

Full nuke survival plan some way off

By JANE CLIFTON

THE CABINET has already started to prepare contingency plans for surviving nuclear war, but is likely to authorise public submissions and a second report on New Zealand's survival prospects before making final decisions.

Outgoing Environment Minister Phil Goff says the Planning Council's urgings in a report issued yesterday for comprehensive contingency planning will be met, but probably not before public consultation and a more detailed "Phase II" study.

The Cabinet's domestic and external security committee has been reviewing emergency regulations and existing national disaster planning, and is likely to have the guiding hand in the ultimate contingency blueprint.

Mr Goff commended the Planning Council's report, and trumpeted the Government's courage in instigating its funding.

"The reason why there has never been a report like this before is because no government that wanted to associate New Zealand in a nuclear alliance and depend on the so-called nuclear umbrella to defend it could afford to allow the public of New Zealand to appreciate the consequences of nuclear war."

However, he said the report's various suggestions of making New Zealand self-sufficient or stockpiling essential commodities were unlikely to be adopted extensively.

Stockpiling was expensive and unsuitable for goods that deteriorated.

"I think more realistically we need to . . . look at whether there are substitutes available in New Zealand; whether even at some



MR GOFF

expense we could convert our redundant industries into producing the pharmaceutical and other goods we would need.

"We would need to look at how we might go about re-establishing trade in the southern hemisphere . . . We need to look at alternative forms of medicine.

"But I would not predict that we would make an immediate decision to start moving New Zealand towards self-sufficiency now simply given the prospect of a nuclear war being possible."