



Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group
Post Event Report
Whakaari / White Island Eruption
9 December 2019



Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group COVID-19 Post Event Report

December 2020

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1. Intent of Report

This report is intended to provide The Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group with an understanding of the overarching issues that shaped the Group's response to the Whakaari / White Island Eruption on 9 December 2019.

This report has been prepared with reference to the following:

- Conversations with people directly involved in the event
- Records from the event
- Multiple debrief sessions with staff involved in the response

This report intended to proactively identify opportunities for improvement.

Scope

This report is focused on the coordination function of CDEM and does not address the search and rescue and recovery operation led by New Zealand Police nor does it address the response activities at the national level by Central Government.

2. Summary of Event

Whakaari / White Island erupted at 1411hrs on Monday, 9 December, 2019. 47 people were on or around the island at the time of the eruption. An initial response operation was undertaken by emergency services and the tour operators. By the evening of 9 December, 2019 it was confirmed that all survivors had been rescued from the island. Eight deceased people remained on the island. At this time, Central Government directed that Civil Defence Emergency Management would lead the response, with New Zealand Police leading the recovery operation (to retrieve the remaining deceased from the Island). Injured patients were transferred to hospitals across New Zealand. On Friday, 13 December 2019, New Zealand Police and the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) began a recovery operation to retrieve the eight deceased. Six of the deceased were retrieved, but despite ongoing marine and aerial search operations, two deceased were not found. Those two people have since been confirmed dead by the coroner. At the time of writing, a total of 21 people had lost their lives as a result of the eruption. A number of others received life-changing injuries.

The Whakatāne Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and Group Emergency Coordination Centre (GECC) were activated and combined. The joint centre operated from the Whakatāne District Council (WDC). The following agencies/organisations supported the response:

- Auckland Emergency Management (AEM)
- Australian High Commission
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board (Bay of Plenty DHB)
- Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC)
- Coastguard
- Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ)
- GNS Science
- Ministry of Health (MoH)

- Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)
- Ministry of Social Development (MSD)
- National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
- New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF)
- New Zealand Police (NZ Police)
- New Zealand Red Cross (NZ Red Cross)
- Ngāti Awa Social and Health Services
- Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines (RCCL)
- Salvation Army
- St John Ambulance
- Ministry of Māori Development-Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK)
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa
- Tourism Bay of Plenty

The Whakaari / White Island response was characterised by two distinct objectives:

- The search and rescue of those injured and recovery of deceased persons (led by New Zealand Police).
- The provision of ongoing welfare support to victims, families, and others affected by the event (led by the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group).

It is important to note that considerable support and coordination was required by a large number of other agencies to support both objectives. The response commenced 9 December 2019 and transitioned to the CDEM recovery phase on Friday, 20 December, 2019.

2.1 Extraordinary powers

No declaration of a state of emergency was made in relation to the eruption Whakaari / White Island.

2.2 Unique Contributing Factors

There were a number of factors that made this response unique:

- A number of victims were international visitors. This generated international media attention and required local, regional, national and international coordination.
- Whakaari / White Island falls under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Local Government as the Territorial Authority, administered by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA). The island is within the boundaries of the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group.
- The search and rescue and recovery operation led by New Zealand Police was a significant aspect of the response.
- The provision of welfare support was primarily around victim support for injured, deceased, whānau and others affected, rather than the “traditional” CDEM welfare support.

2.3 Overall

Overarching feedback from the response was that it was led and coordinated successfully. The collaborative efforts of all response partners was seen as a critical factor to success.

3. Factors Supporting the Response

A number of factors have been identified as contributing to the success of the overall response.

3.1 Relationships and Teamwork

The collegial efforts of all agencies involved was identified as a significant factor in the response. The nature of the event meant there was an overall commitment to care in all agencies' approaches. Support and guidance were proactively made available within individual agencies and across agencies. This ranged from technical support and guidance on specific actions or plans through to mentoring and coaching across agencies.

In the initial stages of the rescue effort, collaborative effort and relationships were important in supporting response activities. There was rapid early activation and mobilisation of personnel both through emergency services and commercial operators. Existing relationships enabled the New Zealand Police coordination. They were supported in the early rescue and recovery by St John, Bay of Plenty District Health Board, Coastguard and the commercial operators.

The strength of existing local relationships was an important factor. This was particularly evident in the early stages where shared knowledge and understanding allowed actions to be performed quickly and efficiently. Examples were the establishment of the EOC in Whakatāne to support New Zealand Police operations and early engagement with GNS to support New Zealand Police decision-making. As the response continued, strong relationship-building and teamwork supported a collaborative approach to coordinating and managing the response.

Making use of local knowledge to support operational planning and decision-making was seen as a significant factor in the overall operation. Involvement of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa in this process strengthened the overall understanding of the situation and helped ensure the best decisions were made within the wider context.

3.2 Iwi Collaboration and Support

Throughout the response, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa (as tangata whenua) were significantly involved and had multiple roles in the response:

- Liaison into the EOC to promote understanding of how Iwi partners were supporting the response.
- Coordinating and supporting a larger Iwi response- including mobilising rapidly to provide cultural support and aroha.
- Providing technical and cultural advice around tikanga.
- Supporting planning and decision-making with organisations like Ngāti Awa Social and Health Services and Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi.

In addition to the elements above, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa was a commercial entity significantly affected by, and involved with the disaster.

The extent of the iwi involvement and support in the response was considerable, and greater than in many previous events. The Rūnanga structure is dynamic but comprises of a mix of community and commercial structures. This event demonstrated the ability of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa to provide considerable leadership and valuable input.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa was involved from the first day of the response, and an Iwi advisor role was established in the EOC. All agencies involved commented on the positive contribution that the partnership brought to the response. Involving Te Rūnanga in the planning process made for a more effective response and gave Bay of Plenty CDEM Group staff a better understanding of the human environment and the potential consequences of their decision making. An example of this was the collaborative planning of the New Zealand Police led recovery operation to the island. This ensured kaumatua were able to perform a blessing on Whakaari prior to the final recovery operation. The challenge was ensuring Te Rūnanga had the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process across all aspects of the response.

The Manaakitanga demonstrated by Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa throughout the event provided considerable support those directly impacted, families, the wider community and responders. Te Mānuka Tuatahi was established as a place where people could gather, support each other and receive information away from the eye of the media. This was an important aspect of the response that enabled information sharing and support to those that needed it.

3.3 Coordinated Response

The response was generally well-coordinated and managed across the board. Specific actions were driven by clear objectives and situational awareness. The action plans and situation reports from the EOC support this coordinated approach. New Zealand Police were the lead agency of the rescue and recovery operation. Response coordination, which was required across a wider range of responsibilities was led by CDEM (as per legislation).

In effect, a unified command model was established with the Group Controller (responsible for the overall response coordination) working alongside the Deputy Commissioner New Zealand Police (responsible for the rescue and recovery operation). The primary focus of public and media attention was on the rescue and recovery operation, and the demand for public information was focussed on this part of the response.

Rapid activation and resource support was provided by all agencies (coordinated by the CDEM Group and New Zealand Police). The provision of specialists from a range of backgrounds and agencies across the country contributed to a comprehensive response operation. Appointing police family liaison officers to each of the victims and their families was an important part in ensuring that the necessary support and care was given to those that most needed it. New Zealand Defence Force provided significant support in terms of assets, personnel and specialist planning advice that significantly reinforced the response operation. The planning and execution of the body recovery operation demonstrated the multi-agency coordinated approach (including New Zealand Police, New Zealand Defence Force, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, CDEM, GNS Science and New Zealand Mines Rescue Service) to achieve a specific objective. Of note was the use of a range of skills and experience across the country to plan for and undertake a significant operation with a sound understanding of the risks and risk management.

At an early stage, tracking and management of victim information was identified as a critical component of the response. Sensitive information (held by multiple agencies) needed to be collated, coordinated and shared in a way that respected the privacy of those involved. This presented challenges throughout the response. However, the coordinated approach to managing and sharing this information was seen as an important factor in ensuring the latest information was current and consistent. More importantly, it ensured that support was able to be channelled to where it was

required. Coordinated information management was important to ensure a single source of truth and careful release of timely information.

3.4 Whakatāne Based Response

Early on the afternoon of 9 December, 2019 both New Zealand Police and the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group made the decision to coordinate the response from Whakatāne. Whakaari sits outside of the Whakatāne District, however Whakatāne was where the majority of the impacts were felt and managed, and where the community needed to be supported. Whakatāne harbour was the key staging area for those returning from the island by boat. Coordinating and managing the response from Whakatāne brought a number of factors that contributed to the response.

The competence and knowledge of the staff in the EOC were recognised by response agencies as a contributing success factor. Processes and products were practiced and proficient. The Whakatāne District Council facilities offered an effective space for response operations to be coordinated. Catering and logistical support were described positively a number of debriefs. Refinements to the EOC layout and facilities improved the workflow of the response.

Local knowledge was readily-sourced to enable efficient and effective decision making. Skills and relationships established within the local area were used to support and supplement the knowledge of people who had come from outside the region. Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa was able to be integrated into response operations. This helped ensure a collaborative and positive partnership with Iwi.

4. Challenges to the Response

The Whakaari / White Island eruption was a unique response and differs from the traditional natural hazard response CDEM are accustomed to. There have been a number of factors raised that presented a challenge to managing the response. The following is a summary of the key challenges that were identified through the debrief process.

4.1 Structure

A common and shared understanding of roles and the structure was identified as a challenge across the response. In the early stages of the response New Zealand Police were managing the rescue operation through the District Command Centre (DCC) in Rotorua. It was quickly recognised that there was a need to coordinate this from Whakatāne. At this point New Zealand Police, the Group Controller and the local Controller agreed that New Zealand Police should operate out of the EOC in Whakatāne. Throughout the response there was a Local Controller overseeing the Whakatāne EOC, a Police commander overseeing the search and rescue and recovery operation and the Group Controller leading the overall response. The structure was determined by the scale and needs of the response, it also evolved over the period of the response.

Communicating this unique structure -and its roles and responsibilities- in a more deliberate manner would have benefited the response. In several elements of the response, individuals and groups were unclear on their responsibilities in relation to others. Understanding of roles and responsibilities was clear within the leadership of the response however as it filtered down through the structure, clarity and understanding appears to have been less universal.

Among different agencies, leadership was set at different levels. In time, New Zealand Police and New Zealand Defence Force efforts were escalated to a national-level led response; health matters

were dealt with at the national level by Ministry of Health and regional level by Bay of Plenty District Health Board; and CDEM matters were led at the regional level.

As the designated Lead Agency, working and coordinating with agencies at a national level created challenges for the CDEM Group. In particular, some discussions and decisions occurred in Wellington without the involvement or consultation of the Group Controller or the Coordinating Executive Group (CEG).

Conversely, coordination and planning between agencies and the leads present in Whakatāne was viewed as being very effective.

In the Welfare context the EOC and Local Welfare Manager were responsible for delivering welfare support directly to the Whakatāne Community. A 'strategic' welfare team was established to coordinate the support to victims and families beyond the Whakatāne District including management of sensitive information. A large proportion of this work involved coordination of information sharing and liaison with multiple agencies involved including National Emergency Management Agency, New Zealand Police, Bay of Plenty District Health Board, Ministry of Health, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade and others.

Due to the sensitivity of the data being handled by this Strategic Welfare Team, access to information was limited. Feedback suggests that this inadvertently led to some reduction in situational awareness for the Local Welfare Team.

4.2 Communication

Communication and information sharing is a common theme in post event reports. Sharing information and communication within and between agencies was seen as one of the key challenges in the response. There are some key contributing factors. Respondents described information flowing well 'up' the response model, but it was not always as effective coming 'down' from the national to CDEM Group level (and therefore to local level). Greater alignment or channelling of information between agencies would have helped to ensure directions or guidance came down to all applicable agencies at the same time.

Briefings were held within individual agencies and there was also a regular daily EOC briefings (with key stakeholders represented). However, multiple operational schedules meant the key leadership roles within the response were not consistently present. The EOC briefing was seen as a briefing for the EOC staff only and not for everyone involved in the response. This meant important information wasn't always shared with the right people. A regular, scheduled, coordinated briefing for all staff would have increased understanding of the common operating picture across all levels of the response. Where agencies were on the ground and represented in Whakatāne, the communication challenges appear to have been less significant than for agencies not present in Whakatāne.

Situation reports generated throughout the response were well-written and concise. The challenge was ensuring that these were distributed to those who needed them, and that the reports were read, and fed back to the intelligence team. Working to disseminate information as far 'down' the structure as possible will support information sharing.

While it is noted that one of the key factors supporting the response was the process and team established to manage the victim information, this also presented challenges. Constraints under the Privacy Act, and managing sensitive personal information, presented a significant challenge to

creating a cohesive picture of the impacts and the effective sharing of that information. A significant amount of effort and resource was committed to collating, confirming and sharing victim information throughout the response. A lack of understanding between agencies on how and what information could be shared reduced information flow. Until a single source of information management and sharing was established, there was difficulty in collating a comprehensive common operating picture. Once a team and process was established to manage the information, this was easier. It was noted that where agencies were present in Whakatāne and involved in the team, information flowed smoothly. The Ministry of Health (also dealing with a measles outbreak) had limited resources and was unable to locate a person in the Whakatāne office. This presented a challenge to establishing a consistent information sharing approach.

Coordination of media messaging and media management was a challenge because of the involvement of multiple agencies working at national, regional and local levels. It took time for the public information management (PIM) teams to become effectively connected and coordinated in this space.

4.3 Capacity

The response occurred over 12 days and in the lead-up to Christmas, which is already a busy period for organisations. The duration and timing of the response presented challenges for all agencies to ensure capacity over the 12 day period.

The three-tiered response model stretched resources across a number of organisations, which struggled to have sufficient representation at all levels. Two 12-hour shifts were initially implemented but this was later changed to three 8-hour shifts, with a skeleton shift overnight. Consistent feedback has been received that it is not sustainable for staff to operate on a 12-hour shift cycle. Taking into account handovers, the longer shift meant many staff were working 13+ hour days.

The scale and nature of the event were significant and difficult for staff of a number of organisations. Fatigue management was a challenge for all agencies. There were a number of tired people working throughout the event. This was a result of a number of varying factors including:

- The high pressure and significant emotional toll of the event
- Working long shifts
- Exceeding capacity within the organisation
- Limited additional resources to bring in

For the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group, there was a limited number of Group Controllers available. This meant the Group Controller was supported by only one deputy for the duration of the event.

Appointment of a Health and Safety function within the GECC would have been beneficial by identifying some of these issues at the time.

This event highlighted the importance and involvement of liaisons within different aspects of the response. Where liaisons were established, shared understanding and cohesive response actions were supported. However, it placed additional stress on the capacity of the organisations to staff the roles. Notably, appointing police family liaison officers to families of those deceased and injured was an important component to ensure the right support was given to those that needed it most. However the number of people involved necessitated a significant resource commitment from New Zealand Police to establish and maintain. Two further examples were where Auckland Emergency Management were able to establish a liaison in the incident management team at Middlemore. This

ensured effective information sharing and an appreciation of emerging issues. Secondly, GNS Science established a technical expert in Whakatāne to provide immediate specialist advice on the volcanic hazard and risk. This was critical to successfully achieving the response objectives.

There were some areas of the response operations where liaisons were appointed with limited understanding of their role and function. An improved understanding of the role of liaisons to provide a two-way path of information flow, input into planning and decision making and identify emerging issues would have increased the capacity of agencies to work together.

As noted above, the level of involvement and support from Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa for this event was significant and important. A considerable amount of effort during the event was undertaken by Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa to outline the structure of the Rūnanga and its various roles for the benefit of response teams. As the understanding and appreciation of the role of the Rūnanga grew within response agencies, so did the demand on Ngāti Awa resources. The consequence of this was a substantial draw on resources for a relatively small Rūnanga. There are opportunities to ensure that partnership with Iwi is undertaken in a way that supports effective and efficient participation. Through deliberate planning and scheduling, response activities can be undertaken to minimise duplication and draw on limited resources.

4.4 Process/Facilities

There were a number of process and facility related factors that presented a challenge to the response.

Security, access and identification is an ongoing challenge. Whakatāne District Council established and maintained a sign in desk to the EOC. This provided a level of oversight as to who was accessing the area. However, there was an ongoing challenge with a range of groups and individuals accessing areas. Clear guidance around accessibility of various areas for different groups of people would have ensured better overall security of information. The sensitive information was well-managed through a second level of identification required and sign in. However, it is still important to be aware of who is in the areas when having unguarded conversations.

The New Zealand Police operations room had to consider the balance of having an open door (to share information and collaborate) against discussing sensitive operations and reviewing intelligence products that were particularly distressing (and did not need to be shared with a wider audience). To some in the response this presented a view of isolated working which was not necessarily the case.

A collegial approach was taken to ensure the right activities were delivered as quickly and efficiently as possible. On occasion, time was not taken to clarify the purpose, need and function of logistics requests. As a consequence, additional work has been required post-event to identify where costs lie and how they will be resolved.

During these types of events there is an ongoing tension between undertaking formal needs assessments to ensure that the relevant support can be directed to those that need it, against minimising the requirement for already stressed individuals to go through what is seen as additional administrative hurdles. Collaboration and connection between welfare agencies is an area for future progress. Local and Group Welfare Committees were not convened during the response and this presented a missed opportunity to identify and manage emerging issues.

Provisions within the National CDEM Plan are focussed around providing support to those that have been displaced or impacted by an emergency. There is a gap in the system that does not enable victims and their family to access financial assistance quickly, particularly if they have not been physically displaced by an event. This resulted in additional pressure on families to travel to support their loved ones impacted by a disaster.

5 Opportunities for improvement

5.1 Confirm structure and responsibilities

Understanding the response structure, roles, and responsibilities is important across all levels of the response. There is an opportunity to increase understanding of the response model set in place for the Bay of Plenty and how it will be applied in certain events. The development of a Concept of Operations for the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group is seen as an important tool to confirming the response model employed by the CDEM Group. This should inform training and exercises delivered across the CDEM Group and its partners.

Whatever the response model, at the early stages of an event and throughout the event it is important to confirm the response structure in place for all agencies involved, the roles of key individuals and groups, and communicate these clearly to all people involved. It is necessary to bring in the leads from the key agencies involved early on to confirm the structure and key responsibilities. Reinforcing this at regular briefings and within the action plan will reduce the opportunity for confusion and overlap of responsibilities and tasks. Throughout the Whakaari / White Island Eruption this was achieved well within individual organisations but could have been improved across agencies.

In other events regular controllers or commanders meetings have been established between the lead agencies where emerging issues can be identified and addressed, as well as any areas of responsibility clarified. This is a model that would have improved the coordination of the response and addressed some challenges in achieving objectives in this event identified earlier in the report.

There is an opportunity for the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group to work with NEMA to better understand how NEMA can support and advocate on behalf of CDEM Groups when other agencies are leading their response from the national level. Improving the connection between regionally led responses and the planning and coordination undertaken at a national level is an area of future development that needs to be considered in the establishment of the new NEMA structure.

5.2 Communication and information sharing

A single, coordinated, 'all of response' briefing is important throughout the response. This should be given priority in operational scheduling and be seen as the key focus for all involved to gain an understanding of the current situation and emerging issues. An inter-agency, all of response briefing helps all parties understand the current situation, what the objectives are for the next operation period, and any challenges facing the response. It confirms a common operating picture and reinforces the roles and responsibilities of all involved. It also gives an opportunity for the leadership team to share information across and down the response structure as far as possible, show a coordinated and connected leadership model, and hear any emerging issues on the ground.

The EOC developed sound action plans and situation reports throughout the response. However, the debrief process has identified an opportunity to improve how these are shared among agencies and utilised to better effect, including assessing and updating distribution lists.

Understanding among agencies of the Privacy Act and its constraints needs to be addressed at a national and regional level. A significant amount of time and effort was put into establishing a process to coordinate and manage sensitive information. Agencies require assurance that shared information will be managed in confidential manner.

5.3 Pause and reset

With the benefit of hindsight there were occasions that the flow of the response would have benefited from a deliberate 'pause and reset' moment. These are windows of opportunity within the response to take time to reflect on the situation, weigh up the current activities and review the objectives to ensure the successful achievement of the mission.

A 'pause and reset' give the opportunity to scan the operational activities, resources deployed and emerging issues. It allows better understanding of the current situation and to confirm or adjust the intended approach. This did happen on occasion throughout the response, however doing so in a more deliberate manner will support a more coordinated response and maximise efficient resource use.

5.4 Liaison support

Liaisons play an important role in connecting partners within the response. There are opportunities to better support the role of liaisons in a response. Agencies providing liaisons need to ensure that there is capacity to sustain their presence throughout the response: relying on a single individual is unlikely to be sustainable. It is important that liaisons are located where the response is being coordinated. This event highlighted potential for a gap in communication and coordination of effort where agencies were not able to be physically represented in the response. Role definition and expectations of liaisons will enhance the coordination of effort. For example, it is important that the parent agency is clear what their liaison's scope and responsibility is on their deployment. Likewise, liaisons should be inducted into the EOC, briefed on the situation and introduced to the key parties. The controller/response manager needs to clearly explain expectation of the liaison and how they intend to integrate them into the response.

5.5 Enabling access to support quickly and effectively

The CDEM system allows for people impacted by the response to access support from a range of agencies. In order to do this they need to go through a comprehensive needs assessment process. If people meet the criteria, they can then access support. The needs assessment process is often seen as an unnecessary barrier for affected people to get the support needed. Similarly the system creates an outcome where local authorities and CDEM Groups are hesitant about expenditure. There is a focus on ensuring that where possible response costs can be claimed back from central government.

Administrative barriers at a central government level put additional pressure on the local response. For example when the Minister of Civil Defence provided financial resource to Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa in recognition of their support and involvement in the response NEMA were prevented by legislative restrictions from supporting the Rūnanga directly. Instead WDC was required to manage the payment through the Mayoral Relief Fund. This required an amendment of the terms of reference for the fund and caused significant delay in getting this money to where it was intended. Additional time and effort was also required by WDC to enable this to happen. The ideal solution would be that this is resolved at a national level through the establishment of NEMA and the CDEM Act reforms.

There is an opportunity for the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group to clarify its process on how it will support immediate response costs and welfare needs. One suggestion was to establish an emergency pūtea or fund that is readily available to support the immediate response costs. It is important to have an agreed understanding as to how and what the funding would be used for before an event occurs to enable the resources to get to where they are needed quickly. It will also be important for the CDEM Group to understand and agree that this money may not be recoverable. The benefit would be ensuring urgent support is given to those that most need it. Care would need to be taken to ensure that this does not replace or bypass established support through the appropriate channels such as Ministry for Social Development and Mayoral Relief Funds.

5.6 Confirm arrangements and capacity for welfare delivery

Coordination and delivery of welfare services (including the associated sub-functions) is a substantial part of the response. The collaborative development of sub-function plans should be seen as a priority for all sub-function leads. There is an increasing societal expectation on the level of welfare services provided in CDEM responses: the “wrap around” support model is becoming the standard approach. The supportive approach provides a coordinated and connected delivery of welfare services and there is a need to understand the capacity of agencies to meet the increasing expectations in this space. Developing a common understanding of agencies’ capability, capacity and planned level of service is important to ensure that a deliverable level of service can be established and managed.

5.7 Continue to build partnerships with iwi

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa demonstrated once again the value and capacity of Iwi to partner in a response. Progress has been made in Iwi partnership within the CDEM Group - in particular Ngāti Awa - however there is much more to achieve in this space. For the CDEM Group, increasing cultural knowledge and understanding is an important area for development. Building understanding of tikanga Māori and integrating this into the work of the CDEM Group is a fundamental step in developing the relationship with Iwi. Beyond this, developing an understanding of the structure and roles and responsibilities within Rūnanga is important. The development of a Te ao Māori CDEM framework should be seen as a priority to formalise and explore opportunities to support and partner with Iwi across the region. Supporting Iwi to build their knowledge of CDEM and understanding of capacity to partner with the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group in this mahi is an important part of ensuring a sustainable approach. The capacity of Iwi to participate and partner in CDEM varies across the region, so it is important for the CDEM Group to understand and support Iwi involvement in CDEM at various levels. Clarifying and confirming partnership arrangements is an important element of future work between the CDEM Group and individual local authority members and Iwi.

5.8 Establish and maintain robust processes

Coordination centre staff are developing and growing in their capability. However, it is important to ensure that the commitment to training and exercising continues. This will ensure the development of staff capability. As competency moves from foundational understanding and knowledge to a more comprehensive level, focus will be able to shift towards establishing and maintaining robust systems and processes in the response. Whakatāne District Council staff have already taken ownership of their functions within the coordination centre and identified opportunities to develop process and competency within their team.

Recently CDEM Group members have moved towards 12-hour rosters for their coordination centre rosters. This is not sustainable for responses that extend beyond two days. A sustainable coordination centre shift regime is vital to ensure staff are supported and able to perform their functions at a high

level over sustained response periods. There is an opportunity for CDEM Group members to revisit their approach to establishing 12-hour rosters and consider a model that enables and supports response staff over a sustained response and ensure effective decision making.