

Chairman's comments

Alex Shaw, South Waikato District Council

At the risk of sounding repetitious from the previous newsletter, the world is still facing significant numbers of large scale disasters, ranging from Cyclone Larry in Australia to droughts in Ethiopia, landslips in the Philippines and the potential avian flu pandemic. New Zealand continues to have earthquakes and severe weather events, and of significant current local interest, the recent volcanic eruption on Raoul Island.

These events all serve as constant reminders to us that vigilance is necessary – not only for the lifeline sectors that we are collectively involved in, but as individuals in our every day life, both business and personal. The old adage that there is no cavalry over the hill in the form of a civil defence organisation remains true to a large extent – we are all individually responsible for our safety.

The person reflected in the mirror is your immediate civil defence representative, and should be responsible for the four Rs: reduction, readiness, response and recovery, especially the middle two, readiness and response.

Lifeline sectors have their own reflections, but with the added responsibility of not always being able to operate in isolation. They must be mindful of the needs and priorities of other sectors that may not necessarily coincide with their own, and which could have a negative impact on their ability to effectively operate.

The profile of the Waikato Engineering Lifelines Group is growing and is demonstrated by the welcome addition of Mr. Graham Mearns, Vodafone Waikato/Bay of Plenty Regional Sales Manager, as representative for the telecommunication sector on the WELG Steering Committee.

This is a significant step in WELG's ability to represent and assist lifeline sectors in the emergency management field, especially in terms of the Emergency Management Act 2002.

It also assists in meeting WELG's primary objectives of:

- encouraging and supporting the work of all participants in identifying and mitigating the effects of hazards on lifeline assets and business operations
- facilitating communications between participants in order to increase awareness and understanding of each organisation's interdependencies
- establishing planning and operational relationships with the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group.

Project Manager's comments

John Harris, John Harris Consultancy

We are entering a phase of international emergency planning virtually unprecedented in the world's history, with the possible exception of the Y2K potential threat. Unfortunately in some quarters there appears to be a perception that in spite of all the hype leading up to Y2K, nothing happened, and that the avian flu is simply 'Y2K with feathers' and will not amount to the potential threat that is globally recognised.

This is an extremely dangerous perception for a number of reasons. People are already dying from the avian flu and there has been a degree of mutation of the virus, as anticipated. The Y2K virus did not openly mutate over time and had a finite time line that, once passed, allowed everyone to stop holding their breath and get on with life.

The predominant issue with the Y2K virus was that if it had significantly impacted computers there may have been some consequential loss of life, through computer malfunctions. The impacts would not have been on the scale of a pandemic and may have resulted in some changes to the way some people lived, especially in developed countries.

The primary issue with the avian flu pandemic is sustaining a balance of calm amongst the world's population, while maintaining a high degree of alert and an informed and understanding public. Too much too soon will have the effect of bringing the population up to a peak of maximum readiness and response, but quickly losing its effectiveness over time. We have short memories and more immediate concerns take precedence. This is a major task confronting the emergency management sector.

The other issue with the pandemic is that it is not a one-off event and can have an impact over several months. Other disaster events will occur within this period, increasing the difficulties of reduction, readiness, response and recovery due to a considerable reduction in resources, the most noticeable resource being people. Operational staff will already be reduced and volunteers that previously flocked to a disaster to offer assistance may, during a pandemic, be significantly reduced due to the potential risk of cross infection resulting from group contacts.

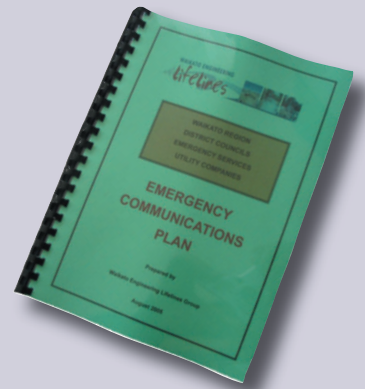
Project Manager's comments continued on page 3

Communications plan

Update

The draft WELG Emergency Communications Plan will be reviewed in April 2006 and the final document will be re-published in May 2006.

A reminder will be sent to all document holders to update their contact details and provide feedback on whether the format should be altered. Other interested parties may contact the WELG Project Manager for information on the document or advise on contacts that may be of use in an emergency.



Publications of interest

"Organisational Debriefing" Information for the CDEM Sector [IS6/05]
Produced by the Ministry Of Civil Defence and Emergency Management.

Training

For those interested in emergency management training, Auckland City Council has the following courses available in 2006:

Date	Time	Training	Location
25 May, 2006	2pm - 4.30pm	Coordinated incident management systems level 2 (first level, no pre-requisites)	Emergency Operations Centre, Bledisloe House, Wellesley Street, Auckland
4 July, 2006	9am - 11am	Essentials of civil defence emergency management	Emergency Operations Centre, Bledisloe House, Wellesley Street, Auckland
10 October, 2006	9.30am - 11.30am	Essentials of civil defence emergency management	Emergency Operations Centre, Bledisloe House, Wellesley Street, Auckland
1 December, 2006	2pm - 4.30pm	Coordinated incident management systems level 2 (first level, no pre-requisites)	Emergency Operations Centre, Bledisloe House, Wellesley Street, Auckland

Note: There is a fee of \$44 + GST for Coordinated Incident Management Level 2 training (NGOs and voluntary agencies exempt).

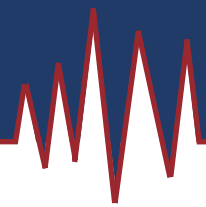
Please register for all courses with Tina Hessey, email tina.hessey@aucklandcity.govt.nz

In terms of appropriate training packages for lifeline utility companies, the MoCDEM RAPID training system may be of value. For further information contact the RAPID Project Manager, MoCDEM, phone (04) 473 7363 or email rapid@dia.govt.nz.

At a local level there are CIMS courses being held:

CIMS Level 2 19 April at Te Awamutu EOC
CIMS Level 4 27-29 June at Hamilton EOC

For further information contact the WELG Project Manager.



Avian flu pandemic

A pandemic planning working party has been formed for the following roles.

- i) Assess and communicate regional risk with regard to the current influenza pandemic risk.
- ii) Identify planning requirements.
- iii) Identify response roles and responsibilities.
- iv) Create a reporting line to CEG identifying planning and readiness issues and response capability.
- v) To provide oversight and guidance to EOA preparedness, response and recovery planning for an outbreak of pandemic influenza.
- vi) To ensure that the work of the National Intersectoral Pandemic Group is reflected at local level, and to identify and address local planning gaps.
- vii) To identify and establish coordinated community information processes (and content).

The WELG is represented on the working party by the WELG Project Manager.

WELG Utility Vulnerability Workshop

The planning of the workshop has undergone several mutations since inception, principally to ensure that the maximum benefits are received by all participants. The first stage, in mid April, is to send out preliminary booklets with information on what is required. The second stage involves a workshop in mid May followed by a second workshop approximately six weeks later.

The date for the final wrap up workshop will be determined at the previous workshop and will be dependant on the progress at that time.

If you have any questions before the booklets arrive, please contact the WELG Project Manager.

WELG membership and contacts

The following are current WELG Committee members and/or sponsors

CDEM Group
Genesis Energy
Hauraki District Council
Matamata-Piako District Council
Powerco
Taupo District Council
The Lines Company
Unison
Waikato District Council
Waipa Networks
WEL Networks

Ministry of CDEM
Hamilton City Council
Environment Waikato
Mighty River Power
South Waikato District Council
Thames Coromandel District Council
Transit NZ
Vodafone New Zealand
Waipa District Council
Waitomo District Council

For more information about WELG or to be added to the newsletter distribution list, please visit our website

www.waikatolifelines.org.nz or contact:

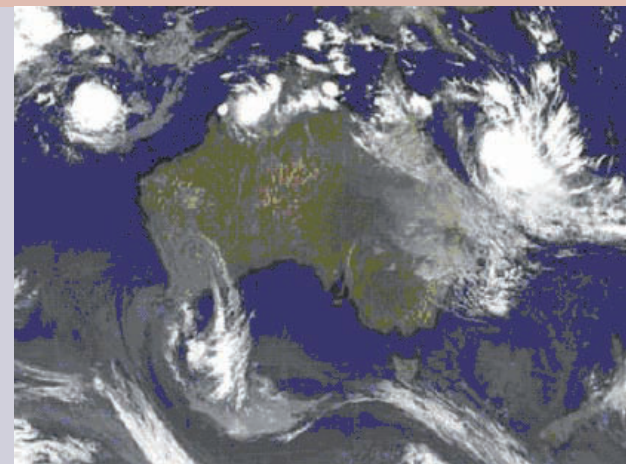
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WELG website

Visit the WELG website - **www.welg.org.nz**, or email **info@welg.org.nz** for copies of newsletters, projects, meeting minutes and agendas for viewing or downloading.

If you have any information that you believe should be on the website please contact the WELG Project Manager. Examples of information could be emergency management training schedules, emergency management and lifeline utility related conferences and overseas projects.



Cyclone Larry - Australia