

Subject:

FW: JOINT COMMITTEE MOVING FORWARD ON CIVIL DEFENCE 1805778



2 December 2010

JOINT COMMITTEE MOVING FORWARD ON CIVIL DEFENCE

The political leadership of Civil Defence in the Waikato has approved a new budget proposal for 2011-12 that will help the region be better prepared for handling emergencies.

Earlier this year, a Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management report identified areas where the Waikato needed to make improvements on its emergency management structures and processes. The report said the Waikato managed local, short-term emergencies well but improvements were needed to ensure effective management of longer-term and region wide situations. General improvements were also needed in the leadership and culture of civil defence.

This week, at its first meeting since the October local body elections, the Waikato Civil Defence and Emergency Management (CDEM) joint committee - which includes regional mayors or their representatives - made a range of decisions designed to address the ministry's concerns.

Newly elected joint committee chair Hugh Vercoe, mayor of Matamata-Piako, had earlier told the meeting: "It's time that we started to move forward."

Other members such as Hauraki's mayor John Tregidga and Hamilton City councillor Pippa Mahood also spoke of the need for the region to "lift our game" on civil defence and emergency management.

The committee subsequently approved a proposed Waikato CDEM group budget of \$470,000 for 2011-12, up by just over \$160,000 on the current financial year.

This proposed 2011-12 budget expenditure would be the equivalent of a \$2.44 (gst exclusive) charge per rateable property across the Waikato region. If such a system had been in place this financial year, the charge would have been approximately \$1.80 (gst exclusive).

"That means that for less than an extra \$1 per property, we would be able to significantly improve the operation of civil defence and emergency management in the Waikato region, as per the ministry's recommendations," said Mr Vercoe.

It is proposed that a uniform charge to fund future CDEM group budgets would be levied through Environment Waikato's rates collection system. The introduction and timing of any such charge would need to be discussed and finalized between CDEM and EW.

Mr Vercoe said he was confident the extra funding suggested for 2011-12 would enable the group

to make significant improvements in the way Waikato Civil Defence and Emergency Management operated.

“It was noticeable at our meeting that there was a strong commitment from everyone present to making sure we can serve our communities even more effectively.

“The Canterbury earthquake and the Pike River mine tragedy show clearly that we need to be well-prepared for a disaster.”

Media contact:

Stephen Ward

Acting public information manager

07 859 0782 or 021 756 310