

**EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY 24 AUGUST 1987**

## **NUCLEAR WAR STUDY REVEALS LACK OF PLANNING**

A Planning Council report released today reveals that government has made no plans for what would be done in the event of a nuclear war.

The report, titled New Zealand After Nuclear War, is the result of a six-month study which investigated the impacts on New Zealand of a major nuclear war.

Principal researcher, Dr Wren Green, says that the impact of a nuclear war on government and its ability to operate would be extremely severe. "If a nuclear war occurred, the effect on New Zealand society would depend very much on the level of preparedness of government."

"In the immediate crisis period," says Dr Green "there would be crucial decisions to be made - such as whether and how to ration petrol and drugs, how to distribute goods and services which, because they are dependent on imports, would soon be in short supply, and how to keep lines of communication open, for example."

"With government's current lack of preparedness, it is doubtful that the people responsible would be able to cope. As individuals they would be under severe stress and the systems (such as telecommunications) and structures they depend on might not withstand the pressure. Everyone, including the defence department and the police, would be looking to government for information and instructions. Without prior plans, government would have enormous difficulty in knowing what to do and every hour of uncertainty could lead to greater panic and chaos," he said.

The Chairperson of the Planning Council, Professor Gary Hawke, commented that the study was commissioned by government as the starting point for deciding the best form of planning to undertake. The Planning Council welcomes the intended public consultation, and will itself then make further suggestions to the government.

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