



## **Media release**

**9 August 2011**

### **Numbers of Waikato residents prepared for a disaster on the rise**

The results of a national survey which have just been released show the number of Waikato residents prepared for a disaster has grown significantly in some cases, but still remains too low in others.

According to the Colmar Brunton research, over a third (34%) of Waikato residents are prepared at home – an increase of 13 percentage points since last year – and 57 per cent have an emergency plan for when at home, up from 47 per cent last year.

Meanwhile, the number of Waikato people who have emergency survival items has increased from 80 per cent to 86 per cent.

Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group chairman Hugh Vercoe said it was good to see improvements in some of the numbers, but acknowledged there was still some way to go.

“What recent events have shown is that a disaster can strike at any time of the day and night, so there is a need to be prepared – not just for when you’re at home.

“Only 12 per cent of Waikato residents are fully prepared for an emergency when at home and away, which is below the national average of 18 per cent,” said Mr Vercoe, also the mayor of Matamata-Piako District.

“In terms of disaster awareness, it is also concerning that Waikato residents are less likely than average to say that a tsunami will occur during their lifetime, given there’s new data indicating the risk of tsunami impacting the east coast of the Coromandel is higher than previously understood,” he said.

“We have recognised that more of our region’s residents need to be better prepared for a disaster, which is why the five year draft plan we released last month shows a commitment to public education in this region.

“Overall, recent events here and overseas mean there is heightened awareness of the impacts an event might have, including disruption to key services, and the lack of advance warning we might get,” he said.

The survey was carried out not long after the devastating quake in Christchurch and while there was still extensive media reporting of the aftershocks. However, a lower than average proportion of Waikato residents said the Christchurch earthquakes prompted them to take steps to prepare for a disaster – 46 per cent compared with the national average of 60 per cent.

The Colmar Brunton national telephone survey of 1,164 respondents was carried out between 16 May and 12 June 2011 to measure disaster preparedness and to track the effectiveness of the national Civil Defence and Emergency Management Get Ready Get Thru communications campaign.

The survey has a maximum margin of error of +/- 3.1% at the 95 per cent confidence level.

Additional interviews were carried out to allow more robust regional analyses this year; however, Christchurch residents were not interviewed due to the proximity to the February quake.

All the 2010 results were recalculated with Christchurch city residents excluded in order to compare preparedness with the previous year. According to Colmar Brunton, excluding Christchurch residents had almost no impact on the 2010 findings.

To read the survey findings in full, visit the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management: <http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/>

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