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



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

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Deputy Auditor-General's overview

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā karangatanga maha o te motu, tēnā koutou.

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland is New Zealand's largest city and home to more than a third of the country's population. The Auckland region's natural features, such as its sub-tropical climate, coastal location, and scenic volcanic cones, are part of what makes the city an attractive place for residents and visitors. However, they also make it vulnerable to natural hazards, including severe weather events, flooding, tsunami, and volcanic eruptions.

It is critical for everyone who lives in or visits our largest city that Auckland is resilient and well prepared to respond to, and recover from, major emergency events.

Auckland Council plays the central role in overseeing emergency preparedness in the Auckland region. Auckland Emergency Management is the business unit within Auckland Council responsible for co-ordinating all planning activities related to hazard and emergency management in Auckland.

Flooding in 2023 that affected Auckland and the wider North Island was a reminder of the importance of emergency preparedness. The Auckland Anniversary weekend floods of January 2023 and Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023 led to loss of life and widespread damage to property.

It is predicted that it will take Auckland 10 years to recover from the 2023 floods. Nationally, the combined costs of damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure from these floods are estimated to range from \$9 billion to \$14.5 billion.¹ Auckland Council and central government have committed over \$2 billion to pay for the recovery efforts in Auckland.²

Auckland Council commissioned two independent reviews into its response to the 2023 floods. These were *Auckland Flood Response Review: Independent, External Review of Events, January 27-29, 2023* by Bush International Consulting (the Bush review) and the *Auckland Severe Weather Events 2023* debrief by Toa Consulting (the Toa review).

In June 2023, my Office published the findings from our performance audit, *Auckland Council: Preparedness for responding to an emergency*. The Council's response to the 2023 floods was not a specific focus of our report, which looked at the Council's emergency preparedness more generally.

1 See the Treasury's information release "Impacts from the North Island weather events" at [treasury.govt.nz](https://www.treasury.govt.nz).

2 See Auckland Council (2023), "Auckland Council and Crown agree to cost sharing agreement for storm recovery and resilience work", at [ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz).

Together, these three reviews found that a significant programme of improvements was needed to ensure that Auckland Council was better positioned to lead and co-ordinate emergency preparedness and emergency responses for the region.

In our 2023 report we said that we would follow up on our work after 12 months to see what progress Auckland Council had made in addressing our recommendations. We also committed to assessing the Council's progress in responding to the recommendations of the Bush review. In 2024, we agreed with the Council that our follow-up work would also include the Toa review.

We wanted to know whether Auckland Council had clear and realistic plans to address the recommendations of the three reviews, and what progress it has made in implementing them.

What we found

No level of planning can ever guarantee that we are completely ready for the next major emergency. However, being adequately prepared can make a significant difference in helping to lessen the effects of emergencies and hasten the speed of recovery.

Emergency preparedness in Auckland is not the responsibility of Auckland Council alone. Individuals, whānau, businesses, communities, and a range of government and non-government organisations all have a role in preparing for emergencies.

We found that Auckland Council has made significant progress in responding to the recommendations of the three reviews and will continue to advance this work through its 2024/25 work programme. Auckland Council is better placed than it was in early 2023 to respond to emergencies. However, more work is needed to fully implement, embed, and test the changes made in response to the three reviews, and to provide assurance to the public that Auckland Council is ready for the next emergency.

Auckland Council has plans in place to respond to review recommendations

Auckland Council has accepted the recommendations of all three reviews and has developed plans to address them. These plans are the April 2023 “Prioritised Plan of actions for the Auckland Emergency Management function” (the Prioritised Plan) and the March 2024 *Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group Plan 2024 – 2029* (the Group Plan).

Based on our audit team’s analysis of the 62 identified actions in the Prioritised and Group Plans against the 51 review recommendations, I am satisfied that Auckland Council’s plans are well aligned with the nature and intent of the recommendations. Once fully implemented, I consider that all the review recommendations will have been addressed.

Auckland Council provided us with documents that indicate that 38 of the 51 recommendations have already been addressed. Work is under way to address the 13 remaining recommendations.

Auckland Council has made significant progress in addressing review recommendations

An early priority for Auckland Council was finalising a new group plan to set the strategic direction for emergency management in the Auckland region for the next five years.

Auckland Council has prepared new standard operating procedures and detailed manuals for duty teams, the Incident Management Team, the Mayor, and elected members. This will assist staff, the Mayor, and elected members to clearly understand their roles and what to do if called on in an emergency. At the time of writing, 387 Auckland Council staff have completed foundation-level training in responding to emergencies.

Continuous improvement through debriefing and applying lessons learned after emergency responses and exercises is a vital part of emergency management. Regular emergency exercising is essential to ensure that staff have the chance to test and refine their knowledge and skills.

Since the 2023 floods, Auckland Council has put in place an annual calendar of exercises, including some that involve the Mayor’s office and multiple external organisations. For example, in October 2023 Auckland Emergency Management ran a major multi-agency exercise to test the setting up of the Emergency Co-ordination Centre in the event of a tsunami.

Auckland Council has acquired specialised information technology platforms to enhance its situational awareness and ability to share and access up-to-date information in an emergency.

The Council has also employed seven new senior community advisors, whose roles include working with Auckland's 21 local boards to help increase community preparedness for natural disasters.

However, some emergency preparedness work is yet to be done. For example, although there are now standard operating procedures to guide Auckland Council's response to a severe weather event, a comprehensive Severe Weather Response plan has not yet been completed. Similarly, a major study to identify and address vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure has not yet been updated.³

Auckland Council has approved a new Group Plan for 2024 to 2029

Auckland Council plans to respond to the remaining review recommendations through its 2024/25 work programme and the Group Plan for 2024 to 2029.

The overarching goal of the Group Plan is to "strengthen the disaster resilience of Tāmaki Makaurau by managing risks and empowering and supporting everybody to be ready to respond to and recover from emergencies".

Significant work remains for Auckland Council to meet this goal over the next few years. Detailed and sequenced planning is not yet in place to show how the Group Plan will be achieved.

The Council will need to continue to invest in relationships to ensure that all Council teams and external stakeholders are aware of, and can carry out, their emergency management responsibilities during an emergency response and under the Group Plan.

Auckland Council also needs to further strengthen its governance of the Group Plan. There needs to be regular, concise, and relevant reporting to elected members on the Group Plan's progress and risks to enable more effective oversight.

³ The Auckland Engineering Lifelines Project was originally published in 1999 and updated in full in 2014. Auckland Council told us that partial updates were done from 2015 to 2018. See aelg.org.nz.

All Aucklanders have a role in emergency preparedness

The success of the Group Plan does not lie with Auckland Council alone – all Aucklanders have a role to play in emergency preparedness.

Aucklanders' emergency preparedness has improved slightly since before the 2023 floods, with an increase in the percentage of Aucklanders stating that they are prepared for an emergency (from 66% in 2022 to 69% in June 2023).⁴ However, recent national surveys show that costs, and not knowing what to do to prepare, remain significant barriers to household preparedness, even among households directly affected by recent flooding.⁵ There is an estimated 80% chance that another weather event of the scale of Cyclone Gabrielle will occur in the next 50 years.⁶

It is essential that Auckland Council prioritises work to understand gaps in community emergency preparedness and target its resources towards communities that might need more support. Not all communities have the same capacity and resources to prepare for an emergency. Work is needed to ensure that the Group Plan will adequately meet the needs of Auckland's diverse communities.

It will be five years before the Group Plan is fully implemented. In that time, it is essential that Auckland Council continues to prioritise the work that is most important to ensuring that Aucklanders are ready for the next major emergency. Auckland Council needs to keep the public regularly informed on its progress so that Aucklanders can have confidence that the Council is actively addressing gaps in its emergency planning.

4 Auckland Council (2023), *Annual Report 2022/2023 Volume 1: Overview and Service Performance*, pages 104-105, at aucklandcouncil.govt.nz. Although this represents an increase since the floods, the same percentage of Aucklanders (69%) stated that they were prepared for an emergency in 2021.

5 The National Emergency Management Agency does an annual survey of New Zealanders' emergency preparedness. The latest 2023 survey found that preparedness had increased among those affected by the 2023 floods, but over half of New Zealanders don't feel prepared. See National Emergency Management Agency (2023), *2023 Annual Emergency Preparedness Survey*, pages 21-22 and 28, at civildefence.govt.nz.

6 National Emergency Management Agency (2023), *Proactive release: Briefing to the Incoming Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery*, Annex 3, at dpmc.govt.nz.

Final comments

Our work focused on Auckland Council's progress in addressing the recommendations of the three reviews. Although we have not drawn conclusions about Auckland Council's preparedness for the next major emergency, we do consider it is likely to be better placed now than it was in early 2023.

Since the 2023 floods, Auckland Council has made significant steps towards setting up a well-functioning emergency response system, in line with review recommendations. It now needs to focus on ensuring that its new systems and processes are thoroughly tested and practised, and that everybody involved in responding to an emergency is aware of and fully supported to carry out their role.

Many review recommendations are ongoing – such as those requiring Auckland Council to improve and maintain its relationships with communities – and will require continued investment. Those recommendations are also some of the most challenging and important for an emergency response.

I acknowledge the significant effort that Auckland Council, and particularly Auckland Emergency Management, has made in responding to review recommendations over the past year.

Major emergencies can happen at any time. I urge Auckland Council to continue to improve its emergency preparedness through sustained focus on the Group Plan and by actively engaging with Auckland's diverse communities.

I thank Auckland Council staff, particularly those in Auckland Emergency Management, for their time and co-operation in providing us with documents and making themselves available for interviews.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Andrew McConnell', written in a cursive style.

Andrew McConnell
Deputy Controller and Auditor-General

19 September 2024

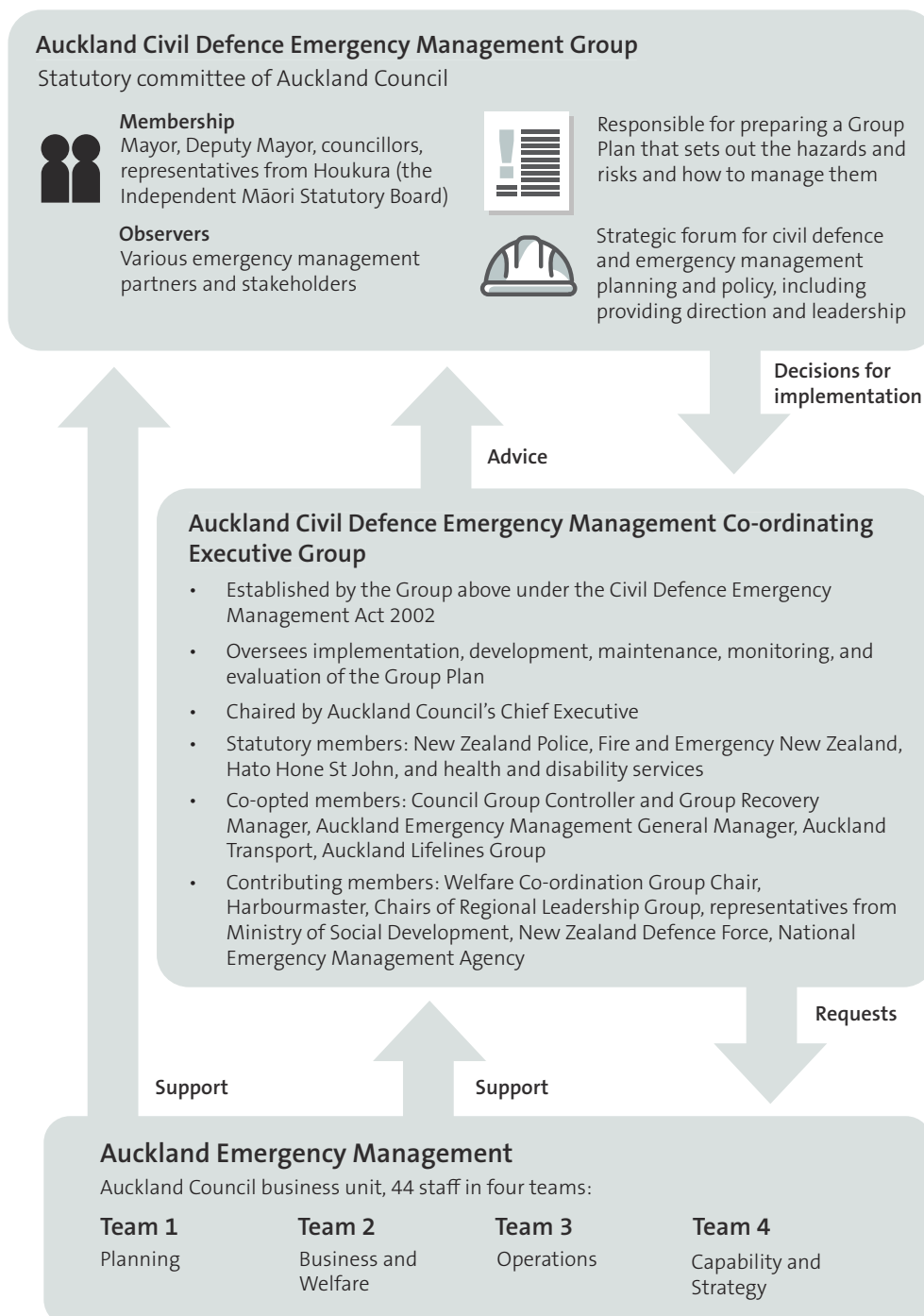
Introduction

- 1.1 As our largest city, and home to over a third of New Zealand's population, it is critical that Auckland is resilient and well prepared for major emergencies.
- 1.2 Auckland Council plays a central role in Auckland's emergency management and preparedness, working with regional stakeholders and communities.
- 1.3 Under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, local authorities are required to establish regional Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) groups to oversee emergency management arrangements. Auckland's CDEM Committee exercises the statutory functions and powers of a CDEM group and provides strategic leadership and direction over emergency management in Auckland.
- 1.4 Auckland's CDEM Committee consists of Auckland Council's Mayor, Deputy Mayor, elected members, and representatives from Houkura, the Independent Māori Statutory Board.⁷
- 1.5 The Co-ordinating Executive Group, which is chaired by the Chief Executive of Auckland Council, consists of members from Auckland Council and emergency services. It is responsible for advising Auckland's CDEM Committee, implementing the Committee's decisions, and overseeing the activities under the Civil Defence Emergency Management group plan.
- 1.6 Auckland Emergency Management is the part of Auckland Council that is responsible for co-ordinating all planning activities related to hazard and emergency management in the Auckland region, including the implementation of the group plan across the wider Council (see Figure 1).⁸

⁷ The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are ex-officio members of the CDEM Committee.

⁸ In July 2024 Auckland Emergency Management became part of Auckland Council's new Resilience and Infrastructure Directorate, along with teams responsible for building consents and planning, healthy waters, and flood resilience. The office overseeing the 2023 flood recovery also became part of the new directorate.

Figure 1
Auckland Civil Defence Emergency Management groups



Source: Adapted from Auckland Council (2024), *Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group Plan 2024 – 2029*, page 83, at aucklandemergencymanagement.org.nz.

The 2023 Auckland floods

- 1.7 In early 2023, the Auckland region experienced two severe storm and flooding events.
- 1.8 The first was the Auckland Anniversary weekend floods. These January 2023 floods caused extensive damage and disruption to property, infrastructure, transport, and other essential services across the Auckland and Waikato regions. Four people lost their lives in the floods.
- 1.9 In February 2023 the Auckland region was heavily affected by Cyclone Gabrielle, which caused widespread damage across the North Island and led to the death of 11 people, including two in Auckland.

There have been three recent reviews of Auckland Council's emergency management

- 1.10 Auckland Council commissioned two independent reviews into its response to the floods of January and February 2023.
- 1.11 In March 2023, Bush International Consulting completed a review into Auckland Council's response to the January floods (the Bush review). The Bush review found that Auckland Council's emergency management system was "not prepared" for an event of the "magnitude and speed" of the January floods.⁹
- 1.12 The Bush review made 17 recommendations aimed at improving Auckland Council's operating model and systems for responding to major emergencies.
- 1.13 In September 2023, Auckland Council released the findings of a further flood response review that it had commissioned from Toa Consulting (the Toa review).¹⁰ This review assessed Auckland Council's response to the January and February 2023 floods as well as to heavy rainfall that caused flooding in the Auckland region in May 2023.
- 1.14 The Toa review resulted in 28 recommendations that were aimed at improving Auckland Council's future responses to emergency events.¹¹
- 1.15 In June 2023, we published a report on Auckland Council's emergency preparedness. We did not examine the response to any specific events, but

9 Bush International Consulting (2023), *Auckland Flood Response Review: Independent, External Review of Events, January 27-29, 2023*, at ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

10 Toa Consulting (2023), *Auckland Severe Weather Events 2023*, in "Auckland Council Civil Defence and Emergency Management Committee: Open Attachments, 5 September 2023", at infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

11 Toa Consulting (2023), *Auckland Severe Weather Events 2023*, in "Auckland Council Civil Defence and Emergency Management Committee: Open Attachments, 5 September 2023", pages 10-11, at infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

wanted to understand the Council's overall capability.¹² Our report made six recommendations aimed at improving Auckland Council's planning, governance, and co-ordination of emergency preparedness activities.

Why we did this work

- 1.16 The purpose of this follow-up work was to see what progress Auckland Council has made in addressing the findings of the three reviews into its flood response and emergency preparedness.
- 1.17 We stated in our 2023 report on Auckland's emergency preparedness that we would follow up on our work after 12 months. We also committed to assessing Auckland Council's progress in responding to the recommendations of the Bush review.
- 1.18 In June 2024, we agreed with Auckland Council that we would also include in our review an assessment of Auckland Council's progress towards addressing the recommendations of the Toa review.
- 1.19 Together, the Bush review, the Toa review, and our previous report (the three reviews) made 51 recommendations for Auckland Council. For a complete list of the recommendations from the three reviews, see Appendix 1.

What we looked at

- 1.20 We wanted to know the extent to which Auckland Council had addressed the recommendations made in the three reviews into Auckland Council's flood response and emergency preparedness.
- 1.21 We wanted to answer two questions:
- Does Auckland Council have clear, realistic, and measurable plans in place to respond to the recommendations of the three reviews?
 - Is Auckland Council effectively implementing its plans to respond to the recommendations to the three reviews?
- 1.22 We spoke with staff and managers from Auckland Emergency Management and the wider Council. We also spoke to representatives of the Mayor's office, local boards, Auckland's CDEM Committee, the Co-ordinating Executive Group, and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).
- 1.23 We reviewed many internal documents provided to us by Auckland Council, as well as publicly available material.
- 1.24 We also viewed the recorded meetings of the CDEM Committee for 2023 and 2024.

¹² Controller and Auditor-General (2023), *Auckland Council: Preparedness for responding to an emergency*, at oag.parliament.nz. We did this work under Section 104 of the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009, which requires the Auditor-General to review the Council's service performance and that of its council-controlled organisations from time to time.

What we did not look at

- 1.25 This report focuses on Auckland Council’s response to the 51 recommendations of the three reviews. We did not seek to re-assess the effectiveness of Auckland Council’s emergency preparedness, planning, or response capabilities, or to provide an overall conclusion on Auckland Council’s preparedness for the next emergency response.
- 1.26 We did not look at work by other organisations with roles in responding to emergencies, such as emergency services or NEMA.
- 1.27 During 2023 and 2024, the local and central government response to the North Island weather events was the subject of several reviews, including the Government Inquiry into the Response to the North Island Severe Weather Events.¹³ The findings and recommendations of these other reviews did not form part of our work.

¹³ For a comprehensive list of previous inquiries and reviews, see New Zealand Government (2024), *Report of the Government Inquiry into the Response to the North Island Severe Weather Events*, page 9, at dia.govt.nz.

2

Auckland Council has plans to address all the recommendations

- 2.1 In this Part, we describe how Auckland Council has responded to the recommendations of the three reviews.
- 2.2 We expected Auckland Council to have clear, realistic, and measurable plans to respond to these recommendations. Where the Council did not have plans to respond to recommendations, we expected it to provide a clear rationale for this.
- 2.3 We also expected Auckland Council to publicly report on its progress in addressing recommendations, so that Aucklanders have a clear understanding of what has been done, and what remains to be done, to respond to the three reviews.
- 2.4 We found that Auckland Council’s work programme, including planned work for 2024 to 2029, covers the broad content and intent of the recommendations. If the programme is effectively implemented, we consider all 51 review recommendations will have been addressed.

Auckland Council has accepted and plans to address the recommendations of all three reviews

- 2.5 Auckland Council told us it has accepted the findings of the three reviews and put plans in place to implement them. These plans are the April 2023 “Prioritised Plan of actions for the Auckland Emergency Management function” (the Prioritised Plan) and the March 2024 *Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group Plan 2024 – 2029* (the Group Plan).¹⁴

The Prioritised Plan

- 2.6 After the Bush review was completed, Auckland Council commissioned MartinJenkins, a consultancy company, to prepare a plan of actions to address the 17 Bush review recommendations.
- 2.7 The purpose of the Prioritised Plan was to identify the most immediate and urgent actions, based on the findings and recommendations of the Bush review, that were within Auckland Council’s control to implement.¹⁵ It also identified some actions that would require a longer timeframe to achieve, or were ongoing. Auckland’s CDEM Committee approved the Prioritised Plan on 26 April 2023.
- 2.8 The Prioritised Plan has 29 actions, which became the focus of Auckland Emergency Management’s work programme for 2023/24. During this time,

¹⁴ The Prioritised Plan is accessible through papers to CDEM Committee meetings on the Auckland Council website. See “Auckland Council Civil Defence and Emergency Management Committee: Open Attachments, 26 April 2023”, at infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz. The Group Plan can be accessed through the “Governance, Strategies and Plans” section of Auckland Emergency Management’s website, at aucklandemergencymanagement.org.nz.

¹⁵ It also drew on the findings of a March 2023 “rapid review” initiated by Auckland Emergency Management, which identified a number of urgent actions.

Auckland Emergency Management provided the CDEM Committee with regular updates on its progress in implementing the plan.

The Group Plan

- 2.9 CDEM groups are required to prepare a group plan to set the strategic direction for emergency management activities in their region. CDEM groups must review their group plan after five years. However, at the time of writing our 2023 report, the Auckland CDEM Committee's previous group plan, dating from 2016, had not yet been reviewed or updated.¹⁶
- 2.10 The first action for Auckland Council under the Prioritised Plan was to consider accelerating the timeline for the development, consultation, and approval of a new group plan for Auckland. Under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, CDEM Groups preparing a group plan must allow at least a month for public consultation and seek comment from the Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery. In April 2023, the CDEM Committee voted to condense the planned timeframe for public consultation on the draft plan from three months to the legislative minimum of one month.
- 2.11 The draft group plan was publicly notified and made available for consultation from 31 July to 31 August 2023.¹⁷ A detailed consultation document containing submissions and feedback received is publicly available on Auckland Council's website.¹⁸ In October 2023, Auckland Emergency Management presented the CDEM Committee with a summary of the feedback and how it had been addressed.
- 2.12 The CDEM Committee adopted the Auckland CDEM Group Plan for 2024-2029 in March 2024.

16 The updating of the previous plan was in part delayed due to Auckland Council awaiting the outcome of a national-level regulatory work programme to develop a new Emergency Management Act. See Controller and Auditor-General (2023), *Auckland Council: Preparedness for responding to an emergency*, page 4, at oag.parliament.nz.

17 The consultation process included seeking specific feedback from Māori and iwi organisations and a forum of Auckland Council's demographic advisory panels. Feedback was also sought from Auckland Council's rural advisory panel.

18 See "Auckland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan" at akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

- 2.13 The 2024 Group Plan is a comprehensive 119-page document that contains information on Auckland’s diverse populations, the city’s natural, built, and economic environments, and risks and hazards. It sets out Auckland Council’s strategic direction for emergency preparedness activities in Auckland across the four “R”s of emergency management (risk reduction, readiness, response, and recovery).
- 2.14 The Group Plan also sets out 33 actions, along with associated outputs and outcomes and their assigned leads within Auckland Council, which will form the basis of the Council’s emergency management work programme over the next five years.¹⁹
- 2.15 Although separate from the Prioritised Plan, the Group Plan contains many actions that are aligned to or are a continuation of earlier Prioritised Plan actions.
- 2.16 For example, an action under the Prioritised Plan was for Auckland Council to appoint a specialist lifelines advisor to act as Council’s liaison with and advisor to lifeline utility providers. A connected action under the Group Plan is to work with lifeline utility providers to prepare a shared work programme to identify and address vulnerabilities in Auckland’s lifelines infrastructure.²⁰
- 2.17 Auckland Council told us that, together, the actions in the Prioritised Plan and the Group Plan are intended to address in full the 51 recommendations of the three reviews.
- 2.18 Appendix 2 sets out a full list of Prioritised Plan and Group Plan actions.

Auckland Council’s work programme reflects the intent and content of the three reviews

- 2.19 We wanted to know whether the actions in the Prioritised Plan and Group Plan align with and will address the 51 recommendations of the three reviews.
- 2.20 Auckland Council provided us with evidence of how it mapped the recommendations of the three reviews to the 33 actions in the Group Plan. An appendix to the Prioritised Plan describes how the 17 recommendations from the Bush review align with the 29 actions in the Prioritised Plan.

19 These priorities are set out in eight action plans: Mana whenua and mataawaka partnership, Risk reduction, Operational readiness, Community readiness, Response, Recovery, Management and governance, and Monitoring and evaluation.

20 Lifeline utilities provide infrastructure services to the community, such as water, wastewater, transport, energy, and telecommunications. Examples of lifeline utilities include suppliers or distributors of water, electricity generators, and road and rail network providers. For more information, see alg.org.nz. See also the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 for a more complete description of lifeline utilities.

- 2.21 We carried out our own analysis to establish whether the Prioritised Plan and Group Plan fully and accurately cover the intent and content of the recommendations of the three reviews (see Appendix 2).
- 2.22 We were satisfied that Auckland Council's work programme, as reflected in the Prioritised Plan and Group Plan, fully and accurately reflects the content and intent of the Auckland reviews, with the exception detailed below.

One recommendation from our 2023 report was not included in Auckland Council's planning

- 2.23 Our 2023 report recommended that Auckland Council "keep the public regularly and well informed about its progress with emergency preparedness activities and implementing recommendations from recent reviews".
- 2.24 Auckland Council initially said that it did not consider further action was required to address this recommendation because it already kept the public informed of its progress through CDEM Committee reports.
- 2.25 When we shared our draft findings with Auckland Council we indicated that we did not consider publishing CDEM committee minutes and papers on the Auckland Council website to be adequate, by itself, to keep the public informed.
- 2.26 Since then, Auckland Council has told us that it intends to share information on its progress and keep Aucklanders better informed of the work it is doing through a refreshed Auckland Emergency Management website, which is due to go live in October 2024. The Council said the new website will include easily accessible and understandable information on emergency management governance. We support this intention, and consider that once the website is available our 2023 report recommendation will have been addressed. We discuss this further in Part 4.

3

What has Auckland Council achieved so far?

- 3.1 In this Part, we discuss Auckland Council's progress to date in addressing the recommendations of the three reviews, as reflected in the Prioritised Plan. In Part 4, we discuss Auckland Council's planning to achieve the overall objectives of the Group Plan.
- 3.2 We expected to see that Auckland Council had effectively addressed the recommendations and, where it had not yet addressed recommendations, it had clear, measurable, and realistic plans in place to do so.
- 3.3 We found that Auckland Council has made significant progress in implementing Prioritised Plan actions over the past year. However, there is more work to do to fully implement, embed, and test the changes made in response to the three reviews.
- 3.4 Although our focus was on Auckland Council's progress on the Prioritised Plan, we consider that in total 38 of the 51 recommendations have been fully addressed.

Auckland Council has made significant progress in implementing the Prioritised Plan

- 3.5 Auckland Council has made significant progress in implementing Prioritised Plan actions to address the recommendations from the three reviews. We summarise Auckland Council's achievements in improving its emergency preparedness below.

Auckland Council has finalised a new Group Plan for 2024-2029

- 3.6 A recommendation of the Bush review (and later our report) was for Auckland Council to urgently finalise a new group plan for emergency management.
- 3.7 During 2023, Auckland Council acted with urgency to finalise its draft group plan, within the legislative requirements of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. The final group plan was approved by the Auckland CDEM Committee in March 2024 and published on Auckland Emergency Management's website.

Auckland Council has revised its emergency response structure and increased its resourcing

- 3.8 The Bush review recommended that Auckland Council review and update its emergency response structure, which is based on the Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) framework.
- 3.9 CIMS is New Zealand's official framework for co-ordinating emergency responses at the local, regional, and national levels.²¹ Under the CIMS framework, there are

²¹ See New Zealand Government (2019), *Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS): Third Edition*, at civildefence.govt.nz.

prescribed functions that set out the range of activities that need to be carried out in an emergency response.²²

- 3.10 Although the CIMS framework was in place at Auckland Council at the time of the 2023 floods, the Bush review found that the emergency response lacked structure and the CIMS framework was not consistently followed.²³
- 3.11 Since the 2023 floods, Auckland Council's emergency response structure and CIMS functions have been clearly documented, including in the Group Plan.
- 3.12 Auckland Council has also invested in training and exercising so that staff understand how to apply the CIMS framework in a response.
- 3.13 During the 2023 floods, Auckland Council relied heavily on a pool of wider Council staff to fill CIMS functions. The Bush and Toa reviews found that staffing levels in Auckland Council's emergency response were inadequate to cope with an event of the scale of the 2023 floods, and some CIMS functions were under-resourced and lacked capability.
- 3.14 Since the floods, Auckland Council has increased its resourcing for specialised staff and managers associated with CIMS functions in an emergency response.²⁴ As of July 2024, Auckland Emergency Management had a total permanent staffing allocation of 44 people (an increase of almost 30% from January 2024).
- 3.15 When not required for an emergency response, these staff play a role in Auckland Emergency Management's ongoing work to increase Auckland Council's emergency preparedness within their specialist areas.
- 3.16 Auckland Council has also invested in a programme of work to recruit and train wider Council support staff in the basics of emergency management, to increase the pool of staff Auckland Emergency Management can call on in a response.

Information for staff on what to do in an emergency response is now clearly documented

- 3.17 The Bush and Toa reviews found that some staff involved in the emergency response to the 2023 floods lacked a clear understanding of what to do. Roles and decision-making criteria had not been documented.

22 The functions are control, safety, intelligence, planning, operations, logistics, public information management, and welfare and recovery. The Group Controller (or the "alternate" for their role) is responsible for directing the overall response.

23 This was also a finding of an earlier review by Rimu Road Consulting Limited, *Review of the response to the Auckland storm of 10 April 2018*. See "Independent review of April storm response to be received by committee" at ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

24 This has included appointing new roles specialising in public information management, welfare, exercises and scenario planning, and community readiness.

- 3.18 An important piece of work for Auckland Emergency Management in 2023 was to write detailed guidance for staff involved in an emergency response. This guidance included standard operating procedures for core processes and CIMS functions and clear decision-making criteria for incident escalation based on scale and severity.
- 3.19 Guidance for staff involved in an emergency response, including standard operating procedures, checklists, and templates, have been collated in manuals for duty teams and Incident Management Teams (IMT). The duty team manual applies until the point of “activation” (when an Emergency Control Centre is set up). From that point, the IMT handbook is used.
- 3.20 The duty manual and IMT handbook specify clear timeframes and instructions for review. The duty manual is reviewed every two years, and its standard operating procedures need to be reviewed every two years or after every activation of the Emergency Control Centre. The IMT handbook is reviewed every two years or after every activation.
- 3.21 Under the Group Plan, Auckland Council will continue to refine its guidance specific to each CIMS function to provide an easy reference for staff assigned to function desks in an emergency response.

Auckland Council has increased its emergency response communications capability

- 3.22 In the early response to the January 2023 floods, Auckland Council failed to communicate important information to the public and within the Council in a timely way. Poor communication between emergency response personnel and the Mayor’s office was a factor in delays to the decision to declare a state of local emergency in Auckland.
- 3.23 The Bush review identified a range of factors that contributed to the failure of communications during the January 2023 floods. These included a lack of planning for response communications and the under-resourcing of the CIMS public information management function.
- 3.24 The person filling the public information management function is responsible for co-ordinating consistent, accurate, and timely communications through a range of channels. This includes ensuring that the Mayor is fully briefed.
- 3.25 Since the 2023 floods, Auckland Emergency Management has employed a senior communications specialist and a senior digital content specialist. This means there are now dedicated Auckland Emergency Management communications staff to assist Auckland Council’s wider corporate communications team in carrying out the public information management function in an emergency response.

- 3.26 Outside of an emergency response, the roles of the senior communications specialist and senior digital content specialist include developing and implementing Auckland Emergency Management’s communications and public awareness strategies.
- 3.27 This will involve a new emergency preparedness website and social media platforms, due for launch in October 2024, to improve Auckland Emergency Management’s ability to keep the public informed before, during, and after an emergency event.

Auckland Council has prepared guidance for the Mayor and elected members on their roles and responsibilities in an emergency response

- 3.28 The Mayor and elected members have an important role during an emergency response. Under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, the Mayor has a specific legislated role in declaring a state of local emergency, on the advice of the Group Controller.²⁵ In addition, the Mayor has an important role in reassuring the community as the “public face” of Auckland Council.
- 3.29 The Bush review found that the Mayor had not been fully briefed on his emergency management roles and responsibilities before the 2023 floods, and had not met key emergency response personnel. Both the Bush and Toa reviews also identified a general need to support elected members to understand their roles and responsibilities in an emergency response.
- 3.30 In 2023, Auckland Emergency Management developed guides for the Mayor and for elected members on their roles and responsibilities during an emergency response.
- 3.31 The Mayor’s guide includes a clear description of the Mayor’s roles and responsibilities during an emergency, and clearly documents the processes for communications between the Mayor’s office, response personnel, elected members, and other stakeholders. The Mayor’s guide also contains a standard operating procedure and templates for declaring a local state of emergency.
- 3.32 The elected members’ guide includes information on the role of elected members across the four “R”s of emergency management, how elected members can stay informed in an emergency, and guidance on communicating with the public.
- 3.33 We were told the current Mayor and Deputy Mayor have received a full briefing based on these guides, and that emergency management will form part of the induction packages for future Mayors to ensure that they are well briefed before an emergency happens. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor have also received emergency-specific media training.

25 A declaration of a local emergency gives a CDEM Group special powers to respond.

Auckland Council has increased emergency management training for its staff

- 3.34 The Bush and Toa reviews both highlighted the need for more emergency management training in Auckland Emergency Management and the wider Council. This included more specialised controller and crisis leadership training for the Group Controller and their “alternates” (the pool of senior managers who can carry out the Group Controller role).
- 3.35 In 2023, Auckland Emergency Management carried out a comprehensive learning needs assessment for all its staff. This informed the development of a capability plan for Auckland Emergency Management staff, emergency response support staff across the Council (known as Auckland Council Emergency Staff), and the Group Controller and their alternates.
- 3.36 Auckland Emergency Management training records show that most staff with emergency response roles have completed foundational emergency management training. The Group Controller and their alternates have met all core CDEM Group Controller training requirements, including crisis leadership training.
- 3.37 Auckland Council has also expanded the availability of emergency management training to staff in the wider Council. In April 2024, Auckland Emergency Management launched an online learning module about emergency response and recovery. All permanent new Council staff are now required to take this module.

There is now a regular exercise programme to improve emergency preparedness

- 3.38 All three reviews recommended that Auckland Council implement a regular schedule of exercising, including exercises involving other organisations, to give emergency management staff the opportunity to test and refine their skills outside of a major emergency response.
- 3.39 In 2023, Auckland Emergency Management hired a dedicated senior staff member to lead regular exercises.
- 3.40 In October 2023, Auckland Emergency Management organised a major exercise, based on the scenario of a tsunami event, to ensure that response staff were familiar with processes and procedures for tsunami alerts and how to set up and operate the Emergency Control Centre. The exercise involved Auckland Emergency Management staff, Auckland Council Emergency Staff, and representatives from external organisations.

- 3.41 In March 2024, new members of the Auckland Emergency Management duty team took part in an exercise based on a severe weather event (tornado) scenario. Auckland Emergency Management staff also participated in Rū Whenua, the 2024 national emergency management exercise organised by NEMA.
- 3.42 Auckland Council provided us copies of a report on the October 2023 tsunami exercise, including a summary of feedback and suggestions for improvement, as well as a copy of an “exercise lessons learned” tracker.
- 3.43 We also viewed a copy of Auckland Emergency Management’s 2024 exercising calendar. This calendar, together with Auckland Emergency Management’s 2024/25 work programme and the Group Plan, provide evidence of Auckland Council’s plans to implement an ongoing schedule of regular exercises from 2024 to 2029.²⁶ These exercises will involve the wider Council, the Mayor’s office, and other organisations.

Auckland Council has invested in information technology to improve its situational awareness and information-sharing in an emergency

- 3.44 The Bush and Toa reviews found that Auckland Emergency Management’s situational awareness was poor, particularly during the January floods. Emergency response staff lacked the tools to rapidly pull together and analyse information from multiple sources. As a result, the Council was slow to realise the scale and severity of the flooding, which impeded its decision-making and communications.
- 3.45 The Bush and Toa reviews recommended that Auckland Council invest in information technology to improve its situational awareness and information-sharing in an emergency response.
- 3.46 In 2024, Auckland Emergency Management acquired D4H, a specialised emergency management software system that is designed to rapidly collate a wide range of information sources. D4H is used by CDEM Groups across New Zealand.

²⁶ This will include monthly duty team exercises, twice-yearly exercises involving Auckland Emergency Management, wider Council staff, and the Mayor, and annual exercises involving the CDEM Group and external organisations.

- 3.47 Auckland Emergency Management has also acquired:
- geographical information software, ArcGIS Online, to improve Auckland Emergency Management's ability to map emergency events as they unfold; and
 - the Survey123 platform, which allows external organisations to input and access needs assessment data to ensure that a welfare response in an emergency is based on up-to-date and accurate information.
- 3.48 Auckland Emergency Management told us that D4H, ArcGIS Online, and Survey123 are now available for use in an emergency response. Once Auckland Council has finalised privacy protocols for these systems, Auckland Emergency Management will also have access to them for non-emergency activities such as readiness and risk reduction. Auckland Council told us that this work is close to completion.

Auckland Council is working to collect data on Auckland-wide Civil Defence Centres

- 3.49 During the 2023 floods, the opening of Civil Defence Centres to support people displaced from their homes was delayed due to lack of information on the status and accessibility of Civil Defence Centres. Few people involved in the running of Civil Defence Centres and community emergency hubs had received any prior training.
- 3.50 The Bush and Toa reviews recommended that Auckland Council prepare a database of Civil Defence Centres across Auckland that can be immediately activated in an emergency and includes information about accessibility and supplies. We viewed a copy of a draft database showing information and contact details for about 90 Civil Defence Centres and community emergency hubs across Auckland.
- 3.51 Once finalised, Auckland Council will make this information publicly accessible through an interactive map on Auckland Emergency Management's website so Aucklanders can access up-to-date information on the location of Civil Defence Centres and whether they are open or closed.

Auckland Emergency Management is working with local boards to improve community readiness for an emergency

- 3.52 The Bush and Toa reviews found that many local boards were unprepared to support their communities in the 2023 floods, and that Auckland Council's 21 local boards were not used effectively as a conduit of information to and from local communities.

- 3.53 In 2023, Auckland Council significantly increased Auckland Emergency Management’s community engagement capacity by establishing seven new senior community planning and readiness advisors.
- 3.54 These advisors work with local communities and local boards to educate and support them to become better prepared in an emergency, as well as liaising between local boards and Auckland Emergency Management. They have been working closely with newly appointed emergency management leads from each of the local boards to help them prepare readiness and response plans.
- 3.55 The purpose of the local board readiness and response plans is to provide local boards and the public with a source of easily accessible information on what to do in an emergency and emergency preparedness more generally. These plans will be tailored to each local board area. Auckland Emergency Management provided us with a copy of its schedule of workshops for local boards to develop and adopt their plans.
- 3.56 Auckland Emergency Management has also created a forum for local board members to ask questions, receive advice and training, and share their experience with other local boards.
- 3.57 Local board members we spoke to were positive about the work of Auckland Emergency Management’s advisors. They also valued having a dedicated contact (their senior community planning and readiness advisor) who they can go to for all emergency management matters.
- 3.58 Auckland Emergency Management expects to complete its work to support Auckland’s 21 local boards to develop their own readiness and response plans by the end of 2024. Auckland Council told us that it is committed to building enduring relationships with local boards, and this will continue after local board readiness and response plans are complete.

The Prioritised Plan actions are nearly complete

- 3.59 Auckland Emergency Management reported to the CDEM Committee in its June 2024 meeting that 25 of the 29 Prioritised Plan actions were complete.
- 3.60 The four remaining actions were:
- “Contingency planning focused on high priority hazards” (Prioritised Plan action 3);
 - “Review Welfare function Standard Operating Procedures to incorporate findings of response reviews and debriefing programme” (Prioritised Plan action 10);

- “Work with local boards to identify and ready optimal locations for Civil Defence Centres” (Prioritised Plan action 19); and
- “Expand work to support marae with resilience strategies” (Prioritised Plan action 20).

- 3.61 Since June 2024, Auckland Council has also completed Prioritised Plan action 10. The Council has finalised a comprehensive guide for welfare functions, such as how to carry out needs assessments and how to set up and run Civil Defence Centres.
- 3.62 Auckland Council told us it intends to complete the remaining Prioritised Plan actions as part of its 2024/25 work programme. For example, the Council’s work with local boards to identify locations for Civil Defence Centres is due to be completed in 2024.
- 3.63 Action 27 of the Prioritised Plan (which states that the Council will refresh its public website to improve its communications) also remains unfinished at the time of writing this report. However, Auckland Council told us that a new Auckland Emergency Management website and social media platforms are scheduled for launch in October 2024 (see paragraph 2.26).
- 3.64 We note that there is strong alignment between many Prioritised Plan actions and the actions in the Group Plan, showing Auckland Council’s continuing commitment to addressing review recommendations. For example, the Council has completed a Prioritised Plan action to provide emergency management training to staff, and ongoing delivery and enhancement of staff training will be a continuing action under the Group Plan.

Most review recommendations have been addressed

- 3.65 Our analysis of the Prioritised Plan and Group Plan progress to date indicates that 38 recommendations have been fully addressed, and that Auckland Council has started work to address most of the remaining 13 review recommendations (see Figure 2).
- 3.66 Appendix 1 sets out our assessment of Auckland Council’s progress against each of the 51 review recommendations.

Figure 2
Status of the 51 recommendations in the three reviews, as at September 2024

Addressed	Work has started	Yet to start	Recommendations expected to be addressed through Auckland Emergency Management's work programme for 2024/25
38	11	2	11

- 3.67 Auckland Council provided us with planning documents indicating that work to address 11 of the remaining recommendations will be complete by mid-2025 (the end of the first year of the time period covered by the Group Plan).

Addressing the remaining recommendations will require ongoing focus and investment under the Group Plan

- 3.68 We consider that all 51 recommendations will be addressed by the work set out in the Prioritised and Group Plans and Auckland Emergency Management's 2024/25 work programme.
- 3.69 Many Prioritised Plan actions, although complete, are also aligned to ongoing work in the Group Plan.
- 3.70 For example, a Prioritised Plan action to prepare a stakeholder management framework is now complete, but the more difficult and time-consuming task of building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders remains a work in progress under the Group Plan.
- 3.71 Similarly, some review recommendations relate to actions that are ongoing and will require sustained investment and prioritisation by Auckland Council to continue to be met.
- 3.72 Auckland Council made significant progress in completing Prioritised Plan actions in the year after the 2023 floods. However, considerable work remains to address the recommendations of the three reviews through the Group Plan for 2024 to 2029.

4

There is still work for Auckland Council to do

- 4.1 In this Part, we discuss Auckland Council's planned work to address the recommendations from the three reviews under the Group Plan for 2024 to 2029.
- 4.2 We acknowledge that Auckland Council is in the early stages of implementing the 33 actions of the Group Plan. We did not expect Auckland Council to have completed all these planned actions.
- 4.3 We did expect Auckland Council to:
 - have clear and specific plans in place for addressing review recommendations through Group Plan actions;
 - ensure that there were adequate and effective governance arrangements to monitor Group Plan actions; and
 - report to the public on its progress in implementing the Group Plan in a clear and accessible way.
- 4.4 The Group Plan sets out a range of actions that Auckland Council will focus on from 2024 to 2029, including actions to address the recommendations of the three reviews.
- 4.5 Auckland Council provided us with documents indicating that work to address 38 of the 51 recommendations is already complete. A further 11 of the 13 remaining recommendations will be addressed by mid-2025 (the end of the first year of the Group Plan).
- 4.6 However, the Group Plan includes several additional priorities, and more detailed planning is needed so that Auckland Council can achieve those actions within the Group Plan's five-year timeframe.
- 4.7 The governance of the Group Plan also needs strengthening. The Council needs to ensure that governors receive regular reports on the Group Plan's progress and risks to enable effective oversight.
- 4.8 Given the extended timeframes involved in the implementation of Group Plan actions (and associated recommendations), it is important that Auckland Council provide the public with regular updates on its progress.

The Group Plan sets out Auckland Council's strategic direction for emergency preparedness for the next five years

- 4.9 Auckland Council's work to address the recommendations of the three reviews builds on the work completed under the Prioritised Plan and will continue to 2029 under the Group Plan.
- 4.10 The Group Plan sets out Auckland Council's planned emergency management activities and actions across the four "R"s of risk reduction, response, recovery, and readiness, and covers areas that were not the subject of review recommendations (which primarily focused on readiness and response).
- 4.11 Some of the recommendations and associated Group Plan actions will also require ongoing work beyond the term of the Group Plan, such as those relating to the need for Auckland Emergency Management to engage with Māori and other communities.
- 4.12 We encourage Auckland Council to consider the following matters as it continues its implementation of the Group Plan.

Detailed implementation planning is needed to achieve the Group Plan's overall objectives

- 4.13 Our 2023 report found that the previous group plan approved by the Auckland CDEM Committee in 2016 was too ambitious and Auckland Council had made insufficient progress in implementing it. At the time of writing our 2023 report, most of the 80 actions in the 2016 Group Plan remained incomplete.
- 4.14 The 2024 Group Plan is a strategic document setting out Auckland Council's strategic framework for emergency management, and sets out the 33 actions, objectives, and results that the Council intends to achieve over the next five years. We consider the 2024 Group Plan to be more realistic in its aims than the 2016 Group Plan.
- 4.15 However, the Group Plan is high-level and is not an implementation plan. More detailed work programme planning will be needed to set out the steps that the Council will take to progress actions, achieve the Group Plan's overall objectives, and show how progress will be tracked and measured.

We saw evidence of detailed planning to progress and complete Group Plan actions over the next year

- 4.16 Auckland Council provided us with evidence of its planning to implement the Group Plan, including its 2024/25 work programme and a Group Plan 2024-2029 tracker.
- 4.17 The Group Plan 2024-2029 tracker includes all the Group Plan's actions, including information such as their status, expected completion year, and success measures.
- 4.18 The tracker provides evidence of thorough planning for Auckland Council's emergency management work programme for 2024/25, including what it aims to achieve and how it will monitor and track progress. Similarly, the work programme includes detailed information on Auckland Emergency Management's work for the next year.
- 4.19 However, beyond the current financial year, planning documents provide little detail about how the Group Plan's actions will be implemented and tracked. Given the long-term nature of the Group Plan, it is critical that detailed measures and milestones are in place to keep up momentum and remain on target.
- 4.20 Auckland Council's long-term work programme for the Group Plan remains a work in progress. At the time of writing, implementation planning beyond 2024/25 did not have enough detail to demonstrate how the actions will be progressed and measured or how they will contribute to the Group Plan's objectives.
- 4.21 Auckland Emergency Management told us that it will prioritise refining its long-term implementation planning in the coming months.

The Group Plan relies on the active participation of the wider Auckland Council, agency partners, and communities

Ongoing work is required to increase knowledge of and commitment to the Group Plan across the wider Council

- 4.22 Successfully implementing the Group Plan over the next few years will rely not only on Auckland Emergency Management, but also on the combined work of the wider Auckland Council.
- 4.23 We saw that the Group Plan is well understood and is the guiding document for Auckland Emergency Management staff. The Group Plan is less of a focus for other Council teams, who have competing priorities.

- 4.24 Auckland Emergency Management staff we spoke to acknowledge that there is more to do to increase the profile of emergency management and the Group Plan across Auckland Council. This work to further embed the Group Plan will also be a priority for Auckland Emergency Management over the coming months.
- 4.25 Recent changes at Auckland Council were seen by staff we spoke to as a positive step in improving relationships between Auckland Emergency Management and the wider Council. These changes include a 2024 restructure (so that Auckland Emergency Management is now in the same directorate as other Council teams responsible for leading Group Plan actions) and the physical move of Auckland Emergency Management to the main Auckland Council building.
- 4.26 The introduction of an emergency management learning module as part of new Council staff inductions should also help increase awareness and ownership of emergency management across the wider Council. An “Introduction to Emergency Management” session for the Auckland Council senior executive team is also planned for late 2024.
- 4.27 Similarly, an action for Auckland Emergency Management under the Group Plan to recruit and train Auckland Council Emergency Staff should help to build knowledge of the Council’s emergency management responsibilities.
- 4.28 We heard positive examples of Auckland Emergency Management working closely with other Auckland Council teams. For example, we were told that Auckland Emergency Management’s communications team had a close working relationship with the Council’s corporate communications team. This will be critical to increasing the capability of wider Council communications staff to respond to the next emergency.
- 4.29 We also heard that iwi/Māori liaison staff in Auckland Emergency Management work closely with Ngā Mātārae, Auckland Council’s Māori outcomes team. This relationship enables Auckland Emergency Management to benefit from the team’s connections with Auckland marae. Auckland Emergency Management and Ngā Mātārae have jointly organised emergency preparedness events with Auckland’s Te Kotahi a Tāmaki Marae collective, such as a 2023 emergency preparedness wānanga for marae.
- 4.30 We encourage Auckland Emergency Management and the wider Council to continue exploring opportunities to connect and collaborate over shared work programmes and priorities and to further embed the Group Plan across Auckland Council.

Effective relationships with communities and stakeholders will be essential to successfully implementing the Group Plan

- 4.31 As we found in our 2023 report, ensuring that Auckland is resilient and well prepared to respond to the emergencies will rely on the effectiveness of Auckland Council's relationships with a wide range of organisations and communities.
- 4.32 Auckland Council's intention is that, once the Group Plan is complete, "Auckland's diverse communities [will] have increased levels of preparedness for an emergency".²⁷
- 4.33 Although everybody in Auckland has a role in preparing for an emergency, Auckland Council plays a central role in supporting residents and communities who need additional help to be prepared.
- 4.34 We note that much of the work currently identified under the Group Plan to improve community resilience prioritises communities that are engaged with their local boards or already have the capability and resources to organise community emergency hubs.
- 4.35 As Auckland Council continues its detailed implementation planning for the Group Plan, we urge the Council to continue to consider and prioritise the needs of communities that might be less well connected or resourced to respond to emergencies.
- 4.36 For example, South Auckland communities told the Government's 2024 inquiry into the North Island severe weather events that they did not know what to do or where to seek help, and that local evacuation and information centres were not responsive to their language, cultural, or faith-based needs.²⁸
- 4.37 The Group Plan recognises the importance of multi-agency groups for "planning, communication, awareness, and relationship-building" at a regional level.²⁹
- 4.38 There are several groups in the Auckland region that co-ordinate multi-agency emergency preparedness work. These include the Auckland Welfare Coordination Group and the Auckland Lifelines Group.
- 4.39 The Auckland Welfare Coordination Group is led by Auckland Council and made up of major welfare organisations. Its responsibilities include planning for and responding to welfare needs in an emergency. The Auckland Lifelines Group is a collaboration between lifeline organisations in the Auckland region and aims to

27 Auckland Council (2024), *Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group Plan 2024-2029*, page 57, at aucklandemergencymanagement.org.nz.

28 New Zealand Government (2024), *Report of the Government Inquiry into the Response to the North Island Severe Weather Events*, page 35, at dia.govt.nz.

29 Auckland Council (2024), *Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group Plan 2024-2029*, page 45, at aucklandemergencymanagement.org.nz.

improve the resilience of lifeline utilities. Auckland Council is a member of the Auckland Lifelines Group. The Auckland Lifelines Group is also represented in the Co-ordinating Executive Group.

- 4.40 The Auckland Welfare Coordination Group has confirmed its membership and shared work programme for 2024/25, which will include review of a new Welfare Plan for Auckland. In August 2024, the Auckland Lifelines Group approved its work programme for 2024 to 2027.
- 4.41 We encourage Auckland Council to continue investing in these cross-agency forums to help strengthen its relationships with other emergency management organisations.

Auckland Council needs to improve its governance and monitoring of Auckland Emergency Management

- 4.42 Auckland's CDEM Committee is responsible for the overall strategic direction and oversight of emergency management in Auckland through the Group Plan.
- 4.43 The Co-ordinating Executive Group is responsible for advising the CDEM Committee, implementing its directions, and monitoring the progress of the Group Plan.
- 4.44 We assessed Auckland Council's governance arrangements for the Group Plan using our guidance on the elements of good governance.³⁰ We saw some of these elements in place in the CDEM Committee.
- 4.45 The CDEM Committee held regular quarterly meetings during 2023 and 2024, as well as six extraordinary meetings for urgent business.³¹
- 4.46 We heard and saw that CDEM Committee meetings generally have a positive and constructive tone. Committee members are engaged with the work programme and willing to ask questions and challenge the information they receive. People we spoke to also told us that governors have a high level of trust in Auckland Emergency Management's senior leadership team.
- 4.47 However, in our view, other aspects of Auckland Council's emergency management governance need strengthening to enable more effective oversight of the Group Plan.
- 4.48 As we commented in our guidance on good governance, governing bodies need to receive regular, focused, and relevant reporting on an organisation's performance to support quality decision-making and monitor performance.

³⁰ See the governance content in the "Good practice" section of our website, at oag.parliament.nz.

³¹ From 2020 to 2022, the CDEM Committee held all its scheduled quarterly meetings except for two meetings cancelled due to Covid-19 and lockdowns and one 2022 meeting cancelled due to staffing issues.

- 4.49 The Group Plan signals Auckland Emergency Management's intention to keep the CDEM Committee updated on its work programme and progress towards implementing the Group Plan.
- 4.50 Auckland Emergency Management intends to report to the CDEM Committee and the Co-ordinating Executive Group quarterly on its progress in implementing its annual work programme (based on the Group Plan) and annually on the status of the Group Plan as a whole.
- 4.51 In our view, this is the minimum level of reporting required to ensure that governors maintain good oversight of progress against addressing the remaining recommendations and the Group Plan more generally.
- 4.52 Governors also need to strike an appropriate balance between strategic focus and holding management to account, without straying into operational details.
- 4.53 Effective governance relies on ensuring that risks are well understood and factored into planning. Auckland Emergency Management intends to implement a risk register as part of its 2024/25 work programme. We strongly encourage this.
- 4.54 In our view, it is essential that Auckland Council ensures that governors are kept regularly informed on risks to the Group Plan as part of regular progress updates, so the governing body can put in place plans to minimise or mitigate these risks.

Resourcing remains a key risk for Auckland Emergency Management

- 4.55 Council staff we spoke to identified a range of risks related to the Council's ongoing resourcing for an emergency response and the successful delivery of the Group Plan, including:
- staff turnover;
 - new staff who have not yet been involved in an emergency response; and
 - funding over the term of the Group Plan.
- 4.56 In our 2023 report, we found that loss of relationships and institutional knowledge due to high staff turnover in Auckland Emergency Management was a contributing factor in Auckland Council's failure to achieve its 2016 Group Plan objectives.

- 4.57 We heard that staff turnover and the effects of duty shifts and response work on well-being remain a concern for Auckland Emergency Management. The risks associated with staff turnover are particularly high when important relationships or highly specialised knowledge are concentrated in one or a few roles.
- 4.58 Preparing a plan for staff well-being during an emergency response (a Toa review recommendation) is an ongoing action under the Group Plan.
- 4.59 Although Auckland Emergency Management's primary purpose is to respond to emergencies, we note that major emergency events and the diversion of staff to response and recovery efforts will inevitably lead to delayed progress on planned work activities.
- 4.60 People we spoke to agreed that the diversion of staff from their usual work into a major emergency response could delay the implementation of the Group Plan.
- 4.61 As we found in our report on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the demands of emergency response efforts can take staff away from their business-as-usual roles for months.³² Auckland Emergency Management told us that the response to another major event, the corrective actions required afterwards, and the demands of an immediate recovery could take staff away from their usual work for as long as six months.
- 4.62 However, Auckland Council told us that the experience gained during real emergency responses is the most valuable form of preparedness for future events. This is dependent on lessons being appropriately documented and integrated into business-as-usual activities.
- 4.63 Resourcing is a risk for any long-term work programme. The Group Plan states that the agreed annual work programmes to implement the 2024 Group Plan can be carried out using funding set under the Council's current long-term plan.³³
- 4.64 However, as noted above, at the time of writing there is insufficient work programme planning (such as the costs of identified actions) for us to verify whether all Group Plan activities are fully funded for the plan's duration.

32 Controller and Auditor-General (2022), *Co-ordination of the all-of-government response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020*, at oag.parliament.nz.

33 Auckland Council told us that annual funding increases of between \$2.92 and \$4.28 million have been provided for under the long-term plan. The Council told us that this amounted to an average 32.9% increase in funding.

Reporting to the public still needs to improve

- 4.65 Auckland Council's preparedness for major emergencies is important to all Aucklanders, and New Zealand as a whole.
- 4.66 An emergency could happen any day, so Aucklanders need to be kept informed on what Auckland Council has done to date to address the gaps in its emergency preparedness highlighted by the three reviews.
- 4.67 This is why a recommendation of our 2023 report was that Auckland Council keep the public regularly and well informed about its progress on emergency preparedness activities and addressing recommendations from recent reviews. Regular reporting is particularly important given the long-term nature of the Group Plan.
- 4.68 We welcome Auckland Council's intention to make accessible and understandable information about its progress publicly available through a new Auckland Emergency Management website and social media platforms from October 2024.

Appendix 1

Recommendations of the three reviews

This appendix sets out all 51 recommendations from the three reviews of Auckland Council – the Bush International Consulting review, published in March 2023, our report, published in June 2023, and the Toa Consulting review, published in August 2023.

Bush International Consulting review

Recommendation	Fully addressed	Work has started	Expected completion
1 That a separate review be undertaken to examine Auckland Emergency Management's (AEM) prevention, preparedness and planning, (also referred to as Reduction and Readiness) for an emergency in Tamaki Makaurau and that this review be undertaken with urgency (noting that the subject of this review was Response).	✓		
2 Finalise with urgency the current review of the Auckland Civil Defence and Emergency Management (ACDEM) Group Plan.	✓		
3 Include in the ACDEM Group Plan supporting plans for high priority hazards and events and detailed documentation of the Operating Model for emergency response.	✓		
4 As recommended in the 2018 Smol Review, the CDEM [Civil Defence Emergency Management] Committee should agree a common approach for use of the CIMS [Coordinated Incident Management System] system methodology as the basis for planning for response and implement each of the structured elements of the CIMS in any major response.	✓		
5 In the context of the CIMS, revise and promulgate new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for emergency response in Auckland, including specific SOPs for high priority hazards such as floods and superstorms.	✓		

* Rimu Road Consulting Limited. *Review of the response to the Auckland storm of 10 April 2018*. See "Independent review of April storm response to be received by committee" at our.auckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

Appendix 1
Recommendations of the three reviews

Recommendation	Fully addressed	Work has started	Expected completion
6 Guided by the CIMS, clarify and communicate the Auckland emergency management organisational structure including in particular the operational relationships between and respective accountabilities of the Group Controller, Deputy Controller, Director CDEM, General Manager Emergency Management, Director Governance, Chief Executive and the Mayor and Mayor's Chief of Staff. Reflect these in updated policies and instruments of delegation.	✓		
7 Ensure that AEM members, including the PIM [public information management] team, have the resource, training and capability to exercise their function relating to internal and external communications.	✓		
8 Establish a standard cadence for the CDEM Coordinating Executive Group (CEG) to provide reporting and advice to the Council's CDEM committee in regard to progress made on implementing its decisions and overseeing the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ACDEM Group Plan.	✓		
9 Deliver a more frequent schedule of emergency management exercises, based on the CIMS and including complex scenarios, with multiple partner agencies, including CCOs [council-controlled organisations] and lifeline utilities. Involve the Office of the Mayor in these training events.	✓		
10 Ensure all Auckland Council staff with dedicated emergency management accountabilities have expertise in and are qualified in both CIMS and crisis leadership protocols and principles.	✓		
11 Consider changing organisational arrangements and reporting lines for the GM EM position [General Manager Emergency Management] and its reports, including the establishment of additional, qualified full time emergency response experts, including experts in public information.	✓		
12 Develop a centralised approach to and system for intelligence capture and analysis, reflecting CIMS protocols, to ensure improved situational awareness in emergency response events.	✓		
13 Revise SOPs to ensure that, while emergency response can be run remotely if required, the default preference is for a physical Emergency Operations Centre to support coordinated command and response.	✓		
14 Ensure that the induction/onboarding process for a new Mayor and Mayoral Office staff includes advice and briefing materials on both the AEM system and how to inform, advise, and provide assurance during emergency response.	✓		

Recommendation	Fully addressed	Work has started	Expected completion
15 Review, update, test and better communicate the database of prequalified CDCs [Civil Defence Centres] and related logistics hubs and welfare arrangements. Ensure key partnering relationships, such as those with local marae and community providers, are explicit and proactively managed.	✓	✓	October 2024
16 Acquire or develop a common IT operating system for AEM and partner agencies to utilise during emergency response to facilitate sharing of intelligence and support improved real time communications and decision making.	✓		
17 Establish and actively manage strong connectivity with critical external stakeholders, as required under the CIMS framework, including mana whenua, Pasifika, community groups, infrastructure providers, and lifeline utilities.	✓		

Our report, Auckland Council: Preparedness for responding to an emergency

Recommendation	Fully addressed	Work has started	Expected completion
1 That Auckland Council complete its review and update of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan and its associated framework for action as soon as possible.	✓		
2 That Auckland Council prepare a strategy and plan to guide its community resilience work, including how it will work with local boards.	✓		
3 That Auckland Council strengthen governance oversight of its progress with key emergency preparedness matters, particularly its progress on implementing recommendations from recent reviews.	✓		
4 That Auckland Council include in its emergency management work programme enough emergency management readiness exercises, including exercises that involve working with other agencies, to properly test its response and recovery capabilities.	✓		
5 That Auckland Council develop a clear approach and appropriate processes to systematically evaluate responses to emergency events, record lessons, and implement improvements identified from responding to emergency events or from its emergency management readiness exercise programme.	✓		

Recommendation	Fully addressed	Work has started	Expected completion
6 That Auckland Council keep the public regularly and well informed about its progress with emergency preparedness activities and implementing recommendations from recent reviews.		✓	October 2024

Toa Consulting review

Recommendation	Fully addressed	Work has started	Expected completion
1 As per the recommendation in the Bush Review, ensure that the Group Controller is identified as required by legislation and that arrangements for the delivery of the Controller role and deputy Controllers in response are developed and communicated with GECC [Group Emergency Coordination Centre] personnel and CDEM Group partner agencies.	✓		
2 Foster opportunities in readiness for Controllers to develop and maintain closer working relationships with Governance and CDEM Group partners, in particular welfare and lifeline providers.	✓		
3 Establish the role of Group Recovery Manager in accordance with Sections 29 and 31 of the CDEM Act 2002 and ensure this role is activated from the initiation of a response. Ensure this function of CDEM is appropriately resourced in both readiness and response to manage the relationships, planning, transition process and any subsequent activities required of an event.	✓		
4 Support Auckland Governances' understanding of their role in emergencies and the statutory role and powers of the Group Controller through the development of response procedures and protocols and involvement in planning, training and exercising in readiness.		✓	November 2024

Recommendation	Fully addressed	Work has started	Expected completion
<p>5 Ensure that the layout of the future GECC facility considers the needs of large-scale events. This should include effective arrangements for accessibility and security and ensure connectivity and inter-dependencies between functions are maintained. This may include, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A standard operating procedure and suggested layout for the rapid expansion of the facility. • Additional resources are available to enable rapid expansion including information technology (IT), connectivity (telecommunications) and displays (both electronic and static e.g. whiteboards). • A system to access the facility by personnel outside of AEM/Auckland Council. • A range of communication methods and infrastructure, including hardwired and Wi-Fi connections and auxiliary methods, such as satellite and VHF radio. 	✓		
<p>6 Ensure that any CIMS structure implemented gives effect to the scale and complexity of responses within the region by considering the inter-dependencies of functions and the requirements of specific communities, organisations and CDEM Group partners. The response structure must consider the requirements of both local delivery and regional coordination and be resourced sufficiently across all functions and any identified additional sub-functions that may be needed.</p>			June 2025
<p>7 Recognise the scale of Auckland responses and staff turnover by developing short, digestible just-in-time training (such as videos) to support the induction process, including [health and safety] information, context about working in an emergency centre, cores [sic] processes within the GECC and the basics of working in each CIMS function.</p>		✓	June 2025
<p>8 Adequately resource a safety function that is able to operate across all aspects of the response. Embed safety considerations in all aspects of response planning and operations from the beginning of any event by pre-identify [sic] and developing required safety plans and arrangements.</p>	✓		
<p>9 Develop a Response Wellbeing Plan that addresses the needs of all response personnel.</p>			December 2025

Appendix 1
Recommendations of the three reviews

Recommendation	Fully addressed	Work has started	Expected completion
<p>10 Work with senior management within Auckland Council to identify personnel to support the operation of the GECC. When undertaking this work consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any conflicts with existing business continuity arrangements. • Employing an “opt-out” model for GECC staffing with the inclusion of CDEM response support requirements within the job descriptions of Auckland Council staff, rather than an “opt-in” volunteer model. • Making all identified staff within the ‘5-Deep’ list available to partake in the training and exercising required for the role they are allocated to. • Enabling redundancy for core GECC roles, such as the Controller, Response Manager and key CIMS functions. 	✓	✓	June 2025
<p>11 Undertake a Capability analysis for AEM, Auckland Council and agency/organisational partners to identify and prioritise the development of a CDEM Group work programme, training framework and an annual training and exercising plan.</p>	✓		
<p>12 Investigate options for a central incident response platform that enables the development of a common operating picture and allows the sharing of information between functions and supporting agencies. The system should also enable the management of resources and tracking of operational activities. This must be able to integrate with other systems utilised within the [C]ECC, including the Microsoft Office suite (Word, Excel, Outlook email), and systems utilised for the provision of welfare and Geospatial intelligence.</p>	✓		
<p>13 Establish a clear set of procedures to enable effective sharing of information between the GECC, CDCs, supporting agencies and communities. This should include the frequency of information sharing, templates for sharing information (status reports), key contacts, systems to be utilised for information sharing and standing information requirements for a range of events.</p>	✓		
<p>14 Develop a procedure, including templates, that covers the conducting of handovers, [Incident Management Team] meetings and briefings.</p>	✓		

Recommendation	Fully addressed	Work has started	Expected completion
15 Procure a standalone licence for ESRI/ArcGIS [geographical information systems] within the GECC to enable effective management of response data for the purposes of situational awareness, planning and decision-making. This should be accompanied by a clear set of procedures to ensure that data is available to all those who require it for response while being managed in accordance with any security and privacy requirements.	✓	✓	June 2025
16 Ensure the embedding of the planning process within all functions through the use of consistent processes and templates, as outlined in CIMS 3rd Edition, and role-specific training for planning personnel.	✓		
17 Work with Lifeline Utility providers to develop arrangements for the coordination of lifeline activities within the GECC and between providers.	✓		
18 Ensure that a plan for the use of volunteers within AEM is developed. In particular, focus should be placed on establishing coordination mechanisms between NZRT [New Zealand Response Teams], AEM and the emergency services. Work should also be conducted to pre-identify volunteer organisations within Auckland that may be able to assist in response.		✓	June 2025
19 Work with NEMA [the National Emergency Management Agency] to identify an effective solution for the deployment of resources from outside the region.		✓	June 2029
20 Develop a suite of plans and procedures in alignment with the National Plan and Guide and the Director's Guideline for Welfare services in an emergency that support the provision of welfare during response. These should include the conducting of welfare needs assessment, the operation of CDCs and emergency shelters, the provision of services (including household goods and services), and temporary accommodation, the sharing and management of welfare data and supporting community-led initiatives.	✓		
21 Implement a needs assessment collection and management solution that enables the timely management and delivery of welfare services to those in need. This should also ensure that all information collected, managed and accessed is in strict compliance with the requirements of the Privacy Act 2020.		✓	June 2025
22 Pre-identify CDCs and emergency shelters based on hazard exposure and likely community needs, including requirements for faith and culture. This process should include the likely resource requirements, including staffing, Police vetting requirements, physical resources to support setup and alternate means of communication.		✓	October 2024

Appendix 1
Recommendations of the three reviews

Recommendation	Fully addressed	Work has started	Expected completion
23 Investigate the placement of secondary communications channels in at-risk communities (e.g. VHF radio, Starlink, etc.) to enable redundant communication options during response.	✓		
24 Consider increasing the number of permanent roles within AEM to support the development of relationships with Māori/Iwi, CALD [culturally and linguistically diverse] and other significant communities within the region.	✓		
25 Work with Iwi leaders and organisations in readiness to foster close working relationships and explore arrangements or response options which could be integrated quickly into the AEM response.	✓		
26 Support the investigation of funding arrangements to enable Iwi to deliver response activities in alignment to current legislation and the Guide to the National CDEM Plan through discussions with Auckland Council, NEMA, MSD [the Ministry of Social Development] and Te Puni Kokiri.	✓		
27 Ensure that arrangements for the inclusion of CALD community and Māori/Iwi networks in response delivery and public information management are pre-identified for use within the response.	✓		
28 Work with communities and local boards to identify appropriate community response arrangements. This may include community response structures and plans, identification of community-led facilities and any potential support or communication requirements in response.		✓	December 2024

Appendix 2

Actions from Auckland Emergency Management’s Prioritised Plan and Group Plan

These tables set out our detailed assessment of Auckland Council’s progress in implementing the Prioritised Plan and Group Plan, by individual plan action. Note that our assessment of progress against each action does not necessarily mean that the corresponding recommendations are complete. Recommendations from the three reviews are identified by review name and sequence and correspond to the numbering in Appendix 1. For example, “Bush1” refers to the first recommendation of the Bush review. The Prioritised and Group Plan actions are identified by plan name and sequence (for example, PP1, GP2).

For our assessment of Auckland Council’s progress in addressing the recommendations of the three reviews, see Appendix 1.

Prioritised Plan of actions for the Auckland Emergency Management function

Action	Associated review recommendations	Action is complete	Work has started	Expected completion	Related Group Plan action (if any)
1	Propose option to accelerate timeline for finalising Group Plan to CDEM committee. Bush2, OAG1	✓			
2	Review Reduction and Readiness focus as part of the Group Plan (routine practice), informed by risk assessments, commissioned reviews. Bush1	✓			
3	Contingency planning, focussed on high priority hazards, including flood hazard alerting options, and volcanic and tsunami contingency plans. There is a continuous cycle of risk assessments on all hazards, to inform planning. Bush3		✓	June 2025	GP7

Appendix 2

Actions from Auckland Emergency Management's Prioritised Plan and Group Plan

Action	Associated review recommendations	Action is complete	Work has started	Expected completion	Related Group Plan action (if any)
4 Document the organisational structure and operational and governance relationships, including: 1. How these relationships differ between "peacetime" and during an emergency response. 2. Map the roles outlined in the Bush report to our unitary structure for clarity, and to policies and delegations, strengthening the role of local boards and community.	Bush6, Toa1, Toa3	✓			
5 Review Controller structure to establish whether it should change during an emergency response to provide clarity of leadership through a designated Primary Lead Controller.	Bush6	✓			
6 Explore a realignment of reporting lines to the GM EM position, including strengthening emergency readiness, response and public information capacity and capability under the direct control of the GM EM (including 3 new roles approved for the new financial year).	Bush11	✓			
7 Finalise Elected Member Induction Guide, extending it to include guidance for Mayors (from NEMA), localised for Auckland Region including induction for Councillors and Local board members. Deliver inductions as soon as possible, including to Mayor and Mayoral Office staff.	Bush14, Toa4	✓			GP31
8 Update CIMS structure to include key standalone functions, such as Safety, to be included in Group Plan.	Bush4, Toa8	✓			

Action	Associated review recommendations	Action is complete	Work has started	Expected completion	Related Group Plan action (if any)
9	<p>Revise and update the Response SOP framework to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out the initiation of the IMT and function desks, starting with severe weather, flooding, and with a focus on SOPs for when an IMT is activated. • develop SOPs for high priority hazards, starting with severe weather, flooding, and with a focus on SOPs for when an IMT is activated. • reflect clear decision-making process regarding the use of physical, virtual or hybrid Emergency Coordination Centre, and test during scheduled exercises. <p>This includes ensuring that the SOPs have sufficient information on core processes, decisions and decision criteria, escalation trigger points, and handoffs.</p>	Bush5, Bush13, Toa8, Toa14, Toa16	✓		GP20
10	<p>Review welfare function SOPs to incorporate findings of response reviews and debriefing programme regarding CDCs and community resilience.</p>	Bush5, Toa13, Toa20, Toa21, Toa22	✓		GP13
11	<p>Implement an enhanced schedule of operational training exercises, overseen by independent observers, including bi-monthly Tier 1 exercising with Duty team and IMT, Tier 2 exercising at Regional/Inter-group level, twice-yearly interagency exercises.</p>	Bush9, OAG4, Toa4, Toa11	✓		GP9
12	<p>Provide compulsory, annual foundation emergency management training to all Council staff, and annual refreshers, alongside CIMS training (to the appropriate level) for key functions and staff with [Emergency Management] accountabilities.</p>	Bush10, Toa11	✓		GP10

Appendix 2

Actions from Auckland Emergency Management's Prioritised Plan and Group Plan

Action	Associated review recommendations	Action is complete	Work has started	Expected completion	Related Group Plan action (if any)
13 Complete CIMS training for all AEM staff, including all 5 deep function lists to level 4.	Bush10, Toa11	✓			GP10
14 Controllers complete new, dedicated controller and CIMS function training.	Bush10, Toa11	✓			GP10
15 Continued use of the RRANZ pathway for crisis leadership training, and exploration of other potential programmes.	Bush10, Toa11	✓			GP10
16 Progress an in-house Council self-service GIS online environment to help build the geospatial operational picture during an emergency response, that draws on multiple intelligence inputs.	Bush16, Toa12, Toa15, Toa21	✓			GP12
17 Discuss with NEMA the potential for developing a common platform/s for incident management.	Bush16, Toa12, Toa15	✓			GP12
18 Develop a framework that clearly outlines how AEM will work with a range of stakeholders, including Local Boards, during an emergency response, to be outlined in the Group Plan and reflected in SOPs.	Bush 15, Bush17, Toa27, Toa28.	✓			GP11
19 Work with Local Boards on response planning and resilience, including understanding of roles and responsibilities, improved communications, and to identify and ready optimal locations for CDCs. This includes hazard planning and mitigation, energy resilience, deployment and maintenance of emergency equipment containers, training of Local Board staff to provide additional capacity.	Bush 15, Bush 17, OAG2, Toa4, Toa20, Toa22, Toa28		✓	December 2024	GP16

Action	Associated review recommendations	Action is complete	Work has started	Expected completion	Related Group Plan action (if any)
20	Bush17	✓			GP1
21	Bush15, Bush17, Toa20	✓			GP13
22	Bush 15, Bush17, Toa27, Toa28	✓			GP11
23	Bush17, Toa25	✓			GP2
24	Bush17	✓			GP14
25	Bush7	✓			GP27
26	Bush7	✓			GP27
27	Bush7		✓	October 2024	GP26

Action	Associated review recommendations	Action is complete	Work has started	Expected completion	Related Group Plan action (if any)
28	Bush7 Controller group and Public Information Manager to undertake media training for emergency situations.	✓			GP27
29	Bush7 Media training for Council leaders who may have a role in communicating with the public during an emergency.	✓			GP27

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group Plan 2024 – 2029

Group Plan action	Associated review recommendations	Related Prioritised Plan action (if any)
1 Coordinate with our partners to expand delivery of Whakaoranga Marae, Whakaoranga Whānau and Kia Rite Kia Mau to support mana whenua and mataawaka disaster resilience, and support investigation into funding arrangements for iwi and marae to enable them to deliver response activities aligned with legislation.	Bush17, Toa25, Toa26	PP20
2 Secure representation of mana whenua and mataawaka in the Incident Management Team and Coordinating Executive Group.	Bush17, Toa25	PP23
3 Identify information gaps that affect our ability to manage natural hazard risks, and conduct a cross-council programme of hazard research to address the gaps and embed hazard considerations across council activity.	N/A	N/A
4 Work with partners to promote region-wide hazard information across multiple platforms to improve knowledge and understanding of hazards, warning and alerting tools. Platforms include social media, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Land Information Memorandums (LIMs), and through Local Board Readiness and Response plans and community resilience plans.	N/A	N/A
5 Undertake a review of the current regulatory and non-regulatory frameworks in relation to their effectiveness in risk reduction and implement required changes.	N/A	N/A

Group Plan action	Associated review recommendations	Related Prioritised Plan action (if any)
6 Collaborate with central government to design a clearer process for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementing adaptation options including managed retreat as a method to reduce risk, and avoiding the establishment of developments in areas where the extent of hazard risk warrants such an approach. 	N/A	N/A
7 Undertake risk reduction activities such as contingency plans, focused on high priority hazards and complex event/impacts. Ensure plans are readily accessible, clearly communicated, exercised and well understood by staff and operational partners.	Bush3	PP3
8 Contribute to national level plans and exercises on catastrophic nationwide and cross-regional event planning and support regional partners with emergency management planning.	Toa19	N/A
9 Deliver a multi-agency exercising calendar on an ongoing basis. Ensure exercises are overseen by independent observers and appropriate agencies participate.	Bush 9, OAG4, OAG5, Toa11	PP11
10 Provide emergency management training appropriate to roles and levels, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> foundation emergency management training to all permanent new council staff, alongside CIMS training (to the appropriate level) for key functions and staff with emergency management accountabilities complete CIMS training for all AEM staff controllers complete new, specific controller and CIMS leadership training. continued use of the RRANZ pathway for crisis leadership training of AEM staff, and exploration of other potential programmes. full accreditation of New Zealand response teams recovery specific training as it becomes available domestic and international deployments as appropriate disability appropriateness. 	Bush10, Toa11	PP12, PP13, PP14, PP15
11 Develop and maintain a relationship management framework that outlines the purpose, method and frequency of engagement with key stakeholders. Develop and maintain relationships in line with the framework.	Bush15, Bush17, Toa27, Toa28.	PP18, PP22

Group Plan action	Associated review recommendations	Related Prioritised Plan action (if any)
12 Develop and implement a technology strategy to enhance response GIS and operational capabilities and strengthen situational awareness. The strategy should focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gaining information and Communications Technology (ICT) autonomy • capacity building • collaboration and communication • data sharing and stakeholder connectivity • real-time data integration in a digital twin for the Auckland region • national advocacy for common incident management platforms to support multi-agency collaboration • supporting effective transition from response to recovery. 	Bush12, Bush16, Toa12, Toa15	PP16, PP17
13 Enhance welfare function capability by developing and implementing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a needs assessment tool in partnership with NEMA • an ongoing work programme for the Auckland Welfare Coordination Group addressing recommendations from previous reviews. 	Toa13, Toa20, Toa21	PP10, PP21
14 Identify and mitigate gaps in Lifelines planning and systems, ensuring alignment with national policy.	Bush17, Toa17	PP24
15 Monitor and maintain operational plant and equipment, including communication tools, alerting and warning systems, fleet and buildings and related facilities. Incorporate new technologies as appropriate.	Toa23	N/A
16 Work with local boards to prepare, communicate and test Local Board Readiness and Response plans that identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local hazards • how to prepare for emergencies • how to evacuate and where to go • useful contacts in an emergency. 	Toa28	PP19

Group Plan action	Associated review recommendations	Related Prioritised Plan action (if any)
17 Encourage and support communities to develop their own community resilience plans, in particular those communities who have the capacity and capability to establish and run community emergency hubs.	Bush15, Bush17, Toa28	N/A
18 Develop an evidence-based communications plan to support community awareness, engagement and preparedness that is tailored to Auckland's diverse communities.	Toa27	N/A
19 Partner with community organisations supporting those communities that may be disproportionately impacted by disasters, to support their preparedness for emergencies.	Bush15, Bush17, Toa23, Toa24	N/A
20 Develop and maintain a robust set of training resources and operational documents ensuring that the functions, roles, and responsibilities set out in this plan are embedded and understood by key parties. Resources and documents to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duty team SOPs and Manual Response SOPs for ECC operation, function manager and function desks SOPs Training videos. 	Bush3, Bush5, Bush10, Toa7, Toa8, Toa16	PP9
21 Work with partners to determine a response structure that more effectively supports regional and local responses.	Toa6	N/A
22 Maintain a schedule of accessible Civil Defence Centres and shelters for local and regional emergency events that can be activated in response as required to support Auckland's diverse communities. Reflect CDCs in the Parks and Community Facilities Network Plan to support acquisition, maintenance and renewal of appropriate facilities. Include information on Community Emergency Hubs (where this is known). Provision identified CDCs with necessary supplies.	Bush15, Toa22	PP19
23 Grow the capacity of response personnel by leveraging the skills and resources of the council and CCOs to provide additional resourcing across all CIMS functions.	Toa10	N/A
24 Develop a volunteer framework addressing recruitment and retention, training, health and safety and use of volunteers in response.	Toa18	N/A
25 Create and implement a wellbeing response plan that captures staff deployment, staff capacity, working hours and support services. Ensure the plan covers all response staff, including those within the ECC and those deployed elsewhere.	Toa9	N/A

Appendix 2
Actions from Auckland Emergency Management's Prioritised Plan and Group Plan

Group Plan action	Associated review recommendations	Related Prioritised Plan action (if any)
26 Maintain a broad range of communication channels and languages that are accessible to Auckland's diverse population and ensure channels such as the website and social media are up-to-date and functional. Utilise third parties to share response communications through their existing channels, including Māori, CALD, rural and disability community networks. Support geographically isolated communities to acquire secondary communication devices.	Bush7, Toa27.	PP27
27 Enhance communications capability and capability by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enlisting and training a broad group of communications staff across the council group, including CCOs with expertise in media management and social media. • implementing media training for Controller Group, PIM, council leaders who may have a role in communicating with the public during an emergency, and media awareness training for all AEM staff working with partners to develop and deliver messaging in the most effective and consistent way. 	Bush7	PP25, PP26, PP28, PP29.
28 Continue to develop and refine preparations for recovery, applying lessons learned from previous recoveries and striving for best practice, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adopting a Recovery Operations Guide • participation in opportunities to share experiences and learnings with recovery practitioners across New Zealand • strengthening the mandate for recovery through political engagement • building general understanding of recovery through accessible public communication. 	Toa3	N/A
29 Recruit and maintain a pool of skilled recovery personnel across the council group.	Toa3	N/A
30 Proactively collaborate with other CDEM groups to develop or contribute to the development of NEMA recovery specific training.	Toa3	N/A
31 Ensure the roles and responsibilities contained within this Group Plan are reviewed and updated as appropriate, communicated and understood by the parties involved, and reflected in appropriate documentation.	Bush6, OAG3, Toa4	PP7

Group Plan action	Associated review recommendations	Related Prioritised Plan action (if any)
32 Reporting to CEG and Committee on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the annual AEM work programme, which demonstrates alignment with the Group Plan and is approved by CEG and the CDEM Committee each year • an annual Group plan monitoring and evaluation report; guided by the key deliverables, success measures and results set out in this plan • bi-annual reporting by CEG working groups to demonstrate progress • recovery plan implementation, including learnings on changes to a community following recovery • compliance with emergency management powers in the CDEM Act. 	Bush8, OAG3	N/A
33 Post emergency response debriefs are carried out, with key findings and recommendations reported to CEG and the CDEM Committee and actions built into forward work plans.	OAG3, OAG5	N/A

Note: Recommendations Toa2 and Toa5 are not directly addressed in the Prioritised Plan and/or Group Plan but we have assessed them as complete based on evidence provided to us by Auckland Council (see Appendix 1).
 OAG6 is expected to be completed as part of Auckland Emergency Management's 2024/25 work programme.
 Not all actions map to review recommendations. Although the three reviews primarily focused on readiness and response, the Group Plan also covers Auckland Council's emergency management responsibilities across risk reduction and recovery.

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