



19 May 2021



Reference: OIA-2020/21-0517

Dear 

**Official Information Act request relating to preparedness and response to March 5 tsunami**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 14 April 2021. You requested:

*“All briefings/reports/analysis on the preparedness and response to the March 5 tsunami. I note [the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)] is a business unit of [the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC)]. The information should include, but not be limited to, reports from local Civil Defence authorities, discussion about tsunami alert warnings and sirens, the adequacy of disaster risk management plans, and whether staff were properly trained.”*

I am releasing to you the following information in full under the Act:

- A copy of the Tsunami Initial Action Plan – Pre-Impact (Warning) Phase for the 5 March 2021 Tsunami event.
- A copy of the NEMA National Coordination Centre Situation Report 001 as at 1400 NZDT on 5 March 2021.

NEMA will shortly publish the *March 5 Earthquake and Tsunami Debrief Report* that will provide an analysis on the preparedness and response to the March 5 tsunami. This post event report will be available here: [www.civildefence.govt.nz/resources/previous-emergencies/post-event-reports/](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/resources/previous-emergencies/post-event-reports/).

Relevant discussions about tsunami alert warnings and sirens as they relate to the March 5 Tsunami event is considered as part of the debrief report, (please note that many of the discussions on the day were verbal). Further information on the wider discussions can be found here: [www.civildefence.govt.nz/resources/tsunami-warning-sirens/](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/resources/tsunami-warning-sirens/). If you require any additional information, we ask that you refine your request so we can ensure that it can be satisfactorily answered.

The disaster risk management plan used during Tsunami events is the National Tsunami Advisory and Warning Plan. As with all events, learnings outlined in the debrief report, will be incorporated into future versions of the plan. The National Tsunami Advisory and Warning Plan is available here: [www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/guidelines/national-tsunami-advisory-and-warning-plan/](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/guidelines/national-tsunami-advisory-and-warning-plan/)

Accordingly, I am refusing your request for the documents listed above under section 18(d) of the Act as the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

NEMA does not hold any reports from local Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups. The primary method of communication during the March 5 Tsunami event was through Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Controller teleconferences. This is due to the speed at which the events were unfolding.

Accordingly, I have refused your request for these documents under section 18(e) of the Act as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Carolyn Schwalger  
**Chief Executive, National Emergency Management Agency**

# Tsunami Initial Action Plan – Pre-Impact (Warning) Phase



NEMA National Coordination Centre Initial Response Plan					
<b>Incident:</b> Kermadec Islands Earthquake	<b>Action Plan No:</b> 1				
<b>NCMC Mode:</b> Mode 2	<b>Date/time of issue:</b> 05/03/21 09:00 hrs				
<b>Operational Period:</b> 05/03/2021 09:00 hrs until updated or cancelled	<b>Incident Classification:</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td rowspan="3" style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"> <b>N2</b>                      [Insert classification number]                 </td> <td style="text-align: center;">↑</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>S</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">↓</td> </tr> </table>	<b>N2</b> [Insert classification number]	↑	<b>S</b>	↓
<b>N2</b> [Insert classification number]	↑				
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<b>Contact:</b> phone: (04) 494 6900 email: <a href="mailto:ncc.operations@nema.govt.nz">ncc.operations@nema.govt.nz</a>	N1 = A <b>minor</b> national level response N2 = A <b>moderate</b> national level response N3 = A <b>major</b> national level response N4 = A <b>severe</b> national level response				

Summary of incident
<p>A magnitude 8.0 earthquake occurred in the Kermadec Islands region at 08:28hrs 05/03/2021. A tsunami has been generated. Land inundation is expected along the East Coast of the North Island from the BAY OF ISLANDS to WHANGAREI, from MATATA to TOLAGA BAY including Whakatane and Opotiki, And GREAT BARRIER ISLAND.</p> <p><b>Response activities</b></p> <p>The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has activated its National Coordination Centre (NCC).</p> <p>CDEM Groups and national agencies have activated in response.</p> <p>The National Security System is activated, and is providing strategic direction to the All-of-Government response.</p>
Mission
<p>To mobilise, direct and coordinate the initial national response to the tsunami in order to minimise loss of life, provide for the immediate needs of the affected population and provide for the continuity of government.</p>
Intent of the Initial National Action Plan
<p><b>Government intent</b></p> <p>The New Zealand public have confidence in the response. The Government is responsive to immediate and longer term needs of communities.</p> <p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>The Initial National Action Plan covers the pre-impact (warning) phase of the response. During this period, the NCC will develop a National Action Plan based on the specifics of this event.</p>

This Initial National Action Plan aims to coordinate the immediate actions of response agencies by providing those agencies with response-specific tasks, response-critical information requirements, pre-identified requests for assistance (including international) and response priorities.

Through this Plan, we will anticipate arising issues and facilitate proactive and effective response coordination with CDEM Groups and central government agencies to assess needs and impacts, establish mechanisms to deliver essential services to affected communities, and ensure public safety and wellbeing.

### Response concept

Coordination of the response at the national level will occur under three broad response phases:

1. **Immediate actions:** agencies begin carrying out their tasks under this Plan and their roles and responsibilities as per the *National CDEM Plan 2015*, without waiting for NCC direction. This phase may last from minutes up to 24 hours. Where possible, agencies and CDEM Groups should actively communicate with each other and coordinate activities jointly.

**Initiation of the sustained response:** this phase begins when the NCC has activated and starts to coordinate the response actions based on this Plan.

**Sustained response:** this phase begins when the NCC has developed and communicated the first National Action Plan. In this phase, agencies are no longer working to their taskings under the Initial National Action Plan, but are instead working to the National Action Plan (under the direction of the NCC).

### End state

This Initial National Action Plan is for immediate response activities in the warning phase and will be superseded when a post-impact National Action Plan has been developed and disseminated.

### Response objectives

Prevent further casualties from related hazards  
 Enable movement of people  
 Establish the response structure at all levels  
 Communicate with affected communities and the wider public throughout the response.

### Plan of action

To achieve the intent and objectives, the NCC will:

Priorities for this operational period:	To achieve the above priorities we will:	Responsible:
<i>Determine:</i> Assess the threat	<i>Consult with GNS/Tsunami Experts Panel on the tsunami threat</i>	<i>Control Team; Intelligence</i>
Confirm CDEM Group response	<i>Ensure CDEM Group response is in place Establish current/projected evacuated areas</i>	<i>Operations Operations</i>
Establish Group coordination	<i>Establish and communicate Controller teleconference schedule</i>	<i>Control Team</i>
Informing the Minister/ Government	<i>Provide an initial briefing to the Minister Establish a schedule of Minister's briefings</i>	<i>Policy Control Team</i>
Ensure media are serviced	<i>Social media and website updated in accordance with threat assessment and media releases + prompt replies to requests and calls</i>	<i>PIM</i>

Ensure adequate staffing	<i>Establish a staffing roster</i>	<i>Logistics (Facilities)</i>
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## Designated Tasks

The following designated tasks are listed by agency and are in addition to BAU and tasks listed in the CDEM Plan 2015.

### National Controller (NCC)

Workstream	Critical tasks
Command, control and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate the NCC.</li> <li>• Establish contact with CDEM Groups, other National Coordination Centres (NCCs), sector coordinating entities, and science and research organisations.</li> <li>• Develop the follow-up National Action Plan.</li> <li>• Identify supplementary staffing requirements and communicate these to agencies.</li> </ul>
Public information management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deploy PIM and Strategic Communication staff to the NCC</li> <li>• Coordinate shared media engagement for national agencies as appropriate to ensure that the public sees a 'joined-up' approach to the overall response.</li> </ul>

### CDEM Groups

Workstream	Critical tasks
Command, control and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate ECCs as per own plans and procedures, without waiting for direction.</li> <li>• Establish contact with the NCMC.</li> </ul>
Reconnaissance and information collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise the NCC of support requirements to maintain or enable response.</li> </ul>
Public Information Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate the dissemination of public safety messages within their remit and/or for which they are the 'authoritative voice' using available communication channels.</li> <li>• Initiate the dissemination of response specific information within their remit and/or for which they are the 'authoritative voice' using available communication channels.</li> </ul>

### New Zealand Police

Workstream	Critical tasks
Command, control and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate agency National Coordination Centres as per own plans and procedures, without waiting for direction.</li> <li>• Establish contact with the NCC.</li> <li>• Provide a liaison officer to the NCC.</li> </ul>

### Fire and Emergency New Zealand

Workstream	Critical tasks
Command, control and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate agency National Coordination Centres as per own plans and procedures, without waiting for direction.</li> <li>• Establish contact with the NCC.</li> <li>• Provide a liaison officer to the NCC.</li> </ul>

## New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF)

Workstream	Critical tasks
Command, control and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate agency National Coordination Centres as per own plans and procedures, without waiting for direction.</li> <li>• Establish contact with the NCC.</li> <li>• Provide a liaison officer to the NCC.</li> <li>• Be prepared to provide personnel to support other CDEM Group ECCs.</li> </ul>

## Ministry of Health (via the NHCC)

Workstream	Critical tasks
Command, control and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate agency National Coordination Centres as per own plans and procedures, without waiting for direction.</li> <li>• Establish contact with the NCC.</li> <li>• Provide a liaison officer to the NCC.</li> </ul>

## Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Workstream	Critical tasks
Command, control and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate agency National Coordination Centres as per own plans and procedures, without waiting for direction.</li> <li>• Establish contact with the NCC.</li> <li>• Provide a liaison officer to the NCC.</li> </ul>

## Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)

Workstream	Critical tasks
Command, control and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate agency National Coordination Centres as per own plans and procedures, without waiting for direction.</li> <li>• Establish contact with the NCC.</li> <li>• Provide a liaison officer to the NCMC.</li> </ul>

### Limiting factors

1. Incomplete information on impacts, resources and needs.
2. Shortage of trained staff in all response agencies.

### Resource needs

All requests for national support are to be directed to the NEMA NCC.

### Information flow

As per the National CDEM Plan 2015 and CIMS.

- Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) are to provide information to Emergency Coordination Centres (ECCs).
- ECCs will provide a collated return to the NCC.

- National agencies will keep their Ministers informed, but must also inform the CDEM NCC to allow the collation of all response information into a single common operating picture.
- NCC to keep the Officials Committee for Domestic and External Security (ODESC) and the National Security Committee (NSC) informed.

## Public information plan

### Domestic

NCC and affected CDEM Group Public Information Managers are to engage with national and local media across all mediums (including social media) to;

1. Provide advice to the affected population on what to do.
2. Reassure the affected population through the provision of updates on the response.

See “Consistent messages for CDEM” at <http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/consistent-messages-for-cdem/>

### National level Spokespeople

- Prime Minister
- Minister of Civil Defence
- Director CDEM
- GNS Seismologist

## Communications

Email, landline and mobile phone remain the primary means of communication.

NCMC phone: 04-494-6900  
 NCMC email: operations@ncmc.govt.nz  
 NEMA webpage: <http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/>

## Organisation

National response structure as per the National CDEM Plan 2015 and CIMS.

### Lead Agency

**National:** NEMA (through NCC)  
**Regional:** CDEM Groups

### Appointments

**Acting Director CDEM:** Roger Ball  
**National Controller:** David Coetzee  
**National Recovery Manager:** TBC

## Appendices

1. Map of expected tsunami impacts

## Approval and distribution

<b>Action Plan prepared by:</b>	NCC Planning Function
<b>Action Plan approved by:</b>	David Coetzee National Controller

<b>Distribution:</b>	ODESC All CDEM Groups NZDF MFAT MBIE MoT NZ Customs DIA GNS Science	DPMC NZ Police MoH Treasury SSC Min of Ed MfE NZFS MPI	DoC NWCG MetService National Lifeline Utilities TPK
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# Initial Advice Land Threat Map



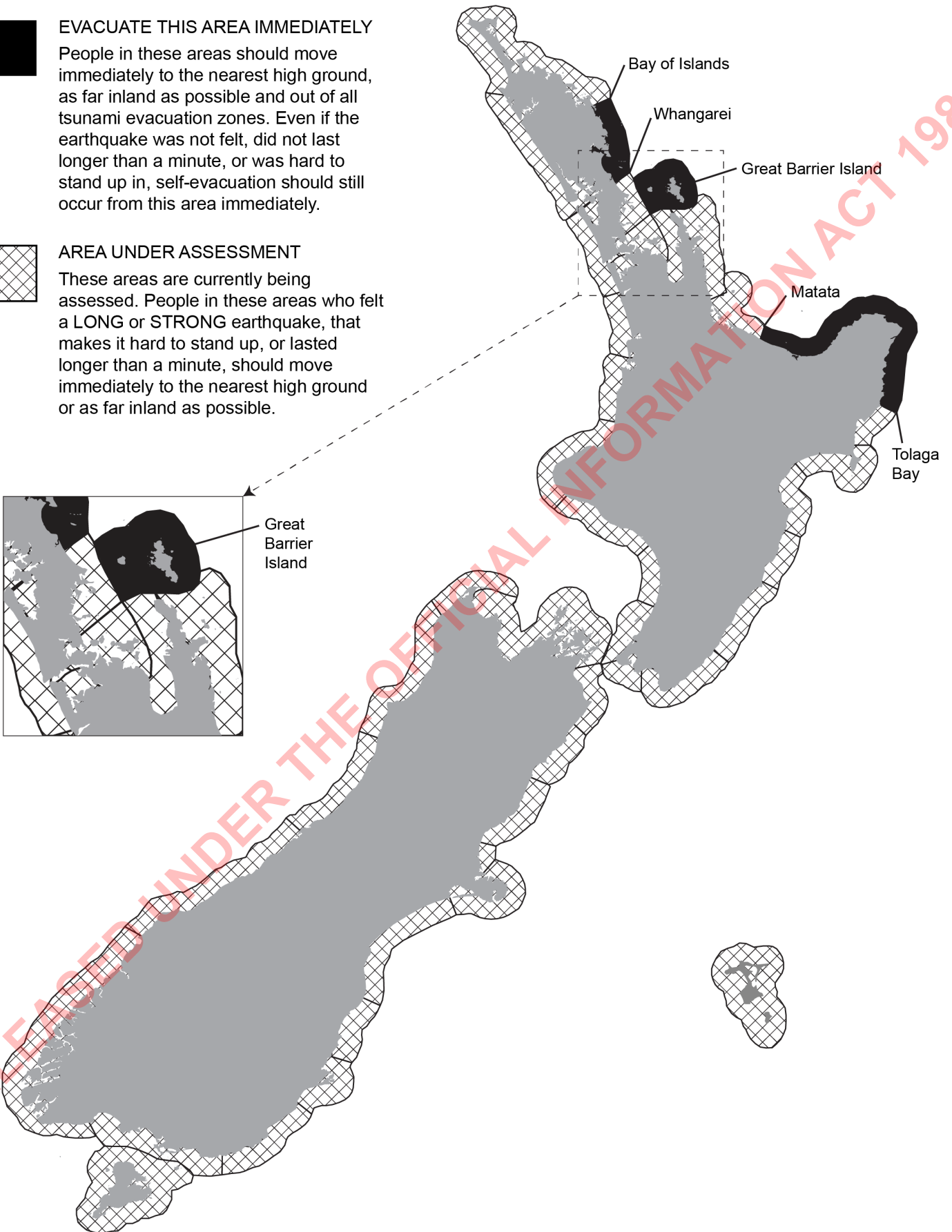
## EVACUATE THIS AREA IMMEDIATELY

People in these areas should move immediately to the nearest high ground, as far inland as possible and out of all tsunami evacuation zones. Even if the earthquake was not felt, did not last longer than a minute, or was hard to stand up in, self-evacuation should still occur from this area immediately.



## AREA UNDER ASSESSMENT

These areas are currently being assessed. People in these areas who felt a LONG or STRONG earthquake, that makes it hard to stand up, or lasted longer than a minute, should move immediately to the nearest high ground or as far inland as possible.



# NEMA NATIONAL COORDINATION CENTRE SITUATION REPORT 001 AS AT 1400 NZDT on 05/03/2021

<b>Event name:</b> Kermadec Earthquake and Tsunami	<b>Declaration status:</b> Not Declared
<b>Activation status:</b> NCC Active	<b>Time declared:</b> N/A

## RESPONSE PRIORITIES

- Prevent casualties from related hazards
- Enable movement of people
- Establish the response structure at all levels
- Communicate with affected communities and the wider public throughout the response.

## OVERVIEW

### SUMMARY OF EVENT AND RESPONSE TO DATE

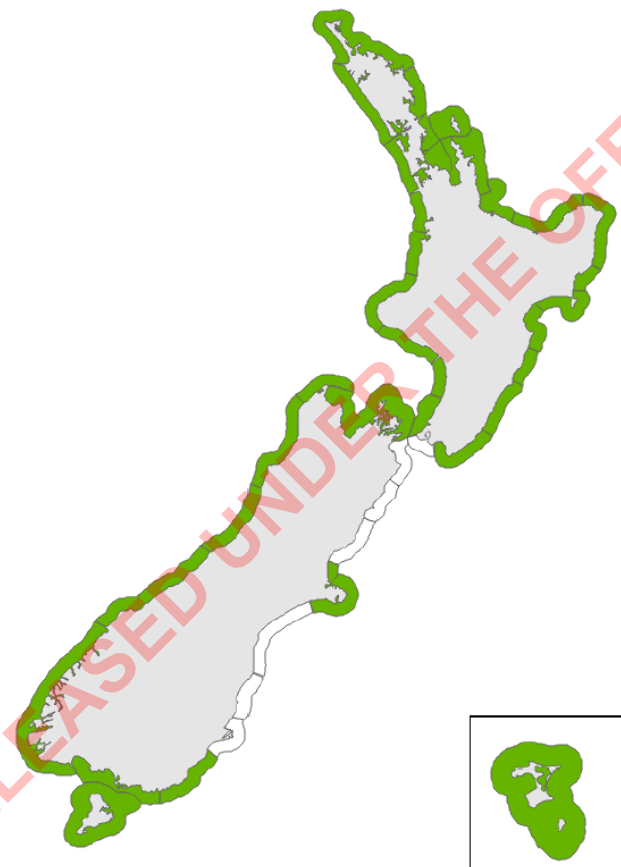
A magnitude 8.1 earthquake occurred in the Kermadec Islands region at 08:28hrs 05/03/2021. A tsunami has been generated.

## Tsunami Forecast Map

**Earthquake details:** M8.1 Kermadec Earthquake #2  
**Time of earthquake:** NZDT 08:28 NZDT 05/03/2021  
**Map issued at:** 1.00pm NZDT 05/03/2021

#### NOTE:

1. The stated threat levels may apply to any one of the series of waves generated by the event and not necessarily to the first wave. The first wave is not always the largest or highest and waves are likely to continue for many hours.
2. The threat levels suggest the largest wave at any coastal point inside the zone. Wave heights will vary within a zone.
3. The amplitudes do not include the tidal state (sea level) at the time the wave reaches the shore.
4. The estimate is for the maximum expected wave amplitude at shore. Run-up can be up to twice as high on steep slopes onshore near the coast i.e. a wave measuring 5m at shore can run-up as high as 10m on-land near the shore.
5. The expected wave amplitudes (crest to sea level) at the shore are likely to be different to measurements given in PTWC bulletins. PTWC measurements are taken at sea level gauges in the open ocean or at coastal points off-shore from New Zealand. NEMA information represents the official threat estimates.



Maximum expected amplitude at shore	Threat definition
<0.3m	No threat
0.3–1m	Beach & Marine Threat (including harbours, estuaries and small boats)
1–3m	Land & Marine Threat
3–5m	
5–8m	
>8m	

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has activated its National Coordination Centre (NCC). CDEM Groups and national agencies have activated in response.

NEMA has issued an initial Emergency Mobile Alert (EMA) to areas requiring evacuation and relevant Groups have followed up with their own EMAs.

**RESPONSE ACTIONS IN LAST 24 HOURS**

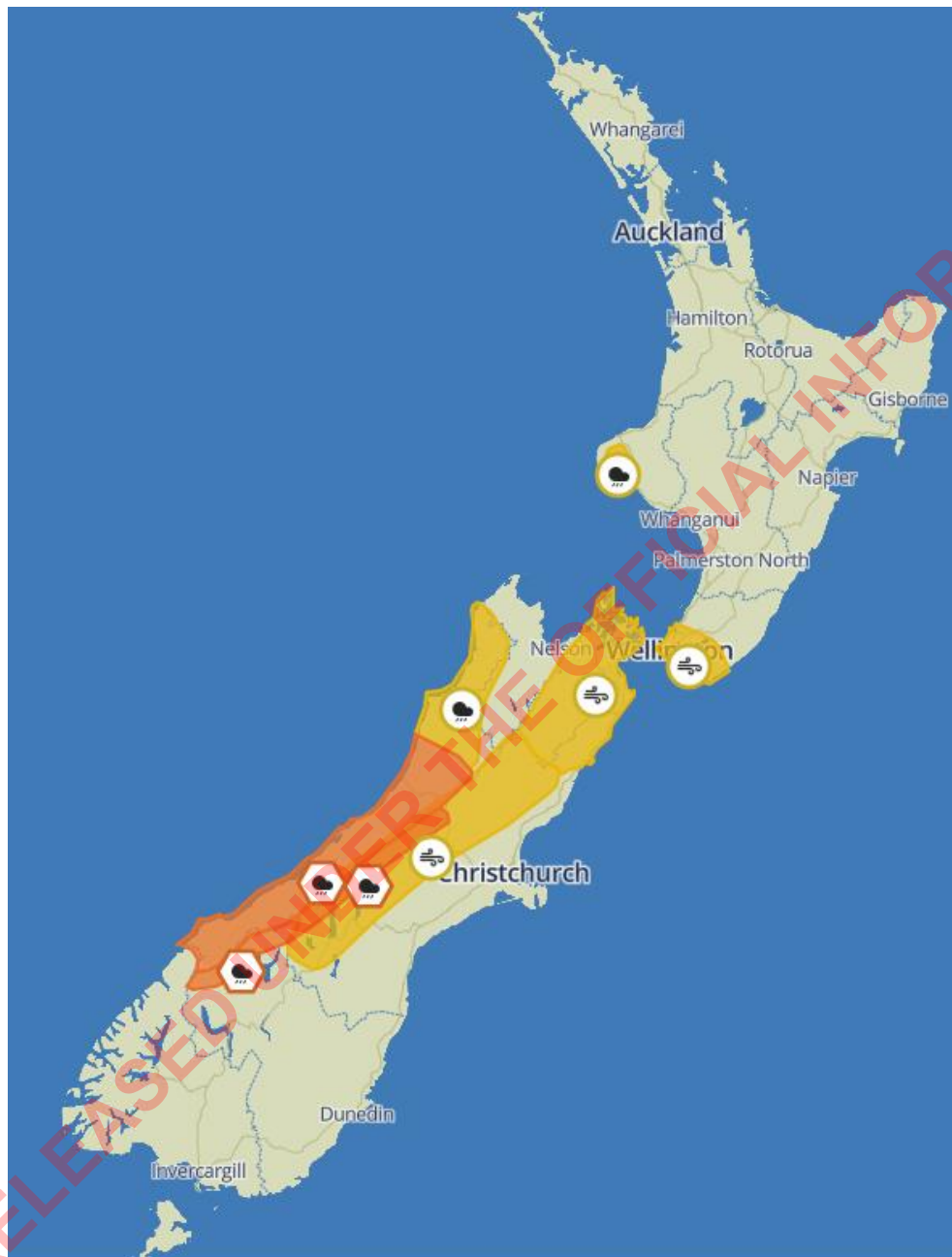
See above.

**PLANNED RESPONSE ACTIVITIES IN NEXT 24-72 HOURS**

To be determined based on tsunami activity.

**WEATHER**

A severe weather warning (heavy rain) is in place for the West Coast.



**SOCIAL AND HEALTH**

NEMA has activated the National Welfare Coordination Group. A NWCG teleconference will be held this afternoon to cover tsunami and COVID-19 welfare issues.



## EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education used Mataara to communicate the Tsunami warning to schools and early learning services on the East Coast affected areas.

**Hawke's Bay Region:** Eleven schools and three early learning services have closed today due to the earthquakes. This impacts approximately 1054 students and 144 children. The Regional office has contacted all schools and early learning services and is continuing to update these.

**Bay of Plenty Region:** Ōpōtiki schools and early learning centres have activated their emergency plans and are evacuating. Schools and early learning centres in coastal areas are reporting some parents panicking and picking children up. The Ministry has reiterated to listen to the Civil Defence broadcasts as these areas are not currently affected.

22 schools and 16 early learning services have closed today due to the earthquakes and tsunami warnings. This impacts approximately **2739** students and **741** children.

**Auckland Region:** We have not been advised of any official closures but we are aware of some schools being in the Tsunami evacuation zone. eg. Great Barrier Island.

The above schools are not closed due to property damage but for the welfare of students and staff. MoE have been advised that the communities are feeling nervous.

Some Kohanga Reo have property damage, National Trust have asked them to check this.

MoE staff remain in contact with their communities. Additionally, all Tai Tokerau regional MoE offices and the Whakatane office have been evacuated.



## EVACUATIONS, DISPLACED PEOPLE AND SHELTER

The following areas were instructed to evacuate:

- Great Barrier Island
- The West Coast of the North Island from CAPE REINGA to AHIPARA.
- The East Coast of the North Island from CAPE REINGA to WHANGAREI and from MATATA to TOLAGA BAY including Whakatane and Ōpōtiki

People outside these areas also self-evacuated.

**Land inundation warnings have now been lifted for all areas.**



## WATER, ELECTRICITY and TELECOMMUNICATIONS

As at 1045hrs, impacts are not expected to telecommunications, and no major disruption or damage is expected to electrical infrastructure. MBIE have been contacted regarding the fuel sector and are following up.

As at 1220hrs, Chorus had identified around 30 sites nationally that are in low lying areas that could be impacted.

Other members of the Telecommunications Emergency Forum (TEF) have been asked to provide details of any likely impacts on sites.



## TRANSPORTATION STATUS

The Transport Response Team (TRT) has been activated by MoT. They are working with Agency partners including Waka Kotahi, CAA, Maritime NZ and KiwiRail to monitor the impact to the transport system and will keep NEMA informed of developments as they arise.



## PUBLIC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The Minister for Emergency Management, Director of Civil Defence and GNS Science conducted a media stand-up at 1130.

Report authorised by: National Controller

Report prepared by: NCMC Intelligence

**Date/time of approval:**

1400 NZDT on 05 March 2021

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