



6 April 2023

Harris Leigh  
fyi-request-22025-9a6275e2@requests.fyi.org.nz

Reference: OIA-2022/23-0676

Dear Harris Leigh

**Official Information Act request relating to the use of local contractors in delivering emergency management responses in New Zealand**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request which was transferred to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) from Hon Kieran McNulty, Minister for Emergency Management, on 15 March 2023. You requested:

*“Under the OIA I seek any information you hold relating to the importance of local contractors in delivering emergency management responses in Aotearoa.*

*Specifically I am interested to know:*

- 1) Whether the urgency of emergency responses means it local contractors are often best placed to provide assistance;*
- 2) Whether it would be possible to replace the use of local contractors with directly employed public servants as proposed by the Leader of the Opposition.”*

Relating to Part 1 of your request, emergencies can be complex and vary in speed of response and scale. Local authorities and NEMA have their own trained staff that manage and coordinate emergency responses, drawing in other staff as necessary. In the event of larger emergencies where NEMA activates the National Crisis Management Centre, NEMA is often assisted by staff from other government agencies.

The work of Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups and NEMA is often supplemented by specific expertise and resources depending on the nature of the emergency. For example:

- floods often damage roads and bridges, in which case local roading contractors are usually best placed to undertake repairs
- floods can often damage stop-banks also requiring emergency repairs, in which case local earth-moving contractors may be used
- where telecommunications services are damaged these are usually restored by the telecommunications providers either using in-house or contracted staff
- in the case of welfare and community assistance, Iwi often provide a great deal of support
- volunteers and a range of community organisations will also typically provide a variety of assistance and support during an emergency.

If you are interested in learning more about the various roles and responsibilities of agencies in managing hazards at a national level, the Guide to the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan has more information. This is available on the NEMA website here: [www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/plans-and-strategies/national-civil-defence-emergency-management-plan-and-guide](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/plans-and-strategies/national-civil-defence-emergency-management-plan-and-guide)

In Part 2 of your request, you asked whether it would be possible to replace the use of local contractors with directly employed public servants. As noted in the answer to Part 1 of your request, most of those who assist in the management of emergency responses are employed either by central or local government or are volunteers.

For emergency repairs to infrastructure, some of which are not owned by either the government or local authorities, it would likely be too expensive or impractical to maintain separate staff and equipment to be available solely for emergencies. For this reason, relationships are in place with a range of providers to ensure they can respond quickly when emergency repairs to key infrastructure assets are required.

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

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anthony Richards". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a light blue rectangular box.

Anthony Richards  
**Chief Advisor to the Deputy Chief Executive, Emergency Management  
National Emergency Management Agency**