



Summary

Improving Auckland Council's emergency preparedness: A follow-up report



Why we did this work

In early 2023, the Auckland region experienced two severe storm and flooding events, which led to loss of life and widespread damage. Nationally, the combined costs of damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure from the floods are estimated to range from \$9 billion to \$14.5 billion. Auckland Council and central government have committed over \$2 billion to pay for the recovery efforts.

Auckland Council commissioned two independent reviews into its response to the 2023 floods. In June 2023, we also published our report *Auckland Council: Preparedness for responding to an emergency*, which looked at the Council's emergency preparedness more generally. We did this follow-up report to find out whether Auckland Council has clear and realistic plans to respond to the recommendations of the three reviews.



What we found

Auckland Council has made significant progress – 38 of the 51 review recommendations have been fully addressed. In our view, if the Council's work programme is implemented as planned, all the review recommendations will be addressed.

As a result, Auckland Council is better placed than it was in early 2023 to respond to the next major emergency. In particular, the Council has:

- revised its emergency response structure and increased its emergency response communications capability, including hiring more staff;
- developed guidance for the Mayor and elected members on their roles and responsibilities, and clearly documented information for staff on what to do in an emergency response;
- established a regular exercise programme and increased staff emergency training; and
- acquired specialised technology platforms to gather and share up-to-date information in an emergency.

Reporting to the public still needs to improve, but we welcome the intention of Auckland Council to make information about its progress publicly available on a new website and social media platforms from October 2024.



What next?

Many review recommendations are ongoing – such as building relationships with communities – and will require continued investment. Although the Council has a detailed short-term work programme for emergency management, its long-term planning does not yet have enough detail to show how it will further progress this work. Auckland Council told us that it is now prioritising its long-term planning.

Major emergencies can happen at any time. It is essential that Auckland Council prioritises work to understand gaps in community emergency preparedness by considering the needs of its diverse communities and targeting its resources towards those that might need more support.