26 July 2024

Reference: OIA-2024/25-0015

Dear

Official Information Act request for advice which speaks to the impact of the 2024 budget on local councils emergency management capabilities

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request that was transferred to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) on 8 July 2024. You requested:

> *"Can I please request a copy of any advice from [NEMA, part of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet], which speaks to the impact of the 2024 budget on local councils emergency management capabilities?"*

The National Emergency Management Agency is a departmental agency hosted by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC). Regarding your request, I have interpreted the local councils' emergency management capabilities to be the responsibilities carried out by Civil Defence Emergency Management groups (CDEM groups) that are part of the local authority structure.

NEMA does not fund CDEM groups. These groups are funded by local authorities. Local authorities generate funds to support CDEM groups from various sources, including from rates.

No information has been identified within scope of your request. Your request is refused under section 18 (e) of the Act – the information requested does not exist.

While NEMA does not provide specific funding to local authorities for emergency management capabilities, it does administer other funding for emergencies and resilience, including:

- Section 115A of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 provides permanent legislative authority for the Crown to reimburse local authorities for costs incurred for emergencies.

- Section 33 of the Guide to the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan 2015 (the Plan) guides the specific government financial support to local authorities during or after an emergency. NEMA administers the following funding mechanisms:

    - Welfare – 100% reimbursement for eligible costs incurred during response by a local authority for accommodating, transporting, feeding (including pet food for companion animals) and clothing displaced people as a result of an emergency.

    - Other Response – 60% reimbursement of eligible costs (above local authority threshold) incurred by a local authority to take precautionary or preventative actions during or immediately prior to the emergency.

- o Recovery Costs – 60% reimbursement of eligible costs (above local authority threshold) incurred by a local authority for like-for-like repairs to essential infrastructure, generally three waters and river protection assets.

- Under Section 33, a contribution can be made to an established Disaster Relief Fund/Mayoral Relief Fund. The Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery, together with either the Prime Minister or Minister of Finance, may authorise a lump sum contribution to a disaster relief fund of up to $100,000. Contributions over $100,000 need to be approved by Cabinet.

- Resilience Fund – NEMA administers the Civil Defence Emergency Management Resilience Fund ($889,000 excluding GST, per financial year). It is a contestable fund with criteria developed in consultation with the Civil Defence Emergency Management sector. The Resilience Fund is allocated by the Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management with guidance and advice from NEMA subject matter experts. The approved funding is generally for one financial year from July to June of the following year. Please refer to the Resilience Fund guidance for additional information - https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/documents/resilience-fund/CDEM-Resilience-Fund-IS-3-August.pdf.

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 DPMC'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

Stefan Weir
Chief of Staff
National Emergency Management Agency