [7.10.1 - 2 pages]



**National Emergency
Management Agency**
Te Rākau Whakamarumaru

National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Update

Otago Emergency Management Committee (EMC)

18 September 2026

Purpose

1. To provide the Committee with assurance on nationally led emergency management system improvements, identify implications for Otago, and highlight where continued regional engagement is required

Executive Summary

2. **Emergency Management System Strengthening:** NEMA continues to advance priority legislative and operational reforms to strengthen New Zealand's emergency management system, working closely with CDEM Groups on implementation planning.
3. **Emergency Management Act (EM Act):** The EM Act has now come into force. NEMA is supporting the sector to implement change.
4. **EMS-OS:** Following Budget 2026 funding, EMS-OS has entered phased delivery to modernise emergency management technology, with ongoing engagement helping shape future capability development.
5. **El Niño Readiness:** NEMA is supporting national preparedness activities and shared situational awareness for potential El Niño impacts, including drought, wildfire risk, and weather-related disruptions.

Emergency management system strengthening

6. The national emergency management work programme remains focused on establishing a stronger legislative, operational and planning foundation for complex, large-scale emergencies. The Emergency Management Bill and Emergency Management Sector Operational Systems (EMS-OS) programme remain the highest priority system initiatives.
7. NEMA remains committed to working alongside Emergency Management Committees and Regional Emergency Management Offices to ensure that national initiatives are practical, informed by regional experience and aligned with local arrangements. Early and ongoing engagement will support implementation planning and help identify capability, assurance and resourcing implications as they emerge.

Emergency Management Act (EM Act)

8. The Emergency Management Bill (No.2) had its third reading on 25 August 2026 and received Royal Assent on 3 September 2026, passing the bill into law on Friday 4th September 2026.
9. The passage of the EM Act marks a significant milestone for New Zealand's emergency management system. The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act (CDEM Act) has been in place since 2002, and over the past two decades New Zealand has experienced major emergencies, inquiries, reviews, and system reforms that have highlighted both the strengths of the current system and the need for change.



10. The EM Act reflects the increased expectations of the emergency management system and everyone involved in it. It provides new tools and mechanisms to strengthen capability, improve consistency, and lift performance across the sector, while supporting objectives that have emerged from successive reviews and inquiries into emergency management.
11. The EM Act enables significant change, but implementing that change requires a careful and considered approach. NEMA recognises that many parts of the emergency management system are already operating under pressure, while also responding to increasing emergency risks, wider public sector reforms, and competing priorities. As a result, implementation will be sequenced and prioritised over time, focusing first on the areas that are most critical to achieving the intended reforms.
12. A series of Topic Information Sheets that highlight changes and implementation implications are available on [NEMA's website](#).

Emergency Management Sector Operational Systems (EMS-OS)

13. EMS-OS was funded through Budget 2026 and is intended to modernise the technology used across response and recovery. The programme comprises four connected capabilities: a sector foundational data platform, a common operating picture, operational coordination tools, and an upgraded National Warning System.
14. Delivery is phased. Near-term work is focused on warning-system and selected stand-alone tools. Data-platform improvements and more integrated operational tools are expected to follow, with the full system anticipated to take about three years to develop and mature.
15. NEMA facilitated an Otago workshop on 08-09 July. The workshop was part of a national series intended to inform assumptions for the next detailed business case, including extension of operational tools to regional and local users. NEMA considers Otago's involvement essential to ensure the solution is designed with regional requirements in mind, including multi-agency coordination, regional interdependencies, data governance, cyber security and the transition from current tools and processes.

El Niño webinar and seasonal planning

16. International climate agencies and preparedness networks are monitoring the development of El Niño conditions during 2026-27. NEMA's regional engagement approach is to support shared situational awareness and practical planning.
17. A national webinar was convened recently to bring together views from across the sector on potential impacts and to assist situational awareness. Nationally, potential readiness discussions are considering drought and water-supply stress, elevated vegetation-fire conditions, heat and health impacts, coastal and marine effects, severe-weather variability, supply-chain disruption, and the potential for concurrent events.

Shaun O'Halloran | Senior Regional Emergency Management Advisor

National Emergency Management Agency Te Rākau Whakamarumaru

KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

WHEN TO USE IT > To end the day • To close a meeting

**Kua mutu a mātou mahi
Mō tēnei wā
Manaakitia mai mātou katoa
O mātou hoa
O mātou whānau
Āio ki te aorangi**

**Our work is finished
For the moment
Bless us all
Our colleagues
Our families
Peace to the universe**

Alternative karakia whakamutunga

**Kia tau te rangimārie
Ki runga i ngā iwi o te ao
Let peace reign
On all peoples of the world**



Otago
Regional
Council