

Strategic Recovery Planning Changes to the 2013-2018 Wellington CDEM Group Plan

Why is the Group making these changes?

In 2016 amendments to the CDEM Act 2002 created new requirements for CDEM Groups to engage in strategic recovery planning. These changes recognised that, in the past, Groups had focused primarily on readiness and response but events have shown the need for Groups to proactively engage communities and partner agencies in planning for recovery.

In accordance with these new requirements, in August 2017 MCDEM directed that by 1 June 2018 all CDEM Groups were to have considered the requirements detailed in the (new) 2017 Strategic Planning for Recovery Director's Guideline and identified what actions they would take to meet the new requirements.

This amendment to the 2013-2018 Wellington CDEM Group Plan is a minor amendment to the plan. It covers the period from 1 June 2018 until 1 January 2019, when the new Group Plan for the period 2019-24 is expected to come into effect.

What is Strategic Planning for Recovery?

Strategic planning for recovery determines what CDEM Groups and each member of the Group need to do to ensure their communities are well-placed and supported to recover from any emergencies resulting from the hazards and risks identified in the CDEM Group plan. Strategic planning for recovery aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Comprehensive understanding of what is needed to support communities to overcome the consequences from specific hazards and risks, and to build on the opportunities to reduce risk and strengthen resilience;
- Communities are engaged, have an enhanced ability to adapt, and decision-makers understand what is important to the communities;
- Immediate, medium-term and long-term recovery outcomes, and a community recovery vision are defined;
- Risks are identified and managed through additional reduction, readiness, response and recovery measures;
- Local and regional capacity and capability to prepare for, manage and deliver recovery (across a range of emergencies) is readily accessible, with a clear understanding of the local, regional and central government roles and responsibilities.

The 2017 Directors Guidelines (DGL) for Strategic Recovery Planning outlines six areas for developing and improving recovery plans. These are:

1. Understand community values and priorities for recovery
2. Recovery vision and outcomes
3. Understand consequences and opportunities from specific hazards and risks
4. Capacity, capability, collaboration and leadership
5. Monitoring and evaluation
6. Prioritise and implement strategic recovery actions.

The actions outlined in the following sections reflect the work that the Wellington CDEM Group and members of the Group are doing to support strategic planning for recovery through the six areas outlined above, until the expiry of the current Group Plan on 31 December 2018. Strategic planning for recovery will be a critical part of the CDEM Group Plan review and the revised plan will provide longer-term strategic recovery objectives and associated actions.

1- Understanding community values and priorities for recovery

An understanding of community values and priorities is needed to be able to adequately prepare the community, supporting agencies and local authorities to recover from emergencies. The Wellington Region Strategic Recovery Framework outlines a potential model for looking at recovery outcomes, and proposes a structure for directly including community liaisons in post-disaster recovery plans.

In addition, the Community Response Plans facilitated by WREMO include a module on discussing what communities value. This helps determine what recovery outcomes are critical for communities across all environments and informs recovery preparedness.

Actions to be completed by end of 2018

- Initial comparison of District Plans in the Wellington Region to post-disaster plans, in order identify gaps and opportunities for future plan alignment.

Possible future actions

- To incorporate into the 2019-24 Group Plan an examination of the identified gaps from the review of District Plans, with identified priorities and timelines.
- Using 2018 Census data, compare communities in the Wellington Region to case studies of disaster impacted communities with similar demographics and risks to those in our Region.

2- Recovery vision and outcomes

An understanding of the desired community recovery outcomes helps inform the support needed by the community, and supports decisions regarding the priorities and opportunities to reinstate and enhance community assets. The Group Strategic Recovery Framework includes a description on recovery outcomes based on the different consequences following an event.

Actions to be completed by end of 2018

- Review vision statements and goals of District Plans and look for opportunities to better align the Wellington Region Strategic Recovery Framework.

Possible future actions

- Use 2018 census, Community Response Plans, and other data sets to better understand where the vision of recovery planning can meet the stated needs of communities.

3- Understand consequences/opportunities from specific hazards/risk

Communities rely on infrastructure to maintain their standard of living. An understanding of this infrastructure and its resilience is crucial to the development/recovery of a community. The Infrastructure Resilience Indicator Set (IRIS) report partially bridged our understanding of earthquake/tsunami impacts to disruptions to infrastructure and, to a limited degree, the social/economic effects of such disruptions.

The Group partners with science agencies such as GNS Science and the Joint Centre for Disaster Research and continues to rely on the technical advice and analysis these agencies contribute towards a credible evidence base.

Actions to be completed by end of 2018

- Review the results of the Regional Resilience Project (lead by the Wellington Lifelines Group and GNS) to understand opportunities for reducing risks.

Possible future actions

- Workshop the Natural Hazards Strategy objectives with local authorities to ensure there is consistency with interpretation of the policies for development and urban planning.

4- Capacity, capability, collaboration and leadership

Understanding the roles and responsibilities and the people in those roles will collaborate both pre and post disaster, is key to positive recovery outcomes. Part of the current Wellington Region Strategic Recovery Framework addresses this by defining roles, and providing a structure for local and regional recovery organisations. This includes a common concept of operations for all councils in the region in recovery management, including the identification of modular Recovery Environments and Support Services which can be scaled up as needed post-event.

Though councils will play a leading role in recovery, the Group recognises that positive recovery outcomes require leadership from community and business sectors, and a collaborative relationship between the full range of partners.

Actions to be completed by end of 2018

- Propose a process for engaging councils and community partners for further development of the Wellington Region Strategic Recovery Framework.

Possible future actions

- Develop a regional capacity report of how many recovery-relevant positions (such as planners or engineers) are staffed in councils under business-as-usual roles, and compare to case studies to understand how many of these roles may be required post-disaster.

5- Monitoring and evaluation

The progress of recovery efforts, and their effectiveness in meeting the desired recovery outcomes for the community need to be monitored and evaluated throughout. This gives confidence that the right support is being provided, in the right way, at the right time. Establishing a baseline for a range of factors across the Recovery Environments (Built, Natural, Social, Economic and Cultural) is an important process to undertake pre-disaster. Having a well-informed baseline helps show where communities were headed before an event, how that changed post-event, and enables recovery outcomes to match or improve upon pre-disaster conditions. Preliminary work has begun on developing a 'balance scorecard' to be used to track post-event recovery progress and the achievement of agreed recovery objectives. It will help identify emerging issues to prompt additional support, or change, in the approach to the recovery as the needs of the community change over time.

Actions to be completed by end of 2018

- Develop a proposed timeline for aligning future updates to Wellington Region Strategic Recovery Framework to coincide with the 5 year cycle of the Group Plan.

Possible future actions

- Researching and developing recovery indicators that enable a comparison of pre-disaster conditions and post-disaster recovery outcomes.
- Investigation of levels of hazard risk acceptance through the National Hazards Strategy engagement working group.

6- Prioritisation and Implementation of Strategic Recovery Actions

With the breadth of possible actions the Group could take in regards to recovery planning it is necessary to create a clear sense of priorities and build a pathway to implementation. The previous sections explain what the Group has done or is currently doing regarding strategic recovery planning, as well as listing intended actions for the remainder of the current Group Plan (ending December 31, 2018). Possible future actions are also included. Further prioritisation of actions and scheduling for implementation will be included as a part of the ongoing development for the 2019-2024 Group Plan.