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29 NOVEMBER 2019

Launch of the National Emergency Management Agency

Hon Peeni Henare

Civil Defence

Civil Defence Minister Hon Peeni Henare today announced the establishment of the new National Emergency Management Agency from 1 December 2019.

The National Emergency Management Agency will replace the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management. It will be an autonomous departmental agency, hosted by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Minister Henare welcomed the establishment of the National Emergency Management Agency as an important step in a significant programme of change for the emergency management system.

“The National Emergency Management Agency will provide strong, national leadership, putting people and their communities at the heart of our national emergency management system. The National Emergency Management Agency will help New Zealand better prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies by boosting the performance and capability of the system across all hazards and all risks,” Peeni Henare said.

“Emergencies impact people and communities. They also impact property, critical infrastructure, economy and the environment. The National Emergency Management Agency will work together with central and local government, communities, iwi/Māori and the business sector to reduce those impacts. It will take a system-wide approach to reducing risk, strengthening readiness, and quickly and effectively responding to and recovering from emergencies,” Peeni Henare said.

The Ministry's current emergency management responsibilities will be transferred to the National Emergency Management Agency.

The Deputy State Services Commissioner has appointed Carolyn Schwalger as the Chief Executive of the National Emergency Management Agency for an interim period.

The decision to establish the National Emergency Management Agency is part of the Government's response to a Ministerial review into New Zealand's civil defence system, commissioned after the 2016 Kaikōura-Hurunui earthquake and tsunami and the 2017 Port Hills fire.

Notes to the editor

Carolyn Schwalger has been the Programme Director for the NEMA transition since July 2019.

Before this role, Carolyn held several senior positions across New Zealand's public sector, including the Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative at New Zealand's Permanent Mission to the UN and the Principal Capability Adviser and Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. She holds a BA and BCom from the University of Auckland and recently completed Oxford University's Strategic Leadership Programme.



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