



Waitakere City Council
Te Taiao o Waitakere

NOTICE OF MEETING

EMERGENCY SERVICES SPECIAL COMMITTEE

I hereby give notice that a Meeting of the Emergency Services Special Committee will be held on:-

DATE: Tuesday, 30 November 2004 **TIME:** 9.30 am

VENUE: Civil Defence Headquarters, 7 Elcoat Avenue, Henderson, Waitakere City

to consider the business as set out herein and to take any necessary action connected therewith.

25 November 2004

Charlie Inggs
COMMITTEE SECRETARY

Telephone (09) 836 8000 extn 8854

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillors	DQ	Battersby, JP (Chairperson)
	WW	Flaunty, QSM, JP (Deputy Chairperson)
	PJ	Booth, OBE
	RP	Dallow, QPM, JP

Mayor RA Harvey, QSO, JP (ex officio)

Deputy Mayor CA Stone (ex officio)

(Quorum 2 members)

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(The reports and recommendations contained in all agendas are reports and recommendations only and are not to be construed, in any way, as Council policy until adopted.)

**AGENDA FOR A MEETING OF THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SPECIAL COMMITTEE
TO BE HELD IN THE CIVIL DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS, 7 ELCOAT AVENUE,
HENDERSON, WAITAKERE CITY, ON TUESDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2004,
COMMENCING AT 9.30 AM.**

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1 APOLOGIES



2 URGENT BUSINESS

Section 46A(7) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 provides that where an item of business is not on the agenda, it may only be dealt with at the meeting if:

- (i) the Committee by resolution so decides; and
- (ii) the Chairperson has explained at the beginning of the meeting (when open to the public) that the item will be raised for discussion and decision, why the item is not on the agenda, and why it cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting.

The Committee may make a decision on a matter determined to be urgent.

NOTE: Urgent Business need not be dealt with now and may be delayed until later in the meeting.



3 CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to give the Emergency Services Special Committee an overview of the Waitakere City Civil Defence Emergency Management and future planned activity.

BACKGROUND

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 has introduced a new framework for Civil Defence and Emergency Management in New Zealand. The legislation has established a regional basis of the leadership of Emergency Management with establishment of Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups and co-ordinating executive groups to support them. Alongside this regional framework there is still a strong responsibility for local emergency management that lies with District/City Councils. The basis for this management is summarised within the "4R's" of emergency management namely Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery.

Since December 2003, Council has undertaken a programme aimed specifically at ensuring Council provides for the future development requirements for our Civil Defence Emergency Management organisation. This commenced with the adoption of our current transitional Civil Defence Plan under the Civil Defence Act 1983, which provides for transitional arrangements are in place until the Regional Group Plan comes into effect.

In line with the requirements of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, local plans and supporting Standard Operating Procedures have had to be rewritten based on the requirements of the draft Group Plan, which under the requirements of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 has to be approved for use by May 2005. At the time of writing this report the Group Plan requires further development in the Welfare Section plus a few other minor amendments before it will come into force. Locally, some minor adjustments will be required to reflect Group Plan requirements, but Council is otherwise well placed to have the new plan operative at the same time as the Group Plan is authorised. In the meantime should there be a requirement to declare a state of emergency within Waitakere City, the declaration would be made under the provisions of Civil Defence Act 1983, albeit that the management of the incident would be based on current response planning procedures.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Civil Defence Emergency Management is a responsibility of the Council under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. Civil Defence Emergency Management forms part of Council's strategic framework in that it contributes to community well being and building strong communities by increasing community readiness for and resilience to emergency events, reducing exposure to such events, and providing for emergency response in the case of such events. The requirement for local planning and co-ordination is essential to meeting these requirements.

ISSUES

1 Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan

As mentioned above a Transitional Local Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan was authorised for use in December 2003. This is in keeping with the requirements of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. The Plan will remain valid for three years or until such time as the Auckland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan is authorised.

The new Act does not require that Territorial Authorities maintain their own plans, but there is still the requirement for Local Authorities to plan for Civil Defence Emergency Management within its district and it is recommended that Waitakere City maintain a plan to achieve this purpose.

For the purpose of consistency, the Emergency Management Officers from across the Region have worked together to develop a standard plan for use throughout each of the Territorial Authorities. This plan will be consistent with the Regional Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan, the primary change to local plans is the greater incorporation of Standard Operating Procedures as the basis for readiness, response and recovery activities. This will serve to ensure a common standard throughout the Region and reflect the requirements for standardisation within Emergency Operating Centres. In addition to the Local Plan and supporting Standard Operating Procedures, the Group Plan requires the formation of three Civil Defence Emergency Management Zones throughout the Region and the development of a Memorandum of Understanding for mutual support during an emergency within each of the respective zones. Waitakere City, North Shore City and the Rodney District Council comprise the North West Zone, and a signed Memorandum of Understanding is in place.

2 Current Emergency Operating Centre Capability

When originally purchased and outfitted, the current facility was adequate to serve the then population as a dedicated Civil Defence Headquarters. Since that time the City has grown significantly, as have operational capability expectations from the community and other emergency services. Over the years an additional room and garage have been added, plus more recently a portacom, to facilitate resourcing and operational requirements to the extent that exists today.

While still capable of operating effectively as a local Emergency Operations Centre for short periods, the complex has limitations for extended operational response, day-to-day training and general work requirements. Exercises in recent years have been successful in their outcome but have only been conducted for a limited period. Catering has been pre-arranged and the number of persons present in the Emergency Operations Centre limited to a workable number. It is considered that if ever required to function as an alternate Group Emergency Operations Centre the current facility would be found wanting and would experience difficulties in operating in for a local response over an extended period. The primary limitations identified are as follows:

- Staff workspaces are ad hoc and have limitations.
- Limited kitchen facilities with no cooking ability other than a microwave oven.
- Limited toilet and shower facilities.
- Limited training room space for any numbers in excess of twenty people.
- Restricted Liaison Officer spaces and adequate briefing room facilities for use in an operational environment.
- Restricted communications room space for full operational use.
- A lack of space to extend for the introduction of computer driven emergency response systems.
- Restricted space within the Operations Room in a fully staffed situation.
- Increasing maintenance problems due to the age of the existing structure.

Given that the City's population is now approaching 200,000 people and there may be a requirement to function both a regional and local response, it was agreed that the current premises are in need of considerable expansion or that another accommodation option was required.

Analysis work was carried out with the options being as follows:

1. Upgrade the existing facility to meet the requirements as listed above.
2. Build a new dedicated facility in a strategic location.
3. Incorporate a new Emergency Operations Centre within a proposed new New Zealand Fire Service District Headquarters.
4. Incorporate into the new Civic Centre.

Of the above, option 3 is preferred with option 2 as second choice. The site constraints mitigate against option 1, and option 4 is not favoured as having a separately located Emergency Operations Centre from the main Council offices provides for a secondary Emergency Operations Centre in the event of something happening to the primary site. It also provides for the Council to remain operational without Emergency Operations Centre operations impinging on service delivery or recovery. An agreement in principle has already been agreed with the New Zealand Fire Service for co-location pending the purchase of an appropriate site for both their and our purposes. Capital expenditure to the sum of \$500,000 has been provided for in the Annual Plan and Long Term Council Community Plan together with the proceeds from the sale of the current premises, however the Fire Service may prefer a lease arrangement over an option involving a capital expenditure for the relocation. Should it not be possible to relocate with the Fire Service, the second option is to construct a new building in a strategic location separate from the Council complex in the same manner as now exists. The sale of the current facility will greatly help to offset the costs for either option.

3 Local Emergency Operating Centre (Emergency Operations Centre) Staffing

Given the traditional level of Council and Management support and interest given to the Waitakere City Civil Defence Emergency Management Organisation, Council is well served in the numbers of Council Staff, liaison personnel and other volunteers available to respond to any activation requirement. Council is also very well served in the level of staff experience of working within an Emergency Operations Centre. This has been markedly increased over the last two years through a training and development programme which has resulted in far closer operational ties with the emergency services and other response stakeholder groups, plus advanced training for a number of Council staff holding senior positions within the Emergency Operations Centre. A review has also been carried out to revise staffing level requirements commensurate with the development of the Group Emergency Operations Centre concept. In other words, Council is ensuring that the same terminology and staffing positions are in place for each designated Emergency Operations Centre throughout the Region.

4 Local Reporting Centre Staffing

There are currently 16 Local Reporting Centres within the District. They range from Council Libraries, Rural Fire Stations, Primary Schools, Community Centres and an RSA. Staffing is a mixture of Council staff and volunteers. Each Reporting Centre is equipped with a Civil Defence Emergency Management radio and a box of material for use in an emergency. The level of experience and ability to respond is variable and an annual programme of training and development is carried out to maintain the readiness and response capability of each.

The primary role of the Reporting Centres is to act as a community response and information centre in an emergency situation. They are also the conduit for feeding information to the Emergency Operations Centre. The level of Reporting Centre activation would depend on the scale of the emergency and it is a possibility that in a small scale emergency a Reporting Centre could perform the role of a localised Emergency Operations Centre.

It is at the Reporting Centres that elected representatives would have a primary role to play in and following an emergency by being in touch with and providing assurance to the community.

5 Volunteers

In addition to the Emergency Operations Centre and Local Reporting Centre volunteer requirements as mentioned above, other volunteers essentially fall into three categories, rescue, welfare and rural fire.

a) Rescue

Currently there are 15 volunteer Rescue Team members undertaking regular training. In addition to their general rescue training, the team has also qualified as an Urban Search and Rescue Responder Group, and have gained national recognition in being designated as New Zealand Response Team 3. There are currently only nine such registered teams in the Country. As such, the team is both a regional and national response asset. Team training also involves Emergency Operations Centre, welfare and communications operating procedures making them very well qualified and a competent unit that is now well recognised by the emergency services. This is another area where advanced training that has been conducted over the last two years.

b) Welfare

The current Civil Defence Emergency Management Welfare response essentially revolves around the use of Salvation Army and Latter Day Saints facilities and volunteers. In any Civil Defence Emergency Management emergency, the primary response from a Civil Defence Emergency Management perspective relates to the welfare of the affected people in the community. Although there is a sound welfare response base, there is a requirement to further extend our response capability in this area. This has recently been improved considerably through the development of a comprehensive Welfare Response Plan, and increased liaison with Neighbourhood Support and other community groups and facilities are on the work programme to be brought into the welfare network. Council is far better placed to respond effectively to the welfare needs of the community as a result of planning improvements over the last two years.

c) Rural Fire

The District's three Rural Fire Force units provide a high level of service response to the community. Numbers remain satisfactory and the Principal Rural Fire Officer maintains a training programme relevant to their requirements, which meets nationally recognised standards. Over and above their normal day to day response activities, Rural Fire volunteers are also an integral element of our Civil Defence Emergency Management readiness, response and recovery organisation. The Principal Rural Fire Officer has provided a separate overview report for the Committee at this meeting.

d) Volunteers and the Health and Safety in Employment Amendment Act

A primary change within the Health and Safety in Employment Amendment Act now categorises volunteers as being the same as paid workers in terms of safety requirements. In this respect there is an increased responsibility on Council to ensure that adequate provision is made for the safety of volunteers. It should be noted however, that this Council has always placed an emphasis on the safety of volunteer personnel.

Note: Over many years, Civil Defence has relied on community volunteers to support local emergency response capability. The reality is that the number of people providing this service is continually falling, and are becoming increasingly harder to attract. Health and safety concerns are also a factor in this consideration. This places greater emphasis on Local Authorities to ensure Council staff are trained and available for emergency response purposes.

6 Regional Activities and Organisation

Waitakere City Council has an obligation under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 to participate in the Auckland Region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group. Under the Act this Group is established as a Joint Committee of the eight Local Authorities in the Auckland region, and has the lead responsibility for Civil Defence Emergency Management planning in the Region. The Group's primary functions include hazard management, providing resources and providing for emergency response and recovery. Section 17 of the Act outlines the full list of functions in more detail. Group membership comprises the chairperson of each local authority or an elected representative who has the delegated authority to act on the chairperson's behalf.

Councillor Battersby is Council's representative on the Group Committee with Councillor Dallow being the alternate. The Civil Defence Emergency Management Group meets quarterly or as otherwise required.

Each Civil Defence Emergency Management Group must also establish a Coordinating Executive Group comprising the Chief Executive or delegated senior manager of each local authority, plus representatives from the Emergency Services and District Health Boards. The primary functions of the Coordinating Executive Group are to advise the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group and implement their decisions, as well as overseeing the development and implementation of the Group Plan. The Director: Corporate and Civic Services is Council's representative on the Coordinating Executive Group, and is also currently the Chairman.

Operational expenditure for regional activities is funded by the eight Councils of the region by way of an agreed funding formula. The Auckland Regional Council meets 35% of costs, and the balance of funding is shared among the territorial authorities on a population basis. Work is currently underway on gaining agreement of funding of Emergency Expenditure if it were ever required.

While Territorial Authorities are still required to plan for Civil Defence Emergency Management measures, such activities are becoming increasingly driven by the requirements and targets and objectives as contained within the Group Plan. When it becomes operational in May 2005 the Group Plan will be the overriding document for all Regional Civil Defence Emergency Management activity. Core activities with specific strategies and targets for achievement include public education, relationship management, testing and exercises, professional development, Emergency Operations Centre capability, response and recovery and a monitoring framework.

Territorial authorities are still able to declare a local emergency and this can be done in two ways. First every Civil Defence Emergency Management Group must appoint at least one member to have the power to declare a State of Emergency for all or part of the Group's area of responsibility. Second, Mayors and other Elected Members have the right to declare a State of Emergency in their own district or a ward within that district. When a State of Emergency is declared, the Group Controller will coordinate the response. He or she may have any number of local controllers who also work to coordinate the response, but at all times they are subject to the direction of the Group Controller.

Note: There is no longer the term Civil Defence prefixing a State of Declared Emergency. It is now simply a State of Emergency whether it is local, regional or national and includes warlike acts and other emergency work.

7 Reduction

Reduction is commonly referred to as the first of the 4R's. It is essentially an overall Council responsibility rather than being Civil Defence Emergency Management specific. Reduction can be termed as identifying and analysing long term risks to human life and property from natural or man made hazards; taking steps to eliminate these risks where practicable, and, where not, reducing the likelihood and magnitude of their impact. An example of reduction within Waitakere City is limiting of development on unstable land through the District Plan.

While there are elements of Council charged with ensuring public safety, a cross Council Hazards Working Group has been established to monitor and recommend reduction measures based upon identified risk. The Manager, Emergency Management is a member of that working group. A wider ranging regional Local Authority Hazards Liaison Group is also established charged with reducing risk across the region as a whole, and Council's work programmes link with this group's work.

8 Recovery

The ability for Council to be able to recover from an emergency and to restore the community to its previous level or better is still very much a part of the Civil Defence Emergency Management function. In addition to in-house business continuity planning there is also the need for external Civil Defence Emergency Management recovery planning. This has traditionally been an area that has been neglected in Civil Defence Emergency Management planning and was highlighted in the February Lower North Island floods. Over the last six months a dedicated Recovery Plan has been developed, Recovery Managers appointed and a process for training is being implemented. Further development of the recovery function is occurring within Council, and at both the regional and national levels.

9 Communications

Waitakere City is well served by its current Civil Defence Emergency Management communications network. A programme of installing new radios within the Emergency Operations Centre and Local Reporting Centres was completed during the last twelve months.

There is currently no intention to incorporate a computer based emergency management system within the Emergency Operations Centre as has been done to varying degrees within the region and nationally. The Ministry of Civil Defence Emergency Management are in the final stages of acquiring a system for national use which will ultimately become available for wider use. The aim of this development will be to improve the effectiveness of local, regional and national emergency management through the use of an effective computer based system. The approach being taken at Waitakere City is to review local needs once the national system is operational and can be observed.

10 Appointments

In accordance with the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, all Territorial Authorities are required to appoint persons authorised to declare an emergency, Controllers and Recovery Managers. The following appointments have been approved for Waitakere City:

Persons Authorised to Declare:

Mayor
Deputy Mayor
Councillor Derek Battersby, Chair Emergency Services Special Committee
Councillor Ross Dallow, Alternate representative on the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Committee

Controllers

Controller:	Ross McLeod, Director: Corporate and Civic Services
1 st Alternate Controller:	Darryl Griffin, Group Manager: Democracy and Support Services
2 nd Alternate Controller:	Philip Brown, Group Manager: Planning and Community Services
3 rd Alternate Controller:	Bill Morley, Manager: Emergency Management

Recovery Managers

Recovery Manager	John Dragicevich: Director, City Services
1st Alternate Recovery Manager	Tony Miguel: Group Manager, Asset Management
2nd Alternate Recovery Manager	Alan Tresadern: Group Manager, Project Services

11 Recent Achievements and Planned Future Activity

Since the last meeting a number of organisational training and personal achievements have been carried out as follows:

- Three Coordinated Incident Management System Level 2 Courses conducted for stakeholders from within the North West Emergency Management Group, which also included Council staff.
- Ross McLeod (Controller), Philip Brown (Alternate Controller), John Hanson (Emergency Management Officer), and Warren Corner (Emergency Operations Centre Operations Manager), have all successfully attended the Coordinated Incident Management System level 4 course.
- The Principal Rural Fire Officer Peter Barber and Manager: Emergency Management have both completed and gained adult teaching NZQA Unit Standards as part of the regional initiative to create standardisation across the Civil Defence Emergency Management sector. These officers are now formally recognised for being able to deliver recognised training in house and regionally.
- A two hour Hazardous Materials Workshop for all Emergency Services senior management was conducted in the Emergency Operations Centre for North West Emergency Management Committee members.
- A Welfare Centre staff member course was conducted for welfare and rescue team volunteers.
- Nine members of the Volunteer Rescue Team were awarded the Local Government Certificate for Rescue from Heights. Ten team members also participated in the major Urban Search and Rescue Exercise Pegasus held over 17-19 September 2004.

CONCLUSION

Given the Council's responsibility to provide for Civil Defence Emergency Management measures for the community and despite the current staffing situation, Council is well placed to provide an adequate response to any perceived emergency threat. In recent months the question was raised as to how well this organisation is to respond to a major emergency such as the Manawatu and Bay of Plenty floods this year.

Regardless of the fact that Waitakere City is not at risk to flooding of the magnitude of those events, this Organisation is very well placed to provide an effective response to any emergency as required by the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. This ability has been particularly improved over the last two years by the developments as listed above, and in particular the greater liaison enjoyed with the local emergency services and stakeholder response groups, including the wider Civil Defence Emergency Management. Ongoing plan developments through the requirements of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group plan for both regional and local level integration will further enhance the City's overall capability in developing a resilient community.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Civil Defence Emergency Management Overview report be received.

Report prepared by Bill Morley: Manager, Emergency Management.



4 RURAL FIRE REPORT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to give the Emergency Services Special Committee an overview of the Waitakere Rural Fire Authority during the reporting period, and future planned activities.

BACKGROUND

Under Rural Fire Legislation, Waitakere City Council is the Waitakere Rural Fire Authority for the rural area of this city and has responsibilities which include:

- Fire preparedness, fire prevention, fire suppression and the necessary training and equipping of the Volunteer Rural Fire Forces in order that they can carry out these roles.
- Producing a Rural Fire Plan on an annual basis.
- Authorising and monitoring open, restricted and prohibited fire seasons for the Waitakere Rural Fire District.
- Meeting the requirements of the National Rural Fire Management Code of Practice for Council's rural fire risk factor.

By contractual arrangements and through the services of the Principal Rural Fire Officer, the Waitakere Rural Fire Authority also provides rural fire services to the North Shore City Council. Oversight of all services rests with the Manager: Emergency Management within the Corporate and Civic Services Directorate.

Waitakere City has volunteer Rural Fire Forces established at Karekare, Bethells, Waitakere Village and Arataki.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Waitakere City Council is deemed to be the Waitakere Rural Fire Authority pursuant to Section 7(2) of the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977. Rural Fire contributes toward Council's strategic framework in that it contributes to community wellbeing by enhancing community preparedness for the risk of wildfire by educating communities in fire safety, managing the fire risk and responding to and suppressing any fires which may occur.

Rural Fire also contributes to the Green Network through providing protection of the Waitakere Ranges from fire hazards. Rural Fire resources are also available to provide assistance to communities in other emergency events.

ISSUES

The winter period has been relatively quiet with regard to fires. Non fire responses remained at the usual levels for the time of year. Other activity through this period has involved maintenance of equipment and ongoing training to ensure an effective response capability we are fully prepared for the forthcoming fire season starting 1 December 2004.

Training

The cancellation of the training agreement in August with the Rodney District Council has required a re-organising of the planned training schedule for Waitakere City crews for the remainder of the year.

Through discussion with the NZ Fire Service, an agreement has been reached to allow access to their training facility at Mt Wellington for Rural Fire staff in four basic areas:

- Basic Fire-Fighters
- Emergency Driving
- Pump Operator
- Breathing Apparatus

It is necessary to place volunteer staff on these courses to ensure compliance to approved New Zealand Qualifications Authority standards.

All Rural Fire volunteer staff are qualified to NZQA Unit Standard 3285 (Vegetation Fire Safety) and 14555 (Defensive Control of Structures) for compliance with the requirements of the National Code of Practice.

The acquisition of new Sabre Centurion compressed air breathing apparatus has required all crews to undergo either initial or refresher training to ensure that skill levels are current. Additional areas of training are also now being required to enable crews to fully utilise the ability to work in toxic atmospheres in future.

A Rural Fire Field Day was conducted on behalf of the Regional Rural Fire Committee (Auckland) on 20 November 2004. Those attending were given the opportunity to gain Unit Standards for 'working safely with aircraft at emergency incidents'. The Waitakere and North Shore's Urban Search and Rescue Response Teams also attended to gain this qualification and experience in working with Rural Fire Teams.

Waitakere crews have also recently attended a Basic Fire-Fighter and a Breathing Apparatus Course at Mt Wellington. Those attending the Breathing Apparatus Course had first conducted pre-course training over a period of six weeks at the Waitakere Fire Station. On-going First Aid has also been conducted as required to ensure crews maintain competent levels of expertise.

Further training is being programmed to comply with newly introduced N.Z.Q.A. Unit Standard qualifications for those staff who issue Fire Permits and for Rural Fire Officers. These units are a new requirement by the Rural Fire Management Code of Practice.

Two Coordinated Incident Management Systems Level 2 training courses have also been conducted for local New Zealand Fire Service crews. Given their response and attendance at rural incidents, their knowledge of the incident management structure under which they operate is vital to the effective control and management at any incident. All stations continued to follow their individual weekly training programmes in core skills.

Management

Recruitment is causing some concern. Currently volunteer numbers are sufficient, but with a number of staff 'maturing' there is a requirement to recruit some younger blood at all stations.

The overall cost of equipping and training a fire-fighter to a 'useful' level is not a cheap exercise, and is wasted if a volunteer only stays for one or two years. Ideally, younger, established people are required to fill the ranks over a longer term. Unfortunately this type of person is usually too busy with building their own lives to afford to give the time and commitment that is required of our crews.

Work is in progress on a recruitment and progression manual which will make clear to prospective members the requirements of the volunteer units, and to ensure they are fully aware of the commitment they make.

The current year's Fire Plans for Waitakere and North Shore have been approved by the Regional Rural Fire Committee and have been issued to all organisations, committees and staff. This year's Plan includes membership details of the Regional Incident Management Team. This team has been set up to provide a higher level operational management resource able to be responded to major incidents within the Auckland Region and the Waitakere City Principal Rural Fire Officer is a member of the Committee.

An Internal Affairs Committee review to investigate and report on changes to existing Fire Legislation and funding is still progressing and this Committee will be notified of any developments as they arise.

RESOURCES

Appliances

The Karekare fire appliance has had a half- life refurbishment with the work being carried out at the Fire Service workshop. New additions included the provision of stowage for an additional two breathing sets. This appliance should now be capable of a further 10 to 15 years of service without major work.

An air leak problem on the Bethells Valley water tanker braking system has been solved. Given the loaded weight of this appliance, consistent braking ability is essential for the safety of the crew and the public.

The Arataki appliance required some work on the pump glands, but with a vehicle of its age some water leak problems are inevitable.

All appliances are now up to operational standard and ready for the fire season.

Equipment

A new motor was purchased for the Wajax pump at Arataki and two additional hand held radios for Karekare.

The largest resource addition has been the compressed air breathing apparatus which was donated to our units by 'The Trusts'. Each station received four sets. Older sets are all based at the Waitakere Station and used for training requirements only.

General maintenance of equipment and protective clothing is on-going and up to standard.

CONCLUSION

Given the last six months of intensive training, volunteer crews can look forward to a relatively quiet Christmas break with regard to formalised training. On station maintenance training will continue throughout but no further structured training is programmed until February 2005.

Levels of co-operation with the local brigades of the New Zealand Fire Service are excellent and the integration of our training and policies has built a fire response structure which is well able to operate as a single unit. Appliances, equipment and crews are ready for the increased fire potential of the fire season. The suppression policy remains the same, 'to mount an aggressive initial attack on all fires reported throughout the District'. It is with confidence that the Waitakere City Rural Fire crews are currently fully prepared and capable of providing an ongoing effective level of service.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Rural Fire report be received.

Report prepared by: Peter Barber, Principal Rural Fire Officer.

