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Civil defence moves to Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

Nikki Kaye

Civil Defence

From tomorrow (Tuesday 1 April) the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (MCDEM) will be part of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), Civil Defence Minister Nikki Kaye said today.

“This move strengthens the Ministry and New Zealand’s ability to plan for and respond to large scale emergencies, and to coordinate the national support needed,” Ms Kaye says.

Since the Ministry was formed in 1959, it has been part of the Department of Internal Affairs. DIA has become the government technology and information management leader, which makes it appropriate for MCDEM to move to an agency closely involved in crisis management.

“DPMC leads national security planning. Having the Ministry within DPMC will benefit that planning and will give the Ministry a greater role in working across all of government to strengthen national emergency management arrangements,” Ms Kaye says.

“New Zealand’s civil defence emergency management system is world-leading in involving communities and local government in emergency management. This focus will not change.

“Our approach of local responsibility, regional coordination, and national support has been tested many times since 1959 by floods, storms, landslides, volcanoes and earthquakes. It remains our philosophy because it works.

“The move to DPMC will strengthen the coordination of national support that can be provided when it is needed.”

The Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management, John Hamilton, remains the head of the Ministry and keeps all his statutory powers. The Ministry will continue to be fully capable of supporting a response to an emergency during the transition. MCDEM will move its offices to within the Parliamentary precinct.



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