

Emergency Management Bill No 2



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

February 2026

Tirohanga Whānui | Overview

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Emergency Management Bill (No 2). We support the kaupapa to increase recognition within legislation for communities and Māori. NZCCSS members play an important role in community readiness, response and recovery in relation to emergency management.

Taunakitanga | Recommendations

We offer the following feedback and recommendations:

1. Recognition of the role of Māori within the Bill

We support the strengthening of the role of Māori within in the Bill, including the provisions for local Māori interests and values to be represented within Emergency Management Co-ordinating Executive Groups, and for Māori to inform the development of regional and national emergency management plans.

It is important that Māori are adequately recognised within legislation as partners in emergency management and resourced appropriately. NZCCSS Members have recommended that engagement with Māori take a partnership approach to ensure that responsibility and risk are shared by government, Māori and community. We believe a partnership approach would also mitigate any perception held by the public that Māori-led response activities are not available to non-Māori.

We recommend that partnership with Māori be strengthened in the Bill as follows:

- Amendment of Clause 14 so that the functions of the Director-General of Emergency Management include engaging with and seeking advice on Māori interests and knowledge to inform all aspects of emergency management.
- Amendment to Part 2, Subpart 2 (Regional role holders) to reflect formal authority for iwi/hapu in emergency management within their areas.

2. Recognition that communities experience emergencies differently

We support the strengthening of recognition within the Bill that some communities are disproportionately affected by emergencies, including the requirement for the Director-General of Emergency Management and Emergency Management Committees to identify and engage with representatives of those communities during the development of emergency management plans. We also welcome the inclusion of social isolation within the examples of those communities who may be disproportionately affected by emergencies. NZCCSS Members note that people living in urban areas that are not geographically isolated may experience social isolation due to a lack of family or people they know or trust in their lives.

The input of those organisations and peak bodies working alongside people in the community who may be disproportionately affected by emergencies is important to ensure that relevant communities are identified. As an example, NZCCSS Members note that people providing care for others, such as those caring for tamariki who are not their own, are a group who may be disproportionately affected by emergencies, given that loss of property may impact their ability to continue to provide that care.

Currently the Bill does not specifically require representation from the community and voluntary sector within Emergency Management Committees or Emergency Management Co-ordinating Executive Group, and does not specify how Committees will identify communities that may be disproportionately affected by an emergency. To strengthen this aspect of the legislation, we recommend that:

- Clause 26 be amended to require community and voluntary sector representation within Emergency Management Committees.
- Clause 39 be amended to require community and voluntary sector representation within Emergency Management Co-ordinating Executive Groups.
- Clause 86(2) be amended to include engagement with community and voluntary sector peak bodies in relation to the development of proposals relating to review of a national emergency management plan.

3. Role of the community and importance of social infrastructure in emergency management

We welcome the strengthening of the role of community within the Bill. The requirement for regional emergency management plans to address how offers of assistance from people and communities will be managed in an emergency is supported by feedback from our membership about the need for legislative mandate and clear guidelines regarding community response and resourcing. NZCCSS Members have noted the need for a consistent approach to community response across local and national government and the removal of bureaucratic barriers that may prevent support being readily available during emergencies.

NZCCSS Members have recommended that greater recognition be given to social infrastructure within emergency management. Community organisations provide a variety of essential services that are critical to emergency response, such as food, shelter, health and psychological support. Members observe that the psychological impacts of emergencies can last beyond any physical impacts and that support is needed across the spectrum of mental health care during emergency response and recovery. This is important not only for individuals, but to equip people to support others, such as parents caring tamariki and rangatahi, and teachers supporting students.

We recommend that Clauses 91 and 105 of the Bill be amended as follows:

- Clause 91 to require that Emergency Management Plans identify essential community services (including those related to food, shelter, health, mental health, social cohesion, disability support, caregiving) to be activated during emergency response and recovery, and funding mechanisms to enable service provision.
- Clause 105 to reflect the inclusion of social infrastructure within the scope of essential services and in Essential infrastructure sector response plans.

4. Greater focus on emergency readiness within the community

NZCCSS Member feedback indicates that greater investment is needed in emergency readiness activities when there isn't an emergency to ensure people within the community are prepared

when an emergency does occur. This would include training volunteers to navigate Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) processes and systems, being involved in regular scenario planning activities and being regularly consulted and communicated with. We believe greater investment in emergency readiness would help to:

- Identify groups within a community who may be disproportionately affected by an emergency
- Identify resources and expertise that could be made readily available in times of emergency.
- Mitigate the impacts of staff turnover within Emergency Management staff or community organisations

To strengthen the Bill's focus on emergency readiness we recommend that:

- Clauses 27(d) and 28(e) be amended to reflect that the Committee functions of planning for recovery activities is to include regularly exercising their powers under Clause 29(2)(a)(b) to recruit and train volunteers and conduct emergency management exercises.
- That the General Powers of Emergency Management Committees under Clause 29 be amended to include regular consultation and communication with volunteers in advance of an emergency.

5. Consideration of animals within the Bill

We support the inclusion within Emergency Management Plans of consideration being given to how animals will be managed in emergencies. NZCCSS Members have noted the distress experienced by those caring for animals or forced to abandon animals during an emergency.

Ko wai tātou | Who we are

NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches.

Through this membership, NZCCSS represents over 100 organisations providing a range of social support services across Aotearoa. Our mission is to call forth a just and compassionate society for Aotearoa, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website - www.nzccss.org.nz.

Ingoa whakapā | Contact Name

Alicia Sudden ceo@nzccss.org.nz

Melanie Wilson