

# National Disaster Resilience Strategy

## Rautaki ā-Motu Manawaroa Aituā

We all have a role in a disaster resilient nation

He wāhanga tō tātau katoa i roto i te iwi manawaroa aituā



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Rautaki ā-Motu  
Manawaroa Aituā

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## Authority

The National Disaster Resilience Strategy is issued by the Minister of Civil Defence, pursuant to s 31 of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. It provides an outline of the Crown's goals in relation to civil defence emergency management, including the objectives to be pursued to achieve those goals.

## Commencement

This Strategy comes into effect on 10 April 2019, pursuant to s 34(1)(a) of the CDEM Act.

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# Foreword

## Kōrero whakapuaki

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Hon Kris Faafoi  
**Minister of Civil Defence**

New Zealand faces some of the greatest natural hazard risks of any country in the world. Increasingly, we also face a range of hazards and risks from other sources, from plant and animal diseases, to human health, to technological disruptions and security threats. Many of these have the potential to be exacerbated with the increased risks posed by climate change. Other trends in our society and the broader international context means that our risk landscape is increasingly complex and uncertain.

The role of this Strategy – the national civil defence emergency management strategy – is to set out our goals and objectives for civil defence emergency management over the next ten years. The previous Strategy was over ten years old, predating the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury and 2016 Kaikōura earthquakes. This Strategy aims to incorporate lessons learned from these and other events in New Zealand and overseas, and takes a fresh look at our priorities. It has been given the title of National Disaster Resilience Strategy to reflect the inclusive approach we want to take.

The Strategy has a strong focus on wellbeing. It incorporates the Treasury's Living Standards Framework and considers the types of resilience needed to protect and grow our wellbeing. The Strategy reflects our increased understanding of national risks and responds to increased community expectations of our emergency management system. It also builds on the Government's work to reform the emergency management system to improve how New Zealand responds to natural disasters and other emergencies.

The objectives set out in this Strategy acknowledge the particular challenges faced by many New Zealand communities associated with their geographic location, their vulnerabilities, or their hazards. It seeks to enable and empower communities everywhere to take action to look after themselves and others in times of crisis, while still ensuring strong local, regional, and national leadership and support when needed.

On behalf of the Government, I acknowledge the efforts of everyone around the country who contributed to the development of this Strategy – the next step towards building a more resilient New Zealand.

# Appendix 2: Analysis of our current state as a baseline for this Strategy

In order to form an effective strategy for the future and move towards a state of enhanced resilience, it is useful to look at our current state – our strengths, barriers, and opportunities – and how we capitalise on areas of strength and opportunity, overcome obstacles to progress, and make the smartest possible choices about actions and investment. In the quest to be future ready, it is useful to consider other environmental and societal trends occurring around us, and how we can use them to build our resilience.

## Strengths

New Zealand already has several strengths in disaster resilience.

1. We have good social capital in our communities. New Zealand communities are aware, knowledgeable, passionate, and well-connected. In general, they have a strong sense of local identity and belonging to their environment, a belief in manaakitanga and concern for their fellow citizens, and a sense of civic duty.
2. We are a developed country with comprehensive education, health, and social welfare systems, which build our people and look after the most vulnerable in society.
3. We have a strong cultural identity, including the special relationship between Māori and the Crown, provided through the Treaty of Waitangi. New Zealand is also one of a handful of culturally and linguistically 'super-diverse' countries, which brings many economic and social benefits, and expanded knowledge and experience (the diversity dividend). We value our culture, our kaupapa and tikanga. We celebrate and foster a rich and diverse cultural life.
4. We have a high-performing and relatively stable economy. The New Zealand economy made a solid recovery after the 2008-09 recession, which was shallow compared to other advanced economies. Annual growth has averaged 2.1% since March 2010, emphasising the economy's resilience.
5. We have very high insurance penetration across residential property. Most countries struggle to get their ratio of insured to non-insured up to an acceptable level. Because of the Earthquake Commission, New Zealand's residential insurance penetration is 98%. This means that a good proportion of the economic costs of most natural hazard events are covered by re-insurance.
6. We have a stable political system, low levels of corruption, and freedom of speech.
7. We have a good range of policy for disaster risk management, including the CDEM Act 2002, the Resource Management Act 1991, the Building Act 2004, the Local Government Act 2002, the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and other legislation and regulatory instruments. This includes regulation for land-use and building standards, which are critical factors in building more resilient futures.
8. We have an effective national security coordination system that takes an all-hazards approach and has governance at the political, executive, and operational levels.
9. At the regional level consortia of local authorities, emergency services, lifeline utilities, and social welfare agencies (government and non-government) form CDEM Groups that coordinate across agencies and steward emergency management in their regions.
10. We have an engaged and well connected science community, including several platforms specifically targeting the advancement of knowledge and understanding about natural hazards and resilience. In general, there are good links between scientists, policy makers and practitioners. Scientists practice an increasing level of community outreach, engage in co-creation approaches, and are focused on outcomes.
11. Organisations and agencies work well together. While there's always room for improvement, a multi-agency approach is the norm, which means better coordination of activities, more efficient use of resources, and better outcomes.
12. We are a small country, which makes us well connected, uncomplicated, and agile. We can 'get things done' in relatively short order.
13. We are experienced in emergency management. We have seemingly had more than our fair share of crises, emergencies, and disasters over the last ten years. This has brought some bad times, but the silver lining is the awareness that it has built in everyone, the knowledge about 'what works' and what is needed, and willingness to act.

# Executive Summary

## He whakarāpopototanga

Globally, the economic cost of disasters has increased steadily over the last 40 years, in large part because of the expansion of the built environment. Damage to infrastructure and buildings poses huge costs, public and private.

However, it is the impact on wellbeing that can have the most profound effect. On 22 February 2011, New Zealand suffered one of its worst ever disasters with the Canterbury earthquake. In 2013, the Treasury estimated the capital costs to be over \$40 billion, the equivalent of 20% of gross domestic product. Beyond the tangible costs of damage and rebuild, lay a web of social and economic disruption and upheaval. There were flow-on effects to business and employment, psychological trauma, dislocation of communities, creation or exacerbation of social issues, disruption to normal lives and livelihoods, and uncertainty in the future.

We face a range of hazards and risks in New Zealand. Increasingly complex and uncertain risks that represent a threat to our way of life and to our wellbeing and prosperity.

Many of the risks we face now and in the future can be readily identified. However, we also need to recognise the future is uncertain: significant, unexpected, and hard-to-predict events are inevitable. The further we probe into the future, the deeper the level of uncertainty we encounter.

Within this uncertain future environment, **resilience** is an important requirement for success. Resilience is the ability to anticipate and resist disruptive events, minimise adverse impacts, respond effectively, maintain or recover functionality, and adapt in a way that allows for learning and thriving. In essence, it's about developing a wide zone of tolerance – the ability to remain effective across a range of future conditions.

Given our risk landscape, and the uncertainty of the wider domestic and global environment, it is important for us to take deliberate steps to improve our resilience and protect the prosperity and wellbeing of individuals, communities, businesses, our society, the economy, and the nation as a whole.

This Strategy sets three priorities to improve our nation's resilience to disasters:

1. **Managing risks:** what we can do to minimise the risks we face and limit the impacts to be managed if hazards occur;
2. **Effective response to and recovery from emergencies:** building our capability and capacity to manage emergencies when they do happen; and
3. **Enabling, empowering, and supporting community resilience:** building a culture of resilience in New Zealand so that everyone can participate in and contribute to communities' – and the nation's – resilience.

Each priority has six objectives to focus effort on the critical issues and drive progress (shown on the next page).

The Strategy promotes a holistic approach to resilience that connects with a range of agencies and sectors to deliver improved outcomes for New Zealanders. Disaster risk and disaster impacts reach all parts of society, so, to the greatest degree possible, disaster resilience should be integrated in all parts of society.

Disaster resilience requires a shared approach between governments (central and local), relevant stakeholders, and the wider public – a collective approach to a collective problem. The goodwill, knowledge, experience, and commitment of all of parts of society are needed to make a difference.

### What can I do?

All readers of this Strategy are encouraged to consider what the priorities and objectives mean for them, their family/whānau, business or organisation, community/hapū, and what they can do to contribute to their own resilience or the resilience of others.

Appendix 1 takes the priorities, high-level objectives and success measures of the Strategy, and translates them into a range of recommended actions for different audiences: individuals and families/whānau, businesses and organisations, communities and hapū, cities and districts, and government and national organisations.

Resources are online at [www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz), including factsheets to support specific groups in their resilience endeavours. These include pointers on how to find more information and support, and how you can participate in building our nation's resilience to disasters.