

# 1. REVIEW OF CIVIL DEFENCE ARRANGEMENTS UNDERTAKEN BY ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL

<b>Officer responsible</b> Director of Operations	<b>Author</b> Ken Lawn, 3711 607, Murray Sinclair 371-1852
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The purpose of this report is to review the civil defence arrangements currently in place between Environment Canterbury and the Council.

These arrangements have been in place for some years, and it is timely to review them, particularly as we are moving towards new Civil Defence/Emergency Management legislation.

This report is based on an external review commissioned from Mrs Marlene Harrison. Mrs Harrison has worked in the past with the Ministry for Civil Defence, and the West Coast Regional Council, and has provided an independent view.

## BACKGROUND

The Christchurch City Council and Banks Peninsula District Council have contracted Environment Canterbury to undertake civil defence on their behalf. This is permitted pursuant to Section 31 of the Civil Defence Act 1983. All other Councils in Canterbury undertake their own civil defence with Environment Canterbury providing a regional overview.

This arrangement started in 1987 when the then Christchurch Combined Districts Civil Defence Committee recommended to its constituent councils that the then Canterbury United Council undertake civil defence on behalf of the five Councils involved. This arrangement commenced in 1988, and was carried over by the new Christchurch City Council in 1989, and has remained (and developed) in that form since. It has generally worked well, and there has been good co-operation between Environment Canterbury and Christchurch city staff.

## CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

Environment Canterbury has a regional civil defence role to perform, and it prepares and maintains a Regional Civil Defence Plan. Incorporated into that plan are the local requirements for Christchurch City and Banks Peninsula.

The current civil defence structure for the city includes area headquarters (based at state high schools), sector posts (based at state primary schools) and welfare centres, which have been established throughout the city to provide support to the public during declared civil defence emergencies. Each of the area headquarters are provided with back up communications, trained volunteers, and the necessary resource support. A two-way flow of information is passed through this network to/from the Regional Headquarters (located at Environment Canterbury's offices in Kilmore Street).

The civil defence organisation has a dedicated and well set up operational headquarters to support its Civil Defence Controller who may act as regional or local controller, depending upon the extent of a declared emergency event. A number of Alternate Controllers are also available. Annual exercises have been developed and carried out to test the systems in place, and to identify where further training, resources, or improvements are needed.

As part of the regional civil defence structure, the Christchurch City Council runs and resources three other headquarters. These are Engineering Headquarters, Rescue Headquarters, and City Area Headquarters. These headquarters report to the Regional Council structure. This arrangement is included in the Regional Civil Defence Plan referred to earlier.

Environment Canterbury is in the early stages of purchasing another property beside its existing building. Consideration is being given to erecting a stand-alone civil defence headquarters/emergency management centre on part of that property.

Co-ordination of effort and liaison with agencies that have specific responsibilities during emergency events is well advanced. This is considered by Environment Canterbury Civil Defence to be a crucial role for its civil defence organisation. Environment Canterbury well understands that working in isolation is not an option, and it sees a major part of its function is the continued development of good working relationships with personnel within territorial authorities, emergency services, volunteers and their organisations, and all other support agencies. Contact lists are in place and regular updates are made.

Environment Canterbury Civil Defence is now recognised as a NZQA rated training provider and is continually developing accredited Civil Defence Emergency Management Courses. Rescue training is being provided for the public, and for business house rescue teams.

A systematic approach to provide the public with information to prepare for and better help themselves during an emergency is an ongoing task adopted by the Regional Civil Defence personnel. There is some media coverage, but the main effort is providing programmes for targeted groups. Examples include school programmes, the development of a schools kit, special caretaker courses for care giving agencies such as pre-schools and homes for the elderly.

#### **COST OF CURRENT SERVICE**

Since the present civil defence arrangement was agreed to by the Combined District Civil Defence Committee, the civil defence budget has increased from \$436,000 for 1988/89 to \$1,039,433 in 1999/2000. Environment Canterbury's civil defence budget for 2000/2001 is \$1,084,749 net after income from the Ministry of Civil Defence (subsidy), the rescue school course fees and interest.

The budget figure is broken down as shown below. The cost between Banks Peninsula and Christchurch City are allocated based on rateable values.

Regional Civil Defence	\$499,168
Christchurch City	\$555,581
Banks Peninsula	\$30,000
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Total	\$1,084,749

#### **ADEQUACY OF CURRENT SERVICE**

Mrs Harrison in her report provides the following commentary on the current civil defence services.

*"As the civil defence agent for Christchurch City Council and Banks Peninsula District Council and as prescribed in present legislation and the National Civil Defence Plan, Environment Canterbury Civil Defence is providing totally adequate civil defence services.*

*The term 'adequate' is to be interpreted positively. All services provided are of similar or better standard when measured against other civil defence organisations throughout New Zealand and in a number of areas Environment Canterbury Civil Defence can be considered a leader in the field – training and liaison, in particular, but also operational readiness, public awareness programmes and rescue.*

*It also is based on the understanding that improvement of services is ongoing and will come about through increased experience and improved methodology gained from that experience and from other knowledge sources".*

#### **OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

During the review a number of options were identified as to how civil defence arrangements could be carried out. The options identified in the report were:

1. Maintain existing arrangements with Environment Canterbury.
2. The Council undertakes the civil defence responsibility in-house.
3. The Council undertakes its own civil defence responsibility but training remains with Environment Canterbury Regional Civil Defence.
4. The Council undertakes its own civil defence responsibility with existing civil defence expertise and resources transferred to the Council.
5. A joint full partnership in meeting the provisions of civil defence under the Civil Defence Act. CCC and BPCD become equal partners with Environment Canterbury. A joint civil defence committee would be established to share the full role of civil defence.

6. Maintain existing arrangements except that Environment Canterbury takes full responsibility for Rescue. Christchurch City Council would no longer be involved with rescue except for the continued provision of in house rescue teams.

Whilst the above options were considered it would appear that there are realistically only two viable options. These being:

- Maintain the existing arrangements with Environment Canterbury; or
- The Council undertakes civil defence responsibilities in-house.

The strengths and weakness of both these options are explored below:

### 1. Maintaining the Current Arrangements with Environment Canterbury

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets requirements of the Civil Defence Act 1983.</li> <li>• Dedicated Civil Defence/Emergency Management team.</li> <li>• Existing staff have significant expertise built up over time.</li> <li>• Avoidance of duplicating Civil Defence Headquarters.</li> <li>• Established and tested Civil Defence Headquarters and civil defence structures.</li> <li>• Environment Canterbury staff are committed to civil defence with responsibility built into their job descriptions.</li> <li>• During an emergency, Environment Canterbury staff are available to serve in headquarters as they are unlikely to have field responsibilities. CCC and BPDC can continue with their operational responsibilities.</li> <li>• Development of co-operation between agencies at both elected member and staff level is well advanced, as is the development of co-operation with volunteers and volunteer associations.</li> <li>• Well adapted to the holistic approach to civil defence proposed in the Civil Defence Emergency Management Bill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of ownership by Council for civil defence functions within the city.</li> <li>• Lack of formal service level agreement between Environment Canterbury and the City Council.</li> <li>• Currently inadequate reporting criteria.</li> <li>• Present financial recording method does not disclose the cost of operating Civil Defence by Environment Canterbury in adequate detail.</li> <li>• Many CCC staff do not have clear civil defence roles built into their job descriptions, nor have they participated in training.</li> </ul>

### 2. The Council Undertakes Civil Defence Function In-house

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets requirements of the Civil Defence Act 1983.</li> <li>• Clear accountabilities for the Council.</li> <li>• During an emergency, staff are available to serve in Headquarters and outside activities.</li> <li>• Management, control and accounting requirements can be set up to meet the needs of individual Councils.</li> <li>• Better “ownership” of civic defence responsibilities by the City Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expertise built up over the years would be lost if existing staff are not retained and redeployed.</li> <li>• An experienced and effective civil defence team would be broken up.</li> <li>• Training capability &amp; exercise development expertise would be lost.</li> <li>• Establishment cost for setting up the new civil defence structure would be high.</li> <li>• Training costs to raise Council staff to the same level of capability as that which existing under present arrangements would be high.</li> <li>• During an emergency, Council staff involved in adverse events or emergencies have workload increased to meet the demands.</li> <li>• There could be conflict between civil defence duties and operational requirements, unless civil defence personnel are drawn from the ranks of those who do not have operational responsibilities during an emergency.</li> </ul>

Mrs Harrison concluded that the existing arrangement with Environment Canterbury was the best option at this time. This conclusion is supported at officer level and the efficiencies/benefits of the current arrangements with Environment Canterbury are identified below.

#### **EFFICIENCIES/BENEFITS OF PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS**

There are a number of benefits gained from the present arrangement with Environment Canterbury.

- Environment Canterbury civil defence staff, including the Controller, are a source of dedicated emergency management expertise.
- The personnel mentioned above provide a concentrated focus on emergency management and liaison with agencies involved in dealing with emergencies, and often are the leading agent for dealing with joint issues.
- There are cost savings by having only one agency - removing duplication of effort, resources, staff time, and expertise.
- The present arrangement means that other emergency services and agencies are not required to provide liaison support to more than one civil defence headquarters within the city.
- Environment Canterbury provides a dedicated Civil Defence Headquarters that is well resourced with fairly easy access, even in an emergency. A new stand-alone Civil Defence Headquarters is current being considered by Environment Canterbury.
- Regional Civil Defence staff have links with volunteers and understand the issues of how to manage and maintain volunteers in a specialised arena of service.
- Environment Canterbury not only ensures back up communications provided do work but also supplies communications equipment, expertise and training to civil defence posts and welfare centres. A significant resource has been established.

#### **ISSUES IDENTIFIED/IMPROVEMENTS TO CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS WITH ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY**

During the review of current civil defence arrangements a number of issues were identified where improvements could be made. These included the following:

- CCC and Environment Canterbury need to develop a formal agreement for the service to be delivered, including consultation and formal reporting, training requirements, clear financial reporting and performance measures. There has never been a formal service level agreement in place between the two organisations regarding civil defence.
- Investigate Service Centre/Libraries becoming Area Headquarters with Council staff being trained for adverse and civil defence emergencies. (In addition to or in place of current schools)
- The Council should appoint two alternate controllers. (All currently come from Environment Council or outside the Councils)
- Alternative headquarters are required for Engineers and Rescue Headquarters (these two headquarters operate from within the Civic Offices, which is fine for most emergencies, but may not be suitable after a big earthquake.
- The Council include in Unit Manager's performance requirements, clauses which specify the setting aside of time and budget for staff to attend appropriate training required for them to carry out civil defence/emergency management duties
- The Council ensure that 'key personnel' involved in emergency management should have civil defence role included within their job value statement.
- Consult Environment Canterbury and reach agreement on an acceptable level of administrative overheads that it may charge to civil defence.
- Environment Canterbury Civil Defence staff provide training to key emergency staff of the Christchurch City Council. This will ensure Council staff are familiar with the comprehensive nature and extent of the services that are being provided by Environment Canterbury.
- Consultation between Council and Environment Canterbury on strategic planning for future public education/awareness projects.
- To overcome public confusion about which organisation is providing civil defence services the parties involved should develop acceptable joint branding.

## **EFFECT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION CHANGE**

So far this report has been mainly based on current civil defence legislation and arrangements. New legislation has now been introduced (not yet passed) and it is anticipated that the new Civil Defence Emergency Management Act will come into force later in this calendar year.

The new legislation will require the setting up of a Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (CDEMG), within six months. This will be a joint committee of the Canterbury Councils and Environment Canterbury, and will comprise the Mayors and Chairpersons. It will be supported by the Co-ordinating Advisory Group (CAG), consisting of the chief executives (or their nominees), and senior members of the police, fire and health services. The CDEMG will be serviced and supported by the Regional Council.

Canterbury has already set up a trial CDEMG, and this has been operating for the last 12 months. A number of working parties have been established that report to the CAG. The working parties have been established around the four R's of emergency management i.e. reduction, readiness, response and recovery.

Over time this new arrangement will evolve, so that the functions carried out by territorial authorities, and the functions carried out by the CDEMG through the regional council will become clear. It is quite likely that the functions carried out by the CDEMG could grow (e.g. training, awareness raising) as the Councils decide it is better to do things together than each doing them individually. The arrangements for Christchurch City could come closer to the individual arrangements of the other Councils.

Leaving the existing arrangements in place while the new structure develops and evolves means that the strengths of these arrangements are maintained while the new structure is bedded in. The improvements identified in this report can be put in place. Once the CDEMG has settled down, a further review, in say 3 to 4 years, would be appropriate.

- Recommendation:**
1. That Environment Canterbury continue to undertake the civil defence functions for the Council as per the Civil Defence Act 1983 and that proposed in the Civil Defence Emergency Management Bill.
  2. That the Council and Environment Canterbury develop a formal service level agreement for the delivery of the civil defence functions as required under the Civil Defence Act 1983 and Civil Defence Emergency Management Bill.
  3. That the arrangements be reviewed again in 3 to 4 years' time when the Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group has been established and running for a reasonable period of time.