

NATIONAL LIFELINES FORUM: 5 AND 6 NOVEMBER 2014

The following notes summarise main points from the 2014 Forum.

John Hamilton, Director of CDEM (until his recent retirement) gave the keynote presentation on the topic: *Characteristics of Effective Lifeline Utilities*. The presentation drew on his experience as CDEM Controller following the Christchurch earthquakes, overview of other events, the recent release of the revised Director's Guidelines for Lifeline Utilities¹ and development of the draft revised National CDEM Plan.

Main points from the presentation included:

- Delivering good CDEM outcomes in an emergency response is about getting communities back on their feet and is entirely congruent with good customer service in normal times.
- Good utility practice in risk Reduction and Readiness reduces the pressure on Response – in other words, mitigation and readiness pay dividends when a serious Response is needed.
- Relationships matter, including relationships with CDEM. Relationships need to be built in peacetime.
- It's not just about assets or networks, organisational resilience also matters – this brings in organisational culture and leadership.
- The Controller relies on information from utilities on the scale and extent of impacts, to be able to consider consequences and to keep the public and politicians informed – mapped information is most effective.

These themes are consistent with the leading presentation at the commencement of the second day of the Forum. Fran Wilde, Chair of the Greater Wellington Regional Council and also Chair of the Wellington Lifelines Group, noted:

- Lifelines Group Chairs sometimes need to reach utilities at CE level to break through any reticence about issues that can be sensitive and to ensure good utility representation in Lifelines Group activities including funding for projects
- Release of Wellington's post-earthquake restoration times report² was given as an example of good management of sensitive information. There was a need for proactive release as the report was destined for the Joint CDEM Committee, but the information was new for the public and potentially troubling. This challenged the utilities given inevitable media attention.

¹ See <http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/cdem-framework/guidelines/lifeline-utilities-and-civil-defence-emergency-management-groups/>.

² See <http://www.getprepared.org.nz/welg> for the restoration times report and the subsequent report on restoration of Wellington's transport links.

- Resilience is core utility business. There is work to be done to pre-identify emergency service levels including discussion with customers – the subtext here is “good business practice calls for customer and community engagement”.
- There is a need to promote mutually supportive relationships between utilities and CDEM
- Interdependencies between infrastructure types matters. Interdependency management alone provides good reason for lifelines group participation.
- New local government legislation calls for 30 year infrastructure strategies including outlining the approach to be taken to resilience to natural hazards.
- Progress on infrastructure resilience can be slow but a methodical process is needed.

Other presentations at the National Lifelines Forum included:

- **Joint Resilience Study:** Transpower, KiwiRail and NZTA drew attention to their recent Joint Resilience Study. The three agencies found that they have much to learn from each other. Community / customer expectations appear to be increasing (e.g. relating to post-earthquake restoration times) and readings on these expectations, when available, can present challenging surprises.
- **Vulnerability Assessments:** These are recommended foundational projects for Lifelines Groups. Otago and Southland have recently completed their studies. A standard terms of reference is available.
- **Economics of Infrastructure Resilience:** Modelling work on economic impacts of infrastructure loss is making good progress. A working model is now available on infrastructure interdependencies.
- **Rapid Alert System:** GNS’s Rapid Alert System enables availability of site-specific shaking information very quickly following earthquakes (a good spin-off from the investment in GeoNet). The system helps target utility responses.
- **Stronger Canterbury Infrastructure Rebuild Team:** A presentation from SCIRT noted that “the disaster is not the problem – rather, the rebuild is the challenge”.
- **Buildings Regulation:** An overview of the update of the Building Code clause on Structure, and the implications for Lifeline Utilities was provided. NZLC plans further work with lifeline sectors in this area in the coming months.
- **Resilience Tools:** Two new resilience tools (questionnaire format) are available for utilities use and may also be of interest to Lifelines Groups. Recent experience of the Auckland and Bay of Plenty Lifelines Groups in tool use was described. A document that compares and contrasts the two tools is available.

It was a full two days. There is much to think about and consider for take-up in the various Lifelines Groups around New Zealand, and in resilience planning and implementation by utilities.

The presentations are available at <http://www.aelg.org.nz/events/national-lifelines-forum-papers/>.

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