National Emergency Management Agency
Te Rākau Whakamarumaru

Proactive Release

Date: 28 April 2026

The following document has been proactively released by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) on behalf of Hon Chris Penk, Associate Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery:

Title of Papers	Reference
Briefing to the Incoming Associate Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery	

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Where this is the case, the relevant section of the Act that would apply has been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Key to redaction code:

- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials.

National Emergency Management Agency
Te Rākau Whakamarumaru

Briefing to the Incoming Associate Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery

Date 10/03/2026

Priority: Routine

Security classification: ~~In Confidence~~

Welcome

Welcome to your role as Associate Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery. We look forward to working closely with you in a portfolio that is both demanding and deeply consequential for communities across Aotearoa New Zealand.

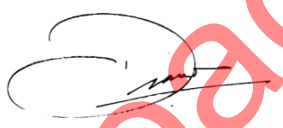
The Emergency Management and Recovery portfolio spans risk reduction, readiness, response, recovery, and system stewardship, and relies on strong collaboration across central government, local authorities, iwi, lifeline utilities, emergency services, and community organisations.

Your appointment comes at a time when the importance of this work is clear to all New Zealanders. Recent severe weather events have once again highlighted both the vulnerability of communities to natural hazards and the strength, resilience, and generosity that people show in response. These events continue to shape how we think about holistic emergency management, and the ongoing impacts of climate-related hazards on communities, infrastructure, and local economies.

This briefing updates the state of the emergency management system, key risks and pressures, and the work underway to strengthen national capability and recovery arrangements.

We recognise the importance of ministerial leadership in setting direction, maintaining momentum, and ensuring that system partners remain focused on shared priorities. As Associate Minister, your engagement with local government, community and iwi leaders, and response and recovery partners will be central to maintaining public confidence and ensuring that affected communities feel heard.

NEMA and the wider emergency management system stand ready to support you in this role, and we welcome your leadership as we continue to build a more resilient and adaptive emergency management system for the future.



Dave Gawn
Chief Executive, National Emergency Management Agency

Purpose

This briefing gives you an overview of the Emergency Management and Recovery portfolio to provide further context to the decisions you will make in your role as Associate Minister. This briefing is an update of that provided to the Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery in November 2023.

The role of the portfolio during emergencies

The Emergency Management and Recovery portfolio has the primary responsibility for leading the government response to, and recovery from, meteorological and geological related emergencies. These can include floods, tornados, severe winds, snowstorms, earthquakes, tsunami, volcanic eruptions, landslides and space weather. The portfolio also leads on infrastructure failure related emergencies - for example a transmission grid failure leading to a significant power outage.

The Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery, will often be the Government's spokesperson in emergencies, especially those requiring government assistance or involvement in the response or recovery. This means working closely with mayors and regional council chairs.

Depending on the nature of the event, you may be engaged along with the Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery at the early stages of emergency events.

For significant emergencies, the Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery can declare a state of national emergency. This may be needed when the resources required to manage a response are beyond what can be provided by Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups[1] and local authorities or otherwise require a significant and coordinated response at the national level. The Minister also has the ability to give notice of a transition period, which gives certain powers to assist Recovery Managers leading the recovery from an emergency.

During and following an emergency the Minister is likely to lead engagement with Cabinet on how the Government can best respond to requests to assist the response to, and recovery from, an emergency.

Other Ministers lead emergency responses related to other hazards (for example, rural droughts, terrorism, biosecurity). For these events, the Minister and Associate Minister support lead Ministers in the response to, and recovery from, an emergency event.

[1] Under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 every regional council and every territory authority must be a member of a CDEM Group.

Emergencies requiring an all-of-government response

The Chief Executive of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet may activate the ODESC (Officials' Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination) system for nationally significant issues requiring an all-of-government response.

ODESC is a meeting of relevant chief executives. It provides a coordinated government response to the emerging risk or crisis, and provides advice, through the ODESC Chair, to the Prime Minister who is the lead decision maker in the ODESC system.

NEMA will continue to keep you, as the Associate Minister, updated during emergency events, including when the event is led by another lead agency or Minister but has consequences for communities.

Your Role in Recovery

As Associate Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery, you hold primary ministerial responsibility for leading the Government's recovery from emergency events. This includes supporting system partners—local authorities, central government agencies, community, iwi, industry partners, and the private sector—to remain aligned in delivering timely and coordinated recovery outcomes.

Your recovery responsibilities include:

- Leading whole-of-government coordination of recovery efforts, maintaining alignment and accountability across relevant Ministers and agencies.
- Providing advice and reporting to Cabinet, including on recovery funding needs, and cross-portfolio issues.
- Oversight of any Government inquiry into the January 2026 severe weather event.
- Monitoring recovery progress and system risks, including pressures faced by affected communities, local authorities, and agencies.
- Responding to Ministerial correspondence and Parliamentary Questions relating to recovery.

The Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery retains statutory responsibilities (e.g., declarations of emergency), but you lead recovery coordination, governance, and assurance across government.

How Recovery Works in the Emergency Management System

Recovery in New Zealand is guided by a locally led, regionally coordinated, centrally supported model. Under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 and the National CDEM Plan:

- Local authorities and CDEM Groups lead recovery on the ground.
- NEMA provides national coordination, support, and guidance, for consistency across regions and across concurrent events.
- Transition periods may be used to provide Recovery Managers additional powers to manage, coordinate, or direct recovery activities.

This framework enables recovery to be responsive to local priorities while backed by national capability, resources, and policy settings.

NEMA's Role in Recovery (and how this supports your role)

NEMA enables and coordinates recovery across multiple levels by:

1. **Coordinating recovery across regions and agencies**
    - Chairs the National Recovery Coordination Group (NRCG)
    - Maintains national visibility of concurrent recoveries and emerging issues
    - NEMA's Regional Emergency Management Advisors (REMAs) gather operational intelligence, support local decision-making, and broker solutions.

2. **Providing early and integrated recovery planning**
    - Seamlessly links response and recovery
    - Aligns early with infrastructure, welfare, housing, insurance, and resilience funding streams
    - Supports transition notices and statutory appointment of Recovery Managers.

3. **Funding navigation, aggregation, and coordination**
    Recovery often hinges on funding clarity and timeliness. NEMA acts as a navigator and coordinator across central funding mechanisms, including:
    - 60/40 infrastructure repair or rebuild cost-sharing
    - Special recovery policies
    - Mayoral Relief Funds
    - Support for local authorities' solid waste removal, community welfare, and other needs.

    NEMA identifies funding gaps early, advises you and Cabinet, and supports consistent decision-making across portfolios.

Standing up a National Recovery Office (NRO) when needed

For nationally significant, multi-regional, or fiscally complex events, NEMA stands up an integrated National Recovery Office. The National Recovery Office develops national recovery strategies and action plans, coordinates national assistance, and provides milestone tracking and reporting. This model is in use following the January and February 2026 severe weather events.

The Current Recovery Landscape and Pressures

New Zealand is operating in an environment where recovery is a persistent and continuous system function, not an occasional activity. Factors shaping the system include:

- Increasing frequency of severe weather events
- Compounding regional impacts (e.g., the same areas hit repeatedly)
- Strained local/central government capacity
- Infrastructure fragility and long-term resilience needs
- Housing, roading, landslide, waste management, and wellbeing challenges

Your role includes providing national leadership, supporting Cabinet to remain well-advised, and maintaining momentum on system improvements that strengthen readiness for future recoveries.

Natural hazards trends

New Zealand is one of the most exposed countries to natural hazard risk and this exposure is increasing. A 2018 Lloyds' analysis ranked New Zealand second highest in the world for financial exposure to natural hazards[2].

A3s describing New Zealand's riskscape and emergency activity since 2008 are set out in **Annexes One and Two**.

An update on expected cyclone activities for the current cyclone season (1 November 2025-30 April 2026) is provided in **Annex Three**. While cyclones clearly pose significant dangers if they reach New Zealand even tropical lows not sufficient to be classified as cyclones, have the potential to be significantly damaging.

There is growing pressure on the emergency management system's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, especially as the scale and frequency of emergency weather events increases.

Factors leading to the increase of occurrence and consequences of emergencies include:

- The gradual increase in population and economic activity over time means there are now more people (up from 4.133 million in 2005 to 5.324 million in 2025) and assets at risk from hazards, especially natural hazards. This would be the case even if there was no increase in the frequency of risk.
- Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of weather-related emergencies, such as floods, landslips, droughts, heatwaves, and wildfires.

While there is growing attention being paid to climate change related risks, it is important to note New Zealand also faces considerable risk from geological related emergencies such as earthquakes, tsunami, and volcanoes. For example, significant earthquakes may be less common but have caused billions of dollars of damage in recent decades. The Treasury estimated the capital costs of the 2011 Canterbury earthquake sequence to be over $40 billion, the equivalent of 20% of gross domestic product. There were flow-on effects including to business and employment, dislocation of communities, and exacerbation of social issues.

Recent scientific research shows there is a strong likelihood a large earthquake and associated tsunami on a catastrophic scale (such as an Alpine Fault earthquake or Hikurangi subduction zone earthquake and tsunami) will happen – if not in our lifetime, then in that of the next generation. Crucially, it could happen tomorrow. These events are discussed further in the case studies below.

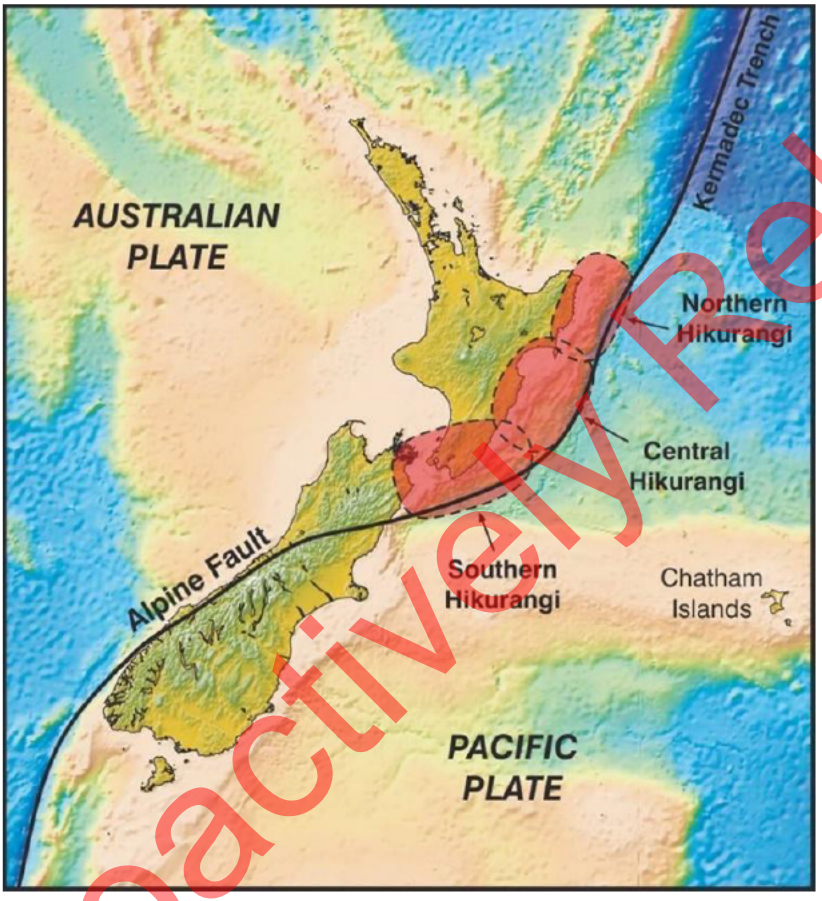
[2] Expected losses from disasters. pdf-lloyds-underinsurance-report-final.pdf

Case Study: Hikurangi subduction zone earthquake and tsunami

Research indicates there is a 25% probability of a major Hikurangi Subduction Zone (refer Figure 1) earthquake event occurring in the next 50 years. Subduction Zones are known for producing the largest earthquakes on earth, such as the 2011 Tohoku (Japan) earthquake which also created a large and devastating tsunami.

Indicative national impacts of a major Hikurangi earthquake and tsunami include tens of thousands of people dead, injured or displaced from their homes, and significant damage to the built environment (in excess of $144 billion).

Figure 1: Hikurangi subduction zone and Alpine Fault



Case Study: Alpine Fault earthquake

Research indicates there is a 75% probability of an Alpine Fault earthquake occurring in the next 50 years, and a 4 out of 5 chance it will be a magnitude 8+ event. Such an event will cause widespread damage, disruption, and devastation across the South Island. It will trigger a range of cascading hazards persisting for decades, with short, medium and long-term consequences for the entire country.

A large Alpine Fault earthquake would cause widespread and significant damage to buildings and infrastructure throughout the South Island. Electricity supply to the

North Island may also be affected. Tens of thousands of visitors and residents are likely to be isolated in Queenstown Lakes, parts of Central Otago, the West Coast and Fiordland. Associated hazards are likely to include landslides, landslide created tsunami, landslide dams and exacerbated river flooding.

In addition to the increasing severity and frequency of events responded to by NEMA and CDEM in the past 10 years, New Zealand has also experienced several other nationally significant emergencies led by other lead agencies and portfolios.

The Emergency Management and Recovery Ministers, NEMA and the emergency management system play a critical role in supporting these emergencies. Previous examples include the Campylobacter outbreak in Havelock North led by the Ministry of Health (2016), Wiri pipeline outage led by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (2017), Mycoplasma bovis outbreak led by the Ministry for Primary Industries (2018), Pigeon Valley wildfire led by Fire and Emergency New Zealand (2019), 15 March terrorist attack led by the NZ Police (2019), and the COVID-19 pandemic led by the Ministry of Health (2020).

Overview of the emergency management system

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 lays down the foundations of the emergency management system. An Emergency Management Bill, to replace the Act, is currently before Parliament and is discussed later in this briefing.

Among other things the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act provides:

- that there is a National CDEM Strategy
- for the Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery to review the National CDEM Plan
- for the Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery to comment on proposed CDEM Group plans
- that the Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery has the ability to declare a state of national emergency or give notice of a national transition period (and to declare a state of local emergency or give notice of a local transition period in certain situations).

The Act also:

- sets the functions and powers of the Director of CDEM (a statutory position currently held by NEMA's Deputy Chief Executive, Emergency Management)
- sets the functions and powers of CDEM Groups (joint committees comprising the mayors and chairs of all local authorities in a region).

The Act places various emergency management and business continuity obligations on:

- government departments

- local authorities
- emergency services
- lifeline utilities (certain entities within the energy, water services, telecommunications, broadcasting, and transport sectors).

The Act requires two national-level planning documents be prepared:

- A National CDEM Strategy, which sets the Crown's goals and objectives in relation to emergency management in New Zealand over the next 10 years. The current strategy was released in 2019 and is titled the *National Disaster Resilience Strategy*.
- A National CDEM Plan which sets out the operational arrangements for emergency management at the national level. This includes identification of New Zealand's nationally significant hazards and risks, and the roles and responsibilities of lead agencies (responsible for managing particular hazards) and support agencies (responsible for managing specific consequences of an emergency).

A wide range of legislation in other portfolios is relevant to emergency management. For example, the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 sets out the role, powers and functions of Fire and Emergency New Zealand, the Biosecurity Act 1993 provides specific powers to manage biosecurity emergencies, and the Epidemic Preparedness Act 2006 and Health Act 1956 provide specific powers in relation to infectious diseases.

Key participants in the emergency management system

Emergency management is delivered collaboratively depending on the nature of the emergency. In general, emergency management is locally led by local authorities, regionally co-ordinated by CDEM Groups, and nationally supported by NEMA and other government agencies.

The following summarises the roles of key participants in the emergency management system.

- **The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)** is the Government lead for emergency management. NEMA acts as steward, operator and assurer of the emergency management system. As steward, we provide leadership for risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery activities, and build emergency management capability and capacity. As operator, we lead or support the response to and recovery from emergencies while also supporting the operation of the emergency management system. As assurer (a relatively new function) we will provide assurance the emergency management system is fit for purpose.

  NEMA works with central and local government, emergency services, lifeline utilities, non-government and research and science organisations, communities, iwi and business to make sure responses to, and recoveries from, emergencies are effective and integrated.

Depending on the type and scale of the emergency, NEMA leads or supports the response and recovery. NEMA works with other government agencies to reduce risk including the Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry for the Environment, and the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment.

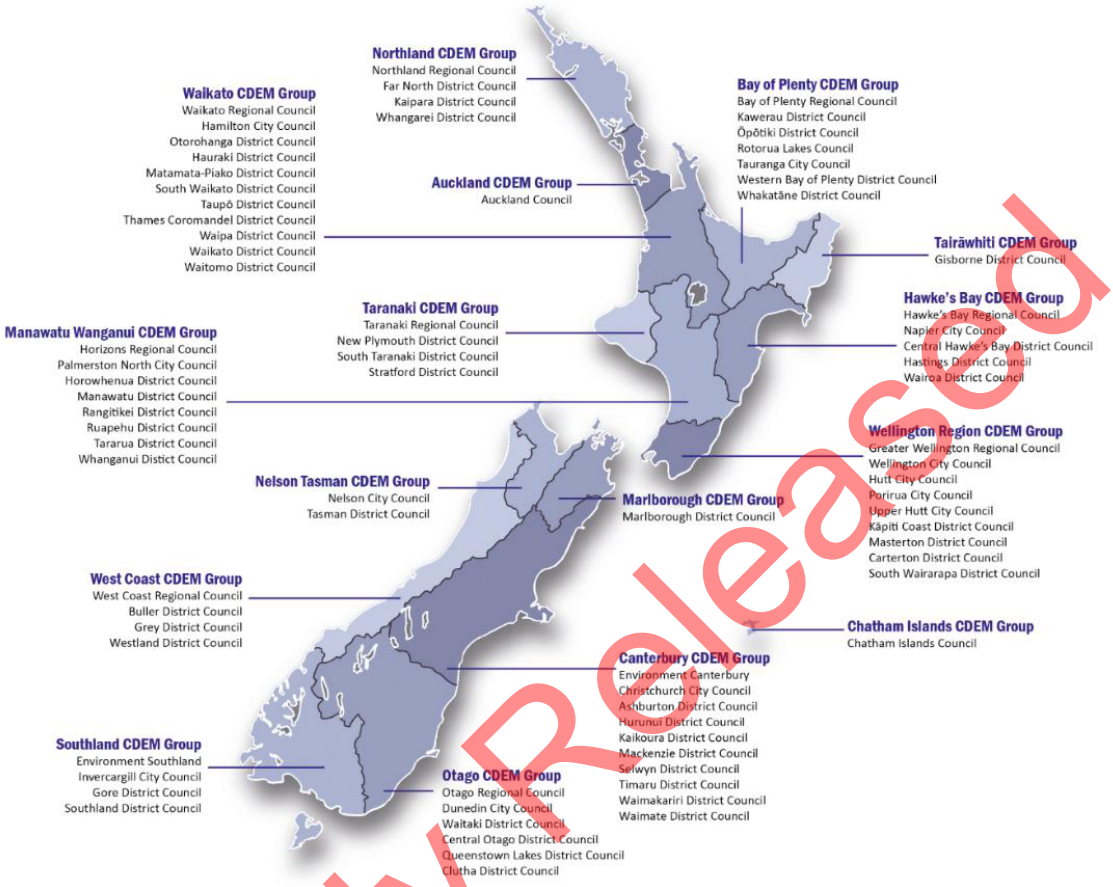
NEMA also provides emergency management support to a range of Pacific countries. This can include support to build local capability as well as on-the-ground assistance during emergencies. This is in close partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. NEMA currently has a MFAT funded staff member on secondment in each of the National Disaster Management Offices of Tonga and Samoa.

A description of funding and reporting within the Emergency Management and Recovery portfolio is set out in **Annex Four**.

- **Local Government.** Most emergency management happens at local government level through council employed staff; they are the key delivery arm of emergency management.
- The CDEM Act 2002 requires all councils to be part of a CDEM Group,. A feature of local leadership is the variety of models across the country ranging from unitary authorities, to territorial authorities acting together with a regional council in a Group. The extent to which common services (such as costs for the Group Emergency Management Office) are shared between group members varies across the country as does the size and distribution of populations that Groups service. This variance means establishing national consistency is an ongoing challenge.
- **Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups (CDEM Groups)** are required to co-ordinate planning and activity across the "4Rs" of risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery, preparing communities for emergencies. CDEM Group Offices are normally established to support coordination across the Group for all "4Rs" although there are varying degrees of centralisation of responsibilities. For example,not all district councils maintain their own local Emergency Operations Centre; some 'sub contract ' the coordination of response to the regional Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC).

  The CDEM Groups lead the response and recovery to local emergencies, whether a state of local emergency is declared or not. They work with each other, emergency services, government agencies, lifeline utilities, iwi, and other agencies to deliver regional and local emergency management. Figure 2 below shows the participating local authority members of the 16 CDEM Groups.

Figure 2: Participating members of the 16 CDEM Groups



- **Central government agencies**, including those designated as lead agencies for specific hazards,[3] have risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery roles during and after emergencies. Other agencies, while not having a lead role, provide specialist services such as Metservice, Earth Sciences NZ (formerly GNS Science and NIWA). All departments have a responsibility to maintain service delivery during and after an emergency.

- **Lifeline utilities** (such as the energy, water services, telecommunications, broadcasting, and transport sectors have obligations under the CDEM Act including being able to function to the fullest possible event during and after an emergency . Specific entities and types of entities are listed as a schedule to the CDEM Act 2002. "Lifeline utilities" are increasingly referred to as Critical Infrastructure.

- **Research and science organisations, non-government organisations, the private sector, marae, iwi, community organisations, volunteers, and the local community.** Many are identified in the National CDEM Plan and play a role in emergencies, particularly in getting ready for, responding to and recovering from

[3] NEMA is the lead agency for geological hazards such as earthquakes, meteorological hazards such as storms, and infrastructure failure. Other agencies lead hazards where they have legislative mandates or expertise (e.g. the Ministry for Primary Industries leads for droughts affecting the rural sector, Fire and Emergency NZ leads for wildfires, and the New Zealand Police leads for terrorism hazards).

emergencies. Their capacity to participate depends on their resources, capability, and commitment.

Key challenges in the emergency management system

With weather events exacerbated by climate change, and the increasing evidence about the likelihood and impact of a catastrophic event, we need to improve our emergency management system.

Growing, upskilling and professionalising the emergency management workforce

Reviews have identified the need to grow and sustain a response and recovery workforce capability across New Zealand. The emergency management system can be easily overwhelmed even with a moderate scale event, let alone a large-scale emergency event (such as a Hikurangi subduction zone earthquake and tsunami).

Emergency management capability and leadership depth varies greatly across regions. Central government agencies and CDEM Groups will not have sufficient staff available to operate a response to a catastrophic event. In some cases, there may not be the capacity to fully respond to and recover from a moderate or even small-scale event.

While progress has been made over the last two years, we still need to continue to grow and professionalise the emergency management workforce. Ensuring those for whom emergency management is not their primary role have proper training including participating in exercises remains important.

Greater public understanding of natural hazard risks and their role in an emergency

Education is critical to ensuring the public is prepared for the impacts of an emergency and they know what to do to stay safe and support themselves following an event. While local and central government have important roles to play in emergencies this does not detract from the need for individuals, families and business to undertake their own planning and preparedness for emergencies. This can help reduce the impacts on individuals and communities, reduce the burden on response agencies, and keep casualties and economic impact to a minimum.

Improving our ability to see the big picture during emergencies

The emergency management system's ability to access and use information is a critical component of decision-making. While there are pockets of good information and intelligence practice in the emergency management system this is not wide-spread or consistent. A related issue is ensuring interconnectivity and common operating systems, so the emergency management system has shared tactical and strategic awareness.

This is discussed further below on the progress of NEMA's Emergency Management Sector – Operational Systems programme.

Being able to assure the system is working

One of NEMA's roles is to provide assurance about the performance and capability of the emergency management system. NEMA is developing a tools and resources to assess the capability of the emergency management system which will ultimately include a national capability report as part of a wider regulatory approach. This will be a key change in balance between NEMA's roles as Steward, Operator and Assurer. We are developing a cost-effective approach to assurance balancing future and current resources available to regulated parties, in particular local government.

Government's roadmap to address these key challenges

In July 2023, the then Minister for Emergency Management established a Government Inquiry into the response to the 2023 North Island Severe Weather Events (NISWE). The purpose of the inquiry was "…to ensure the design of the emergency management system is appropriate to support readiness for, and responses to, future emergency events (such as landslides, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic activity, floods and storms) by identifying lessons from the 2023 North Island severe weather events."

The Inquiry's report was publicly released in March 2024 with 14 high-level recommendations and 33 sub recommendations. The Government accepted all the high-level recommendations and established 15 actions across five focus areas to address them.

The five focus areas were:

- Give effect to the whole-of-society approach to emergency management
- Support and enable local government to deliver a consistent minimum standard of emergency management across New Zealand
- Professionalise and build the capability and capacity of the emergency workforce
- Enable the different parts of the system to work better together at the national level
- Drive a strategic focus on investment and implementation

The detailed actions under each Focus Area are set out in **Annex 5**.

In June 2025, the Minister released Strengthening Emergency Management: A Roadmap for Investment and Implementation. This set out initiatives Cabinet agreed are needed to implement the Focus area actions from 2025-2031. Cabinet agreed to the initiatives in the Roadmap in principle, subject to further policy work, the passage of enabling legislation, and availability of new funding through future Budgets.

The key initiatives for 2026-2031 in the Roadmap are:

- Increased public readiness and priority community development programmes e.g. evidence-based community and national initiatives to build self-reliance

- The CDEM Resilience Fund is increased and refreshed with broader access criteria e.g. resilience pods with equipment and supplies including water tanks and solar power, risk and resilience science operationalised locally
- Increased national response and recovery capacity and capability supporting regions e.g. regional support teams and a national pool of specialist recovery experts
- Improved capability and professionalism across the system e.g. new standards, assurance, exercises, integrated planning, education, training, guidance, tools
- Modernise antiquated technology for real time information, warnings and emergency response and recovery decisions e.g. Common Operating Picture across New Zealand
- National Crisis Management Centre (bunker) and alternative, guidance to improve regional and local coordination centres e.g. local centres beefed up with technology, standard operating procedures and training
- Increased stockpiles and access to nationally critical equipment and supplies e.g. generators, food, petrol, bridges, medical and road supplies stockpiled

NEMA will prioritise activity that can be delivered from its current baselines and will provide advice to Government on initiatives that require new funding from future Budgets.

Key current work

This section highlights key areas of work currently being done by NEMA. You and the Minister will receive a fortnightly portfolio status report along with reporting on recovery activities.

Emergency Management Bill 2025

The Emergency Management Bill (No 2) was introduced on 9 December 2025 and, when passed, will replace the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (the CDEM Act). The Bill implements the parts of the Government's response to the North Island Severe Weather Events Inquiry that require legislative change and modernises the regime.

The Bill retains New Zealand's existing philosophy for emergency management, which is based on three key principles:

- consideration of all hazards – natural and man-made
- taking an end-to-end approach to managing risks – that means taking action across the "4 Rs" of risk reduction, readiness, response, and recovery
- all parts of society have a role to play – risks should be managed by those who are best placed to manage them, at the lowest appropriate level.

The Bill builds on that framework and makes a number of changes which seek to:

- strengthen the role of communities and iwi Māori in emergency management
- provide for clear responsibilities at the national, regional, and local levels
- enable a higher minimum standard of emergency management
- minimise disruption to essential services; and
- ensure agencies have the tools to do their jobs effectively when an emergency happens.

Public and targeted engagement helped inform the development of the Bill. The Governance and Administration Committee is currently receiving submissions and is due to report-back to Parliament on 9 June 2026.

Leading the Bill through the House is the responsibility of the Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery.

The Emergency Management Sector – Operational Systems programme (EMS-OS)

This programme is the technical solution to modernise how New Zealand anticipates, manages, and recovers from emergencies. EMS-OS will deliver three core capabilities:

- a sector-wide intelligence platform and common operating picture;
- a modernised national warning system; and
- the operational tools needed to support coordinated response and recovery across government.

These capabilities address long-standing and repeatedly identified system failures — most recently highlighted by the Government Inquiry into the North Island Severe Weather Events — including poor real-time situational awareness, fragmented information, inconsistent public warnings, and weak interoperability between agencies.

EMS-OS is essential infrastructure, not an IT upgrade: it enables evidence-based decisions, clearer public communication, and a more connected system that can reduce economic, social, and safety impacts on communities.

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Budget 2026

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National Crisis Management Centre facilities

The 2024 Report into the North Island Severe Weather events found that the National Crisis Management Centre (often called the Bunker) is not fit for purpose, including ineffective physical layout size, communications and connectivity. This repeated the findings of the 2017 Technical Advisory Group which found it outmoded and falling behind best practice.

As part of the Parliamentary Service lead building of additional space for MPs in Museum Street in the Parliamentary Precinct NEMA has been offered a floor for a new emergency management facility. This keeps the facility close to Parliament and avoids the cost of a dedicated building.

We are also in the processes building capability for an alternative National Crisis Management Centre based in at the Auckland Institute of Technology in Auckland. This is to be used if a major event, such as tsunami or earthquake makes the Wellington facility unusable and no other suitable buildings in the region are available.

The alternative NCMC currently does not operate as a 24/7 facility and is intended to be activated when required. A programme of work is on-going work to ensure that there will be sufficient trained staff to manage any response in the event of a major disaster in Wellington.

Linkages with other portfolios

The nature of the emergency management system means you will be engaging with other Ministerial portfolios on matters affecting emergency management. Key portfolios include:

- **Local Government.** This portfolio is responsible for supporting the local government system, and the central and local government relationship, both of which are crucial parts of the emergency management system.

Local government leads risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery at a local level. Any policy considerations regarding local government funding and structures may have implications on existing emergency management funding and delivery.

- **Environment and Climate Change portfolios.** Risk reduction is an important part of the emergency management system and levers for risk reduction sit in a range of agencies. Work on resource management reforms (to enable effective land-use planning) and climate adaptation (including long-term policies for climate change adaptation and managed retreat) are central to risk reduction.
- **National Security and Intelligence.** The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet is leading work to improve the resilience of New Zealand's critical infrastructure system. This is to help ensure critical infrastructure is better prepared to withstand, and recover from, disruptions caused by adverse events, such as earthquakes, extreme weather events, and cyber-attacks.
- **Internal Affairs.** This portfolio administers statutory inquiries such as the inquiry into the landslide and Mount Maunganui. It also services the government Inquiry into the response to the North Island severe weather events and the Royal Commission of Inquiry into lessons learned from New Zealand's response to COVID-19. The Department is also the host agency for NEMA.
- **Other response/recovery support agencies.** Depending on the nature of the response/recovery we will also work closely with other agencies who have a role to play in. Amongst the most frequent are the Ministry for Primary Industries, Land Transport New Zealand, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for Social Development, NZ Police, Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

Annex One: New Zealand's Riskscape

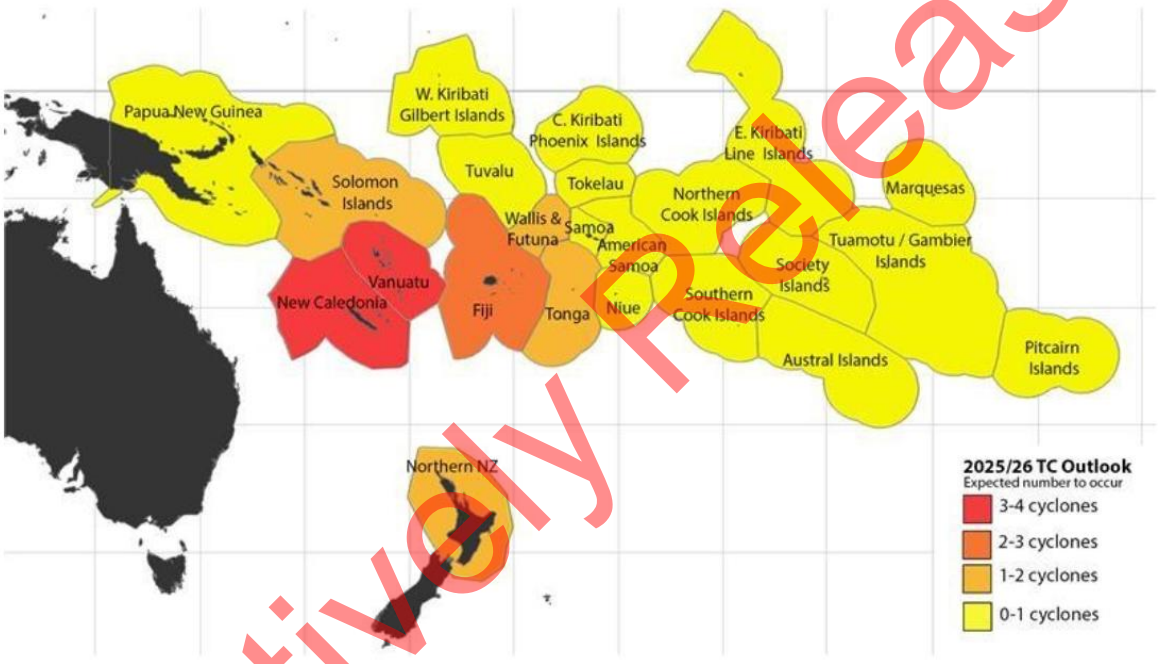
Annex Two: We've had a busy few years

Annex three: Expected number of cyclones

NIWA has prepared the map below (Figure 4) summarising the expected number of cyclones between November 2025 and April 2026 in the South-West Pacific. Depending on the scale or the damage caused NEMA may be asked to provide on the ground assistance to Pacific partners.

As was seen from the recent weather events, subtropical lows, not large enough to be classified as cyclones, can reach New Zealand and cause significant damage.

Figure 4: Predicated number of cyclones November 2025 - April 2026 in the South-West Pacific



Source: Southwest Pacific Tropical Cyclone Outlook -October 2025 | Earth Sciences New Zealand | NIWA

Annex four: Funding and reporting

Funding for emergency management sits within the Emergency Management Leadership and Support Multi-Category Appropriation, within Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet (until 24 September 2025) and Vote Internal Affairs (from 25 September 2025).

NEMA, in conjunction with the Vote Administrator from the Treasury, will engage with you on budget preparation and setting our strategic direction, as well as in meeting other Public Finance Act 1989 reporting and accountability requirements.

The Emergency Management Leadership and Support Multi-Category Appropriation

The Emergency Management Leadership and Support Multi-Category Appropriation supports leadership of the all-hazards, all-risk emergency management system.

The appropriation supports the annual operating costs for NEMA and funding for other non-departmental expenditure to support emergency events and emergency preparedness.

The figures below relate to funding for 2025/26.

The Emergency Management Leadership and Support Multi-Category Appropriation comprises:

	2025/26	2025/26	2025/26
Emergency Management Leadership and Support The single overarching purpose of this appropriation is to support leadership of the all-hazards, all risk emergency management system so that it reduces risk and is ready and able to provide an effective and integrated response to, and recovery from, emergencies.	**After OBU $ million**	**Changes at MBU $ million (TBC)**	**Final Appropriation $ million**
Departmental Output Expenses ***Advice and Support for Emergency Risk Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery*** - This category is limited to advice to Ministers and the emergency management sector on the design, operation and performance of the emergency management system; building the capability and capacity of the emergency management sector (including communities) to plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies; and leading and supporting response to and recovery from emergencies.	58.392	0.831	**59.223**
Non-Departmental Other Expenses ***Risk Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery*** - This category is limited to grants, contributions and other payments to support communities and the emergency management sector in New Zealand and Pacific Realm countries on matters relating to emergency risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery.	5.499	1.2	6.699
Non-Departmental Capital Expenditure - Emergency Risk Reduction and Readiness - Capital Expenditure (Delivering Funding for Whakaari White Island Monitoring)	0.393	0	**0.393**
Emergency Management Leadership and Support MCA	**64.284**	**2.031**	**66.315**

*From July to September, NEMA's appropriation was administered under Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet. From October onward, it is administered under Vote Internal Affairs. The figures above present a consolidated view to reflect NEMA's full-year funding envelope for 2025/26.

The Non-Departmental Other Expenses Emergency Risk Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery category above supports expenditure for:

	After OBU $ million	Changes at MBU $ million (TBC)	Final Appropriation $ million
- Contributions to Local Authorities following an emergency event	0.600	0	**0.600**
- Emergency Management Preparedness Grants supporting emergency preparedness and improved community resilience	0.889	0	**0.889**
- Depreciation of the Tsunami Monitoring and Detection Network	2.177	0	**2.177**
- Delivering Funding for Whakaari White Island Monitoring	0.233	0	**0.233**
- A contribution from the Tertiary Education Commission towards the cost of training in the Civil Defence Emergency Management sector	1.700	0	**1.700**
- A reprioritisation of funding between categories in the Emergency Management Leadership and Support MCA for a contribution to the Nelson Tasman Mayoral Relief Fund associated with the June 2025 weather event	-0.100	0	**-0.100**
- Initial Government Financial Assistance for the January 2026 Upper North Island Severe Weather Event [CAB-26-MIN-0009 refers]	0	1.2	**1.2**
	5.499	**1.2**	**6.699**

NEMA also manages expenditure within the following non-departmental appropriation:

	Final Appropriation $ million
- Local Authority Emergency Expenses PLA	5.0

Annex 5: Focus areas and actions from the Government's response to the NSWIE Inquiry

Focus Area 1 - Give effect to the whole-of-society approach to emergency management

1.1 Develop and invest in a comprehensive and ongoing national public readiness programme to protect lives, prevent injuries and trauma, and reduce the burden on response and recovery efforts.

1.2 Recognise and enable the significant contribution of iwi/Māori in emergency management to the benefit of all people in New Zealand.

1.3 Direct a greater share of emergency management investment into community resilience initiatives.

1.4 Improve how communities access funding after an emergency.

1.5 Expand the number and quality of formal agreements with businesses, community organisations, iwi/Māori to deliver assistance in times of emergencies.

Focus Area 2 - Support and enable local government to deliver a consistent minimum standard of emergency management across New Zealand

2.1 NEMA will increase its focus on the provision of resources that local authorities need.

2.2 NEMA will set standards for the delivery of emergency management and assure these standards are being met.

2.3 Clarify operational roles and responsibilities in an emergency response.

2.4 Strengthen the regional tier of emergency management.

Focus Area 3 - Professionalise and build the capability and capacity of the emergency management workforce

3.1 NEMA will build on existing work to deliver a significant uplift in capability development efforts

3.2 Develop and invest in a model for full-time deployable emergency management surge support.

Focus Area Four - Enable the different parts of the system to work better together at the national level

4.1 Clarify national level roles and responsibilities and strengthen leadership in risk reduction, readiness, response, and recovery.

4.2 Progress work to enable interoperability by:

Focus Area Five - Drive a strategic focus on investment and implementation

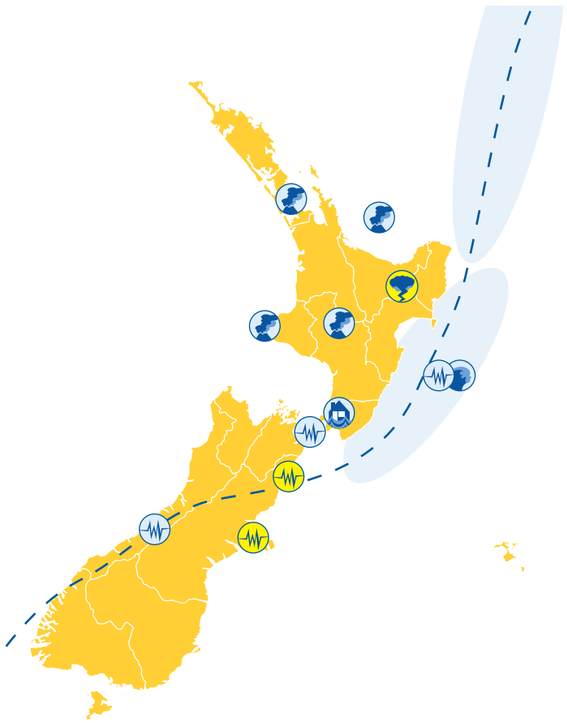
5.1 Ensure a well-governed approach to delivery of *Strengthening disaster resilience and emergency management*.

5.2 Deliver a **detailed investment and implementation roadmap** to deliver the work programme set out in Strengthening disaster resilience and emergency management and to drive delivery.

10 March 2026

Annex 1: New Zealand's riskscape

National Emergency Management Agency
Te Rākau Whakamarumaru
Aotearoa New Zealand

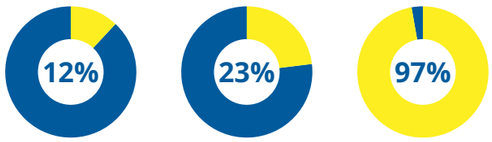


Modelled scenarios		Likelihood in next 50 years	Modelled building/ infrastructure losses	Likely consequences
Ruapehu / Tongariro / Ngauruhoe / Whakaari ash producing eruption		**Almost certain**	**~$1bn**	Disruption mostly from ashfall to aviation, electricity transmission, and tourism and primary industry sectors.
Alpine fault – M8 earthquake		**75%**	**~$10bn**	High-probability event, extensive co-seismic landslides will compound impacts. **Est. Injuries requiring medical facility care:** 9,693 **Est. deaths:** 326
Taranaki eruption	**Small eruption**	**30%**	**~$1bn**	Similar size to 1995-96 Ruapehu eruptions. Impacts dominated by ashfall and lahars; evacuations likely.
	Large eruption	**1%**	**$10bn-$15bn**	Similar size to 1886 Tarawera eruption. Likely severe impacts to oil/gas production and farming sector; mass evacuation probable.
Space weather event - extreme		**30%**	**~$6.2bn (electricity only)**	Global event. Disruption or failure of the national electricity grid with cascading disruptions across interdependent infrastructure (banking, water, health, transport). 15,000 medically dependent consumers vulnerable.
Hikurangi subduction zone earthquake and tsunami	**M8+**	**25%**	**~$10bn-$20bn**	Strong and long ground shaking for east coast of North Island, and large tsunami produced.
	M9.1	**1%**	**$144bn** (buildings only)	**Est. Injuries requiring medical facility care:** 25,960 **Est. deaths:** 22,180 (tsunami).
South American M9+ earthquake & NZ tsunami		**25%**	**~$5bn** (buildings only)	Large exposure for eastern coast of New Zealand, especially Christchurch City/Canterbury
Auckland volcanic eruption		**10%**	**$5bn-$65bn** (buildings only)	Potential full evacuation of Auckland City, with only days to week's warning. **Est. Injuries requiring medical facility care:** 40,817 (0% evacuation) **Est. deaths:** 40,820 (0% evacuation)
Hutt River flood (over stopbank design event)		**5%**	**$5bn-$10bn**	Hutt City – greatest exposure for any flood plain in New Zealand.
Wellington Fault M7.5 earthquake		**5%**	**~$16bn** (buildings only)	Likely serious and prolonged damage and disruption to Wellington, including government.
Actual events				
Space weather event (May 2024) equivalent event		**Almost certain**		Moderate sized event causing disruptions to flight operations and damage to satellites.
Cyclone Gabrielle equivalent event		**80%**	**$9bn-$14bn** (est. actual)	Moderate-sized event, causing severe multi-hazard impacts across multiple regions.
Kaikōura earthquake (2016)		**1.7%**	**$3.5bn** (actual)	Moderate impacts to Wellington despite distance, severe critical infrastructure impacts.
Canterbury Earthquake Sequence (2010-11)		**<1%**	**$54bn** (actual)	Largest disaster in a generation. Major and long-lasting impacts to Christchurch city, complex recovery.

What might the next 50 years look like for the emergency management system?

This page shows a summary of well-understood natural hazard risk scenarios, which helps to give some sense what we face as a nation. While this is not in any way an exhaustive list and is subject to many uncertainties, it provides some insights as to the relative likelihoods and consequences.

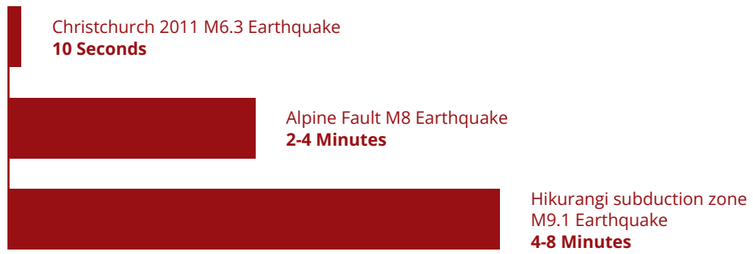
When we consider all of the modelled scenarios with >$10bn expected damage costs, the estimated probability of any one of these events occurring is:



in the next 3 years | **in the next 6 years** | **in the next 50 years**

Note – this is not an exhaustive list of possible scenarios. Modified from LGNZ 2014; updated and new data from GNS Science, NIWA, EQC, and Massey and Canterbury Universities

The shaking in Christchurch on 22 February 2011 lasted for around 10 seconds. An Alpine Fault earthquake could cause shaking for two to four minutes, and a Hikurangi subduction zone earthquake could cause shaking for four to eight minutes.



Challenges

It is very likely we will experience two or more concurrent major events. This will lead to long and overlapping recoveries.

The relative vulnerability of people, property and infrastructure is growing. Climate change may also lead to a greater frequency of events in short succession and compounding socio-economic pressures.

It's critical we have a deep understanding of our risks in all their complexity.

Understanding how to reduce our risks is essential. We need to engage with and influence the right people and organisations. Communication and education with communities is at the heart of this.

We need to understand and work within the complexities of communities. We need to understand how they change over time and with different experiences and how this might impact their awareness of hazard risks.

The human cost of emergencies

In addition to economic costs, large scale emergency events have significant wider impacts on people, such as death, injury, psychosocial and other social impacts. For example, a Hikurangi M9.1 event would potentially result in tens of thousands of fatalities, injuries, and massive displacement of communities.

Alpine Fault

New Zealand remains exposed to costly earthquake events: **researchers estimate a 75% probability of an Alpine Fault earthquake in the next 50 years**, with a 4 out of 5 chance that it will be a magnitude 8+ event with potential to cause significant damage.

An Alpine Fault magnitude 8 rupture will release 350 times more energy than the 2011 Christchurch earthquake.

10 March 2026

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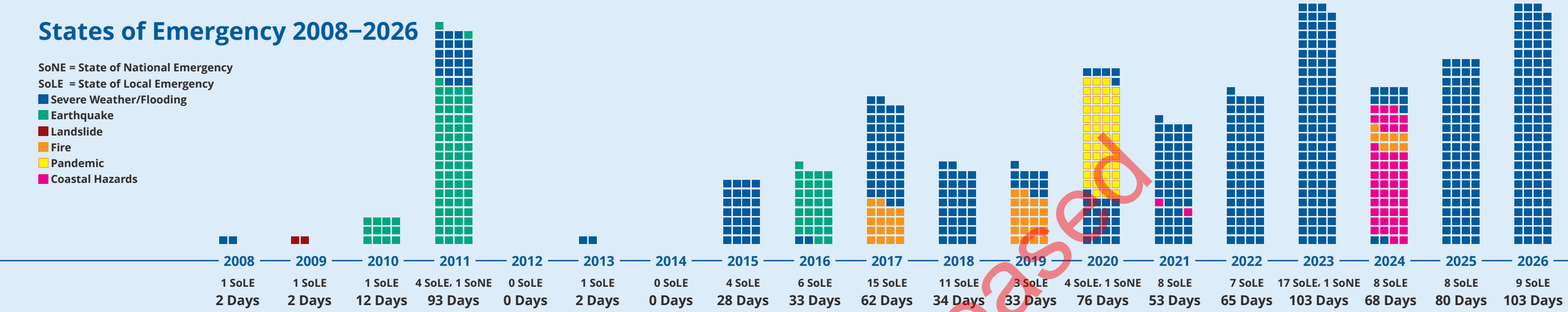
Aotearoa New Zealand

Annex 2: We've had a busy few years

States of Emergency 2008–2026

SoNE = State of National Emergency
SoLE = State of Local Emergency
Severe Weather/Flooding
Earthquake
Landslide
Fire
Pandemic
Coastal Hazards



Extreme weather events (floods, droughts, storms, etc) will be:

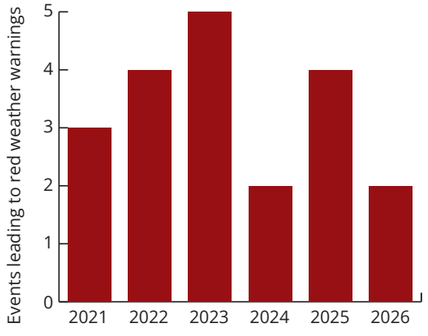
- **more frequent**
- **more intense**
- **in locations not previously considered at risk.**

Evidence suggests the projections appear to be (uncomfortably) accurate

- 2022 weather-related insurance costs were at an unprecedented $335m
- breaking the previous record of $305m in 2021
- 2023 cost about $3.5bn, whereas 2024 was significantly less as there were no significant events.
- During 2025 the Government released the National Adaptation Framework which sets out the approach to the growing risks from climate change in a way that minimises the overall long-term cost to society

(Insurance Council of NZ)

Red weather events annually since 2021

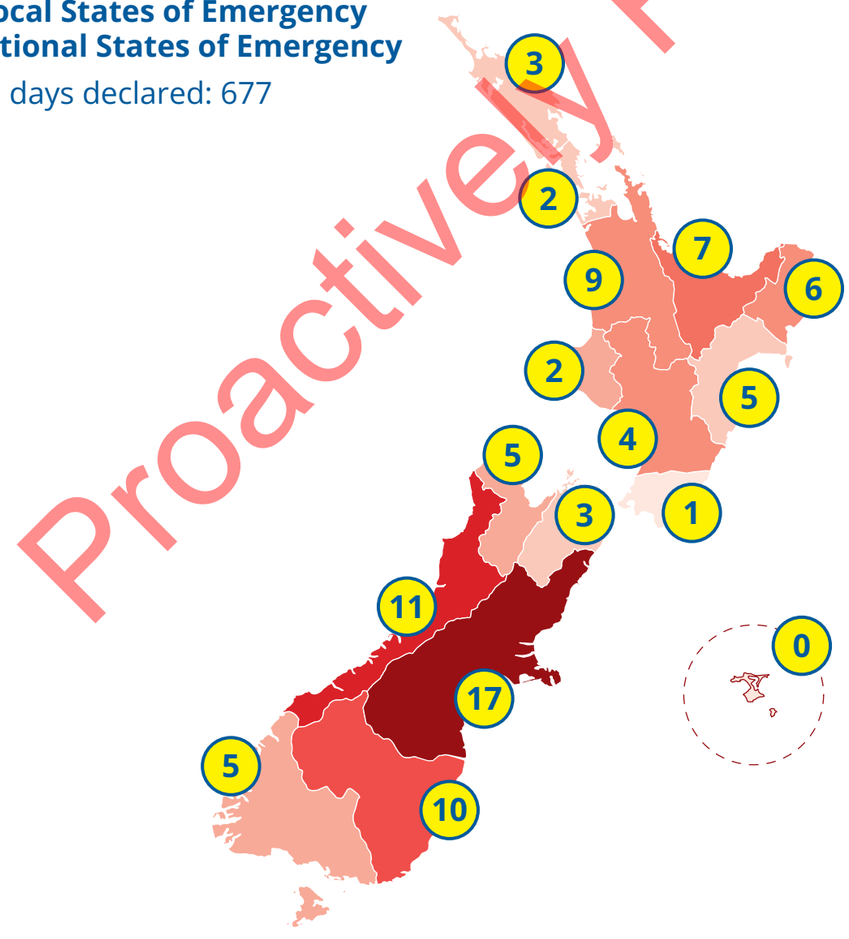


Multiple warnings for a single event (e.g. Cyclone Gabrielle) counted as one 'event'.

Spread of declared emergencies across New Zealand from 2017–2026

States of Emergency:
90 Local States of Emergency
2 National States of Emergency

Total days declared: 677



Areas of New Zealand currently in recovery (February 2026)

Currently in recovery