

## WAIKATO CIVIL DEFENCE PARTICIPATING IN EXERCISE TANGAROA

Waikato Civil Defence's preparedness for a tsunami will again be tested on 20 October during a national civil defence emergency management exercise.

The aim of Exercise Tangaroa, based on a simulated tsunami warning after an earthquake off the west coast of South America, is to further test arrangements for responding to a national tsunami warning.

Waikato Civil Defence coordinating executive group chair Langley Cavers said the exercise was planned before the tsunami warning following the earthquake off Chile earlier this year.

"Waikato Civil Defence and emergency services responded well during the event earlier this year which, fortunately, did not result in any major problems.

"But the east coast of our region, in particular, is vulnerable to tsunami threats and this latest national Exercise Tangaroa will help us further practice our responsiveness for when a real emergency strikes," said Mr Cavers.

Exercise Tangaroa will not involve practising any actual operational responses to a tsunami warning.

Instead it will be a planning desktop exercise involving the region's three current emergency operating areas (EOAs). These EOAs presently are Waikato Valley (including Hamilton, Waikato District, Waipa, Otorohanga and Waitomo), Thames Valley (including Matamata Piako, Hauraki, and Thames-Coromandel) and Southern (South Waikato and Taupo). The Group Emergency Operating Centre based at Environment Waikato in Hamilton will also be involved.

"Civil Defence for both the east and west coasts will participate in Exercise Tangaroa and emergency services are also involved," said Mr Cavers.

"In addition to that, on 26 October the Waikato CDEM Group welfare advisory group will activate with 14 agencies participating in responding to the tsunami exercise scenario."

Mr Cavers noted that when a tsunami was caused by an event a long way away there could be a significant amount of time available to alert people living on the coast to move to higher ground.

"But other tsunami can be caused by events closer to home, such as an earthquake or eruption off the coast, meaning less time to issue warnings."

Waikato Civil Defence urges people to be aware of warnings signs such as:

- Strong earthquake shaking (i.e. it is hard to stand up)
- Prolonged, weak earthquake shaking (i.e. a minute or more)
- A noticeable rapid rise or fall in coastal waters
- Water making unusual noise

If people live in, or are visiting, an area at risk from tsunami, they are urged to be aware of tsunami evacuation zones, escape routes and warning methods and signage

It is also suggested that people plan evacuation routes from their home, school, workplace, or any other place they could be when tsunami might strike.

When evacuating, it is recommended that people get as high up or as far inland as they can.

After evacuation, staying tuned to a local radio station is advised to keep informed of local warnings and instructions.

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