

Past Chairman's comments

Alex Shaw, South Waikato District Council

Another financial year has closed and it is now appropriate to take stock of our achievements over the past year. It is also a time for me, personally, to look back over the past 12 months, and considerably longer, as this was my final year as both Chairman and member of the group. I have officially retired from the South Waikato District Council but will be looking after a few council projects over the next 12 months.

From a nostalgic perspective, the Waikato Region Lifelines Study was originally set up in 1997 to investigate the effects of natural hazards on electricity, telecommunications, water, gas, road and rail. The objective of the study was to assess the vulnerability of lifelines services to damage from earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and floods and identify interdependencies amongst the lifeline services as well as practical strategies for reducing risk.

The group altered its focus in 2004 and has produced a comprehensive Emergency Communications Plan and the Hamilton Climate Change Model and is now well into the Utility Vulnerability Project. Three breakfast seminars have been successfully run and the group's profile in the utility and emergency management sector has increased significantly. The year has seen the preparation of submissions on sustainable land management, oil supply disruptions and GIS applications in emergency management – all having an impact on lifeline utilities. The group has had an increasing involvement in a wider range of hazards, especially the effects of pandemics and climate change.

In terms of local government, the attitude to emergency management has also changed dramatically – due probably to a number of factors including legislation and an increased awareness of hazards, especially the storm events in the Manawatu and Bay of Plenty and the Boxing Day tsunami. This change in attitude extends to utility services that are acutely aware of the need to maintain effective operations, especially during disaster events.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Lifeline Group Committee and members for their efforts over the past three years, and a special mention to the local authority and utility organisations that have seen the benefits of the Lifelines Group. Their support has been through funding and, more importantly, active encouragement of their staff to be involved. Without these two kinds of support, lifeline groups throughout the country would not survive.

I would also like to congratulate the new Chairman, Adam Munro, and Deputy Chairman, Bill Ashurst, on being elected to these key positions and I leave knowing that the Lifelines Group is in good hands and good heart.

Project Manager's comments

John Harris, John Harris Consultancy

The term 'business continuity management' is well used in the lifeline sector, and relates to the ability of an organisation to operate during, and immediately after a disaster event with as little reduction as possible on its level of service. It is important however, to note that a disaster is not simply confined to the traditional events of floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, but can relate to an ever increasing range of risks, many associated with technology. Our reliance on technology has created its own risks, especially with the high reliance on electricity and, although to a lesser extent, less staff due to automation.

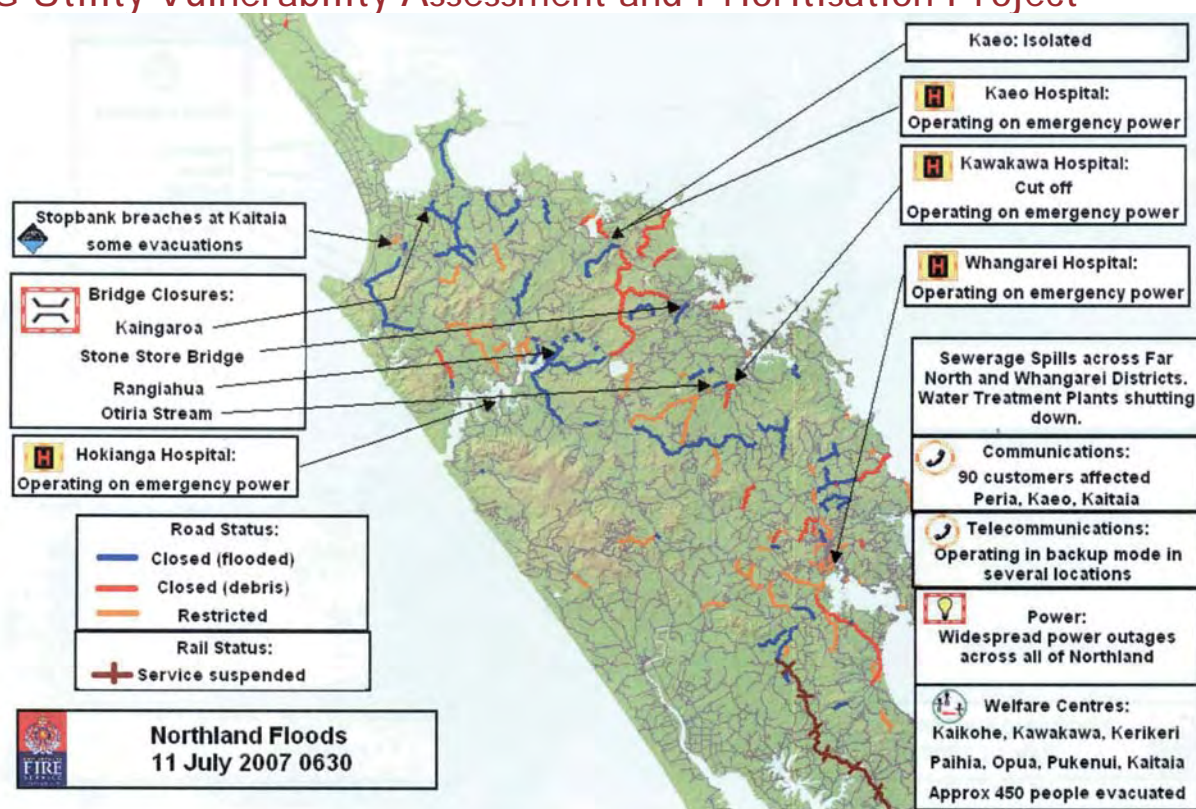
Business continuity management, corporate governance and risk management all have similar objectives and all require an understanding of the organisation's objectives, potential issues that may detrimentally affect these objectives, and implementing means of reducing these potential affects. The implementation may include physical changes, practice changes or planning changes. Unfortunately, virtually every organisation is reliant on other organisations and thus has no or limited control on their respective operations.

This is the very essence of lifeline engineering/advisory groups and in particular, the prime objective of the WELG Utility Vulnerability and Prioritisation Project – which is to assist the region's individual lifeline organisations in identifying their internal vulnerabilities and dependencies on other organisations and to meet their legal requirements, in terms of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (part 3, section 60) of ensuring that it is able to function to the fullest possible extent, even though this may be at a reduced level, during and after an emergency.

To meet these challenges, three publications may be of use. Risk Management Guidelines SAA/SNZ HB 436: 2004, Risk Management AS/NZS 4360: 2004 and Business Continuity Management HB 221: 2004.

Business continuity management is also simply sound business sense, irrespective of disasters.

WELG Utility Vulnerability Assessment and Prioritisation Project



The project is moving forward, albeit slowly, with 11 utility assessments being completed out of a total of 55 utilities. The completion date has been extended to November 2007 with a possible project workshop being held in September to assist asset managers in completing their assessments. Updates will continue to be circulated to keep participants informed of progress and answer questions.

It is important to note there are two essential outcomes to this project. Identification of potentially vulnerable sites in your own sectors, and potentially vulnerable sites in other sectors – that will have a direct impact on your ability to meet the requirements of Section 60 of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002.

“Every lifeline utility must ensure that it is able to function to the fullest possible extent, even though this may be at a reduced level, during and after an emergency”.

The July Northland storm event was a prime example of the potential effects on lifeline infrastructures and is clearly illustrated on the summary situation map above. Map courtesy: National Crisis Management Centre. For more information contact the WELG Project Manager.

The following are extracts from a NCMC situation report during the upper North Island storm event in July, and provide an excellent illustration of dependencies between utility sectors, with access being a priority issue in order to repair other utilities.

People/welfare

- Approximately 650 people are being housed in welfare centres and marae in the far north district.
- A number of small communities in Northland are isolated.
- Welfare emergency centres have been activated and are operating.

Transport and road/rail closures

- SH1 closed at 13 locations.
- A large number of secondary roads throughout the Northland region are impassable due to surface flooding and fallen trees.
- The Karikari peninsula far north is isolated due to inland road closure.
- A number of small rural/coastal communities are isolated due to road closures.

The following railway lines have been affected

- Waitakere-Otira – closed.
- Waitakere-Te Kauwhata – restricted to 40 km/hr.

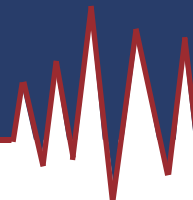
Water and wastewater

- Reports of sewage spills in Whangarei and far north districts due to pump station failures due to loss of power. Efforts to restore hampered by conditions and lack of access. Efforts to access sites with sucker trucks also hampered by flooding and road closures.
- Widespread shut down of water treatment plants due to water quality and power problems. Currently running on reservoir supplies which can meet immediate needs.

Telecommunications

- Loss of service to customers in Piha, Kaeo and Kaitia townships.
- Telecommunication cell sites are running on battery power or engine alternator (generator). Generators and additional batteries have been dispatched in case power is not restored. Due to lack of site access it is likely a number of cell sites servicing the area will cease to function.

Business continuity



Training

Waikato CDEM Group training schedule 2007

Date	Training	Location
26 September	CIMS 2	Hamilton
10 October	Table top exercise	Hamilton
31 October	H&S stress	Hamilton
21 November	CIMMS 2	Hamilton

The programme is subject to change at any time. If you are interested in a course, please contact Graeme Cleaver on (07) 838 6941 or email graeme.cleaver@hcc.govt.nz.

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

The newsletter has traditionally included training schedules to provide a one stop schedule of courses directed at the emergency management field. To this end, courses from GNS Science and NIWA Natural Hazards Centre will be included and future editions of the newsletter.

GNS Science and NIWA Natural Hazards Centre schedule 2007

Date	Training
20-21 September	Managing extreme weather and flooding
7-9 November	Understanding and managing landslide hazards

Prior to each course, the Natural Hazards Centre will send out detailed information about the course programmes, field trips, costs and registration forms.

For more information email j.becker@gns.cri.nz or check out www.naturalhazards.net.nz.

Communications Plan

Update

The final WELG Emergency Communications Plan is available for interested parties in the utility and emergency management sectors. One update has been sent out electronically and document holders are reminded that the Communications Plan's effectiveness is totally reliant on its information being current and it is their responsibility to advise the WELG Project Manager of any changes.

It is a controlled document and is not available on the web, so if you're interested in a copy please contact the WELG Project Manager.



- Cell phone services have been lost to the Hokianga.
- Generators/additional batteries have been despatched to manage the impact if power is not restored.
- Fibre technicians dispersed around Northland to respond as necessary to any cable damage, although road access or floodwaters may delay repairs.
- The main fibre and secondary copper cables on the Kerikeri bridge are being monitored for priority response as bridge is underwater.
- Updated prioritisation on restoration will take place today, but where roads are out, no restoration times can be given.
- International telecommunications – Warkworth satellite earth station has lost satellite links to Chatham Islands, Tonga, Kiribati, New Zealand defence in East Timor, Tokalau, Niue, and Samoa. Restoration will recommence when winds reduce.

Northland

- Power is out to 2000-3000 consumers in the far north district. Conditions are hampering efforts to restore power. In most cases, estimates of time required to restore power have not been given.
- Whangarei base hospital has suffered some power outages and has had to use emergency generator.
- Power out between Ruakaka and Bryderwyn, also the Titioki-Poroti area west of Whangarei due to fallen trees. No estimates of time to restore have been made, due to access problems, conditions and number of outages.

Energy

- Power outages are widespread throughout the Northland and Auckland area.

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.

Waikato Engineering Lifelines Group (WELG) events diary

A chronicle of WELG events over the last quarter and future events

Two WELG meetings have been held since March 2007 – the first on 11 May at the WEL Networks office in Hamilton. The key presenter was Derek Phyn (Environment Waikato) on the use of GIS in emergency management. The meeting was followed by a tour of the WEL Networks control room.

The group's third breakfast seminar was held on Friday, 8 June at the Hamilton Airport Motor Inn. From the satisfaction survey results, it appeared to have been well received and attendance was up slightly. Dave Wakelin, Senior Community Relations Officer – Department of Conservation, Tongariro Taupo Conservancy, made a presentation on the Ruapehu lahar. Rachel Bartells (formerly General Manager of Wiri Oil Services Ltd) talked about the structure of the fuel supply chain in the upper North Island.



During the Ruapehu lahar event the Tangiwai railway and road bridges were an excellent example of planned readiness, reduction and response by multiple agencies.

Avian flu pandemic

On 25 May 2007, the United Kingdom Health Protection Agency (HPA) announced that A/H7N2 virus infection had been laboratory confirmed in four individuals exposed to infected poultry in a small holding in Wales. The number of people found to have had contact with the disease was 142, of which 12 are being treated as being positive for bird flu but no one is seriously ill. Of the 142 to come into contact with the virus, 47 came into contact in a household setting, 14 in a school setting and 81 in a workplace setting. It is not the virulent H5N1 strain of avian flu.

The pandemic exercise, 'Exercise Cruikshank' has been completed and summaries of significant issues raised during the exercise are available on the website. You are encouraged to view this site as the information is important for all sectors. The issues are all-encompassing, ranging from medical to financial, and affecting every individual in this country which, by association, affects every business and organisation. An issue that was clearly identified in the exercise was that recovery would be a long-term phase, measured in years, not months. Another issue, that is directly applicable to one of the key objectives of lifeline groups, is that of interdependencies between utilities and the absolute necessity of identifying your vulnerabilities and planning in advance.

For more information on avian flu pandemic planning, check out www.moh.govt.nz/pandemicinfluenza or phone 0800 286 358.

WELG membership and contacts

The following are current WELG Committee members and/or sponsors.

CDEM Group	Transit NZ
Genesis Energy	Unison
Mighty River Power	Waikato District Council
Hauraki District Council	Waipa District Council
South Waikato District Council	Waipa Networks
Thames-Coromandel District Council	Waitomo District Council
Environment Waikato	WEL Networks
Hamilton City Council	Vodafone New Zealand
Powerco	Contact Energy Geothermal
Matamata-Piako District Council	Ministry of CDEM
Taupo District Council	Transpower
The Lines Company	

The strength of a lifelines group is measured in the participation of its membership in its activities and its funding in order to provide equitable outcomes to all sectors throughout the region.

For more information about WELG or to be added to the newsletter distribution list, please visit our website www.waikatolifelines.org.nz or contact:

John Harris, WELG Project Manager

Phone/fax: (07) 884 9259 Email: john.w.harris@xtra.co.nz
Address: 5 Riverview Lane
Te Aroha