

# On the Plate

A publication from the Wellington City Council Emergency Management Office.

Summer 2004



p6

Stormy August for Wellington – one of the worst storms in 40 years.

**Absolutely**

**POSITIVELY**

ME HEKE KI PŌNEKE  
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

**Wellington**

## Manager's column



**In the last year we have been focusing on the reorganisation of civil defence centres within communities and endeavouring to increase the volunteer base that is associated with each civil defence centre.**

In conjunction with this we have had a programme specifically

aimed at businesses within the city. We have worked with a number of companies both large and small to educate them on the issues they need to be aware of should an event happen during business hours. The service is available to all businesses in the Wellington City area. If this is something you would like to investigate please give us a call.

Since the last issue we have made some exciting progress in terms of our ability to support our volunteer base. We now have a new staff member dedicated to the training of our volunteers and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Alastair Fox.

One of Alastair's key attributes is the fact that he has been one of our volunteers for the past 15 years and a major player in the establishment of civil defence in Tawa. Because of this he has a good understanding of the "needs" of volunteers in terms of training. Alastair is currently working on development of a full training programme and supporting materials. Karori Civil Defence Centre is being used as a pilot for the programme and it is hoped that the programme will be released to all centres before Christmas.

Progress is also being made from a regional perspective. The draft Wellington Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (CDEMG) Plan is about to go out for public consultation. It will be available on the Greater Wellington Regional Council website [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz)

The year is flying by and the holiday season is rapidly approaching. On behalf of our staff I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Adrian Glen  
Manager  
Wellington City Council Emergency Management Office

## Final farewell to Ron

**It was a sad farewell for family, friends and work colleagues when Ron McAleese passed away on 24 June 2004 after a short illness.**

Ron will be remembered for his wonderful sense of humour and his commitment to civil defence and emergency management over 13 years before his retirement in 2002.

We would like to express our condolences to his wife Mary.



## Is your business prepared for an emergency?

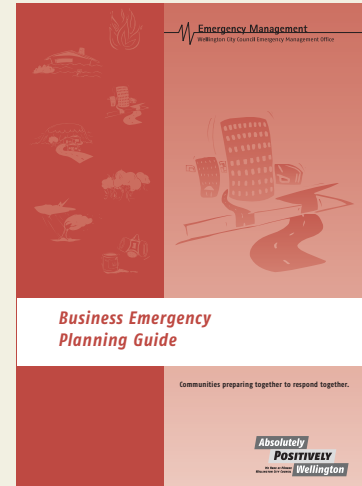
The natural environment of the Wellington region has long been recognised as one which presents several different hazards, both natural and man made. The local community, and the business community in particular, has an obligation to prepare for these hazards and the potential for loss of life and damage to property that they represent.

The Wellington City Council Emergency Management Office (WEMO) has recently reprinted the Business Emergency Planning Guide which will assist you and your business to plan for emergencies.

The guide goes through the procedures that you should go through to develop your emergency plans step-by-step. These include:

- the structure
- introduction
- risk assessment
- emergency preparedness
- response during an emergency
- recovery.

Updating your emergency plan is essential as all businesses are dynamic. Changes can include taking on new staff, moving to a different location or moving into new business ventures. These changes can also mean a change to potential hazards, or the level of emergency preparedness of your business. So it is important that this document is not just put on the shelf to collect dust but is reviewed on a regular basis and practised.



If you would like a copy of the latest Business Emergency Planning Guide or would like a member of the WEMO staff to come along to do a presentation to your staff, please contact us on 460 0650.

## National Bank counting on their staff in an emergency

During the year the Wellington City Council Emergency Management Office (WEMO) has been working with the National Bank to ensure their staff are prepared for the 'big one'.

"Before we run an exercise like this a reconnaissance of the office area is organised to get a better understanding of where the hazards may be during and after an earthquake," says Jock Darragh, Principal Rural Fire Officer for Wellington.

"We then come up with different scenarios for the staff, some may be injured, trapped or in deep shock or perfectly fine. The scenario cards are handed out just prior to the exercise taking place, so that the rest of the staff are not aware of what is wrong with them."



Before the exercise a presentation is given to the management and team leaders, followed by the wardens and staff, on the importance of preparedness and working as a team. "This is a good way of establishing what further training and resources are required for the wardens and staff," says Jock.

After the debrief by WEMO staff, wardens and team leaders, awards are handed out for the best performance in an unconscious, painful, shocked and stunned role.

If you are interested in running this type of exercise for your staff, please contact WEMO on 460 0650.



National Bank wardens had to deal with a range of injuries during the earthquake scenario.

# What happens when the big one strikes at work?

By Sharyn Devereux-Blum



An in-house rescue team ensuring the patient is securely on the stretcher before moving.

**Imagine this ... a 7.5 earthquake has struck during work hours. You are inside your building – people are stuck in the lift, caught in the stairwell and in the toilets. The power has failed, it's dark and it's difficult to see. The floor above has partially collapsed and some staff members need rescuing. How do you get them down to the ground floor without injuring them further? It is extremely likely the fire brigade and ambulance will not be able to get to you for a day or two ... there are hundreds of others in the same situation.**

Recently Devereux-Blum Training and Development Limited facilitated a seven-hour simulation with two multi-tenanted organisations to test their level of readiness and response. This was an important part of their responsibility as organisations to respond to and manage emergency events.

These organisations have taken considerable effort to plan around the four 'Rs' of emergency management (reduction, readiness, response and recovery) and they asked us to create a simulation exercise to see how their training, teamwork, resources and equipment would work for an extended period of time.

It was a great opportunity for people from two different organisations to work together for the first time during an exercise rather than at the scene of an emergency. The Co-ordinated Incident Management (CIMs) model was utilised and a range of scenarios were integrated during the day to provide challenges to the 50 people involved.

The simulation started with people arriving on the scene for a briefing and the incident management team quickly setting themselves up.

The planning intelligence team developed an incident action plan and the operations manager actioned the plan with several rescue teams, floor wardens and other personnel who were available.

The incident management team needed to stay in role and plan ahead. This included the changeover of people within the incident management team and the welfare of people at the scene of the emergency. The hours raced by and people stayed very focused throughout the whole exercise.

The simulation went well and the two organisations worked well together. It was evident from the energy in the room that people felt empowered by the opportunity to trial the response stage. It is also important to acknowledge the accumulation of training needed to get to this point. This simulation provided valuable experience in preparing these two organisations to manage emergencies that are likely to impact on the day to day running of their normal business.

What would you do? How would you cope? How can you help yourselves? How well equipped are you to look after your staff and yourselves? For further information go to [www.emergencymanagement.co.nz](http://www.emergencymanagement.co.nz) or call Devereux-Blum Training and Development on 232 5363.

## Insurance company readies staff for disaster



Graeme Brown from WEMO with Asteron staff showing items from their workstation emergency kits.

**People take out insurance to protect their assets against disaster. Wellington life insurance company Asteron and trust company New Zealand Guardian Trust are protecting their biggest asset – their staff – from disaster with several civil defence briefings and activities.**

Earlier this year Asteron asked Wellington City Council Emergency Management Office (WEMO) to help staff be prepared.

"During the week of activities I gave a presentation on organisational and household risks and preparedness to

different staff groups, with displays set up in their staff room," says Graeme Brown from WEMO.

"This also included giving away 10 litre water containers donated by WEMO to lucky winners and home emergency kits put together by Asteron as quiz prizes."

At the end of the week Asteron gave all work station sites a duffle bag that included 4 litres of water, a foil blanket, light stick and whistle. Staff were encouraged to add their own personal items.

Asteron Health and Safety Committee spokesperson Mary Hepburn said the effort stemmed from disaster preparedness briefings at the Council about 18 months ago.

"What we're trying to do is build awareness of the potential hazards we face living in the Wellington region. We want staff to think not only from a work point of view, but also to get them to make some plans and preparations at home. Hopefully, we will never have to use them, but we can feel more secure knowing we are better prepared. It also shows staff that Asteron is serious about being prepared to deal with a mass emergency or disaster," says Mary.

## NZ Fire Service national headquarters kits out staff

**The NZ Fire Service human resources department has helped the staff at their national headquarters be better prepared. They have supplied sealable plastic containers for each of their staff to store their personal 24 hour emergency supplies of food, medication and other items.**

To introduce the initiative, staff were invited to a morning tea where they were given their containers after listening to a presentation by Wellington City Council Emergency Management Office representative Sandra Pedersen.

"A contest was also launched that gave the staff an incentive to complete their survival containers and to come up with some creative ideas," says Balan Pillay, NZ Fire Service national health and safety advisor. There were various categories in the contest including best and most innovative content of the survival containers.

"Along with the individual containers for the staff we have a civil defence cabinet, containing food and sundry equipment to assist staff to survive the initial 24–48 hours," says Balan.



Sandra Pedersen of WEMO is pictured with Vince Arbuckle and Mike Hall from the NZ Fire Service.



Some of the national headquarter staff with their new civil defence containers.

## Staff start thinking civil defence at Inland Revenue



Commissioner of Inland Revenue, David Butler, drawing the winner of the competition as Jo Madden (left) a member of the life rescue team, looks on.

Recently Inland Revenue held a number of activities for Health and Safety Week. In national office, members of the light rescue team volunteered to spend their lunch breaks promoting civil defence messages to staff.

The objectives for the team were twofold:

- to let staff know who they are and what they do
- to get staff thinking about preparing for an emergency.

The team set up a static display in the cafeteria using information supplied by

various organisations including Wellington City Council Emergency Management Office, Ministry of Civil Defence and the New Zealand Fire Service. In addition to posters and pamphlets, the video "Safe as Houses" was played.

To encourage staff participation the team developed a short, fun competition.

Participants had to perform four tasks:

- tie any knot
- put an arm in a sling
- complete the household emergency plan from the Ministry's website [www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz)
- answer five simple questions.

There were plenty of laughs along the way, but on a more important note, over 100 staff completed the household questionnaire and have had a serious think about how prepared they are for a civil defence emergency.

The winner of the competition received a Red Cross first aid kit.

## New training co-ordinator for WEMO

Alastair Fox has recently joined the WEMO team as a training co-ordinator. This position was established to look at the training requirements and planning needs of both volunteers and WEMO staff.

This is not a new venture for Alastair as he has been with civil defence for the past 15 years as a volunteer and as the manager for Redwood Civil Defence Centre and part of the Tawa emergency management group. Last year he was involved with the working group that assisted in the restructuring of civil defence centres throughout Wellington City.

Alastair's background has been varied working in the electronics and computer industry around the world assisting in communications, computer and business systems development.

As well as work, being a volunteer and a family man, Alastair's hobbies include fly fishing, electronics research and development, microbiology and genealogy.



Training co-ordinator Alastair Fox brings a wealth of experience to his new position.

## Top honours for fire support

Sharon Cowan received the Wellington City Rural Fire Force 'Top Fire Fighter' award this year during the fire force annual general meeting. It was the first time the award has been presented to a support person rather than an operational fire fighter.

"This award was given to Sharon as an indication of the high regard she is held in by the fire fighters," says Jock Darragh, Principal Rural Fire Officer for Wellington.

"Sharon's role as support person is working in the incident control point running the communications, organising vehicles and setting up the support resources when required.

"She has one of the top attendance rates at the fire force and can be relied on to help out any time. I think this is a fitting reward for all the dedication and hard work Sharon has put into the force", says Jock.



Sharon Cowan receiving her 'Top Fire Fighter' award.

## Stormy August for Wellington



Jock Darragh and the rural fire crew with one of the many trees that fell during the August storm.

**It was one of our worst storms in 40 years, and the official highest wind gusts were recorded at 183kmh.**

"We had calls from many of our civil defence centre managers giving us situation reports on their areas," says Adrian Glen, Manager Wellington City Council Emergency Management Office.

"This enabled us to get a clear picture of the damage across the city and where assistance was required."

After the storms the Wellington City Rural Fire Force responded to requests for help from residents in the Makara / Takarau Gorge areas using their expertise with chainsaws to assist residents to clear fallen trees on their properties.

"Having the opportunity and ability to respond and help the community is what being a volunteer is all about. Responding to situations like this also gives volunteers the opportunity to meet the rural community," says Jock Darragh, Principal Rural Fire Officer for Wellington.

## Civil Defence Centre update

**Following the launch of the new civil defence centre structure, and subsequent media exposure in local newspapers our volunteer numbers are gradually increasing.**

We have re-established the Mt Cook Civil Defence Centre which is now located at ADRA Care Seventh Day Adventist Church in Tasman Street and by the new year, Northland Civil Defence Centre will be re-activated.

Karori has become a strong community civil defence centre with members from Karori Lions and Neighbourhood Support and a huge commitment from St Ninian's Church where the centre is now located.

We would like to thank David Ross, Senior Constable for the work he has put into establishing this team.

Kara Lipski has returned as the Kilbirnie centre manager and has been working extremely hard to raise the profile of the centre in Kilbirnie over the past few months. This has enabled her to increase her volunteer numbers greatly, and Kara is now working through her training programme.

In July we had our first civil defence street party in Hataitai organised by Konini Street resident Adrian Parkynt and the WEMO office.

The theme was 'get to know your neighbours before you need them' which followed the publicity from the February floods. Over 60 household residents attended along with two guest speakers, both survivors of the Napier earthquake.

**By Sandra Pedersen, WEMO**

The concept of a street party for civil defence awareness has since been followed by residents in Orangi Kaupapa Road, Northland, where they organised a car boot sale, a karaoke competition and had their own civil defence show they presented to the public.

In October we held the annual volunteer function. This year we had Linda Thompson from Environment Waikato as our guest speaker. Linda has been involved in emergency management media communications for many years including during the Manawatu and Bay of Plenty floods. Her presentation included lessons learnt during both events and roles of volunteers.

During the year we have had four long serving volunteers resign. We presented Barbara Mitchell, Worsler Bay; Heather Dick, Karori and Rob Irving, Newlands with a gift in appreciation of their years of service to civil defence. Brian Amies, Tawa was unable to attend the function and was presented with his gift at a later date.



**Barbara Mitchell receiving her gift for years of service as a civil defence volunteer from Adrian Glen, Manager of WEMO.**

## Exercise Pegasus – Tawa rescue team responds



**Exercise Pegasus held during September was intended to test the response to a major earthquake in the Canterbury region.**

"The Wellington City Council's Tawa rescue team was invited to attend, along with the other eight registered NZ Urban Search and Rescue teams to participate in the simulated rescue

of trapped people in various buildings," says Simon Quirke, Team Manager.

There were simulated building collapses in the Christchurch College of Education with several students and staff missing, PPCS Meat Processing Plant had a number of people trapped on the upper floors and the Malt Works had four staff missing after a possible boiler explosion caused by the earthquake.

"The exercise assisted the team in establishing procedures and requirements that would be needed to respond to incidents outside the Wellington region."

On a separate note, the Council's Tawa rescue team and WEMO would like to farewell Chris Smith for 20 years and Margaret Smith for 14 years of service to civil defence and rescue. The time and commitment that they have given over the years is greatly appreciated.