

# Submission template: Strengthening New Zealand's emergency management legislation

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is seeking feedback on options to strengthen New Zealand's emergency management legislation.

The deadline for submissions is **5pm, 13 May 2025**.

You can find the full discussion document and more information about the legislative reform process on NEMA's website. Your feedback will inform decisions about the proposals. We appreciate your time and effort to respond to this consultation.

[Emergency Management Bill consultation](#)

## How to make a submission

To make a submission, you will need to:

1. Fill out your name, email address and organisation on the next page. If you are submitting on behalf of an organisation, please ensure you have the authority to represent its views.
2. Fill out your responses to the questions in this document. You can choose to answer some or all of the questions. Where possible, please provide evidence to support your views. For example, references to independent research, facts and figures, or your experiences.
3. If your submission has any confidential information:
  - a. Please state this in the email accompanying your submission, setting out clearly which parts you consider should be withheld, and the grounds under the Official Information Act 1982 (Official Information Act) that you believe apply. NEMA will take this into account and will consult with submitters when responding to requests under the Official Information Act.
  - b. Indicate this in your submission. Any confidential information should be clearly marked within the text of your submission (preferably as Microsoft Word comments).
  - c. Note that submissions are subject to the Official Information Act and may, therefore, need to be released in full or in part. The Privacy Act 2020 also applies.
4. Once you have completed this form, you can send it by:

- a. email (as a Microsoft Word document) to [EmergencyManagementBill@nema.govt.nz](mailto:EmergencyManagementBill@nema.govt.nz)

**OR**

- b. post to:

Policy Unit  
National Emergency Management Agency  
PO Box 5010, Wellington 6140

## Submitter information

Any information you provide will be stored securely.

### Your name, email address, and organisation

Name:	Catherine Hall
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Organisation: (if applicable)	Alzheimers NZ

- ☐ The Privacy Act 2020 applies to submissions. Please tick the box if you **do not** want your name or other personal information to be included in any information about submissions that NEMA may publish.
- ☐ NEMA may publish submissions or a summary of submissions to its website, [civildefence.govt.nz](https://civildefence.govt.nz). If you **do not** want your submission or a summary of your submission to be published, please tick the box and type an explanation below:

I do not want my submission published on NEMA's website because...

### Does your submission contain confidential information?

- ☐ I would like my submission (or parts of my submission) to be kept confidential and have stated my reasons and the grounds under section 9 of the Official Information Act that I believe apply, for consideration by NEMA.

I would like my submission (or parts of my submission) to be kept confidential because...

### Use of information

Submissions will be used to inform NEMA's policy development process and will inform advice to Ministers. Your submission (including identifying information) may also be shared with other government agencies working on policies related to emergency management. NEMA may contact submitters directly if we need clarification on their submission or would like further information from them.

# Consultation questions

These questions relate to the issues and options raised in the discussion document *Strengthening New Zealand's emergency management legislation*. You can find the full discussion document on [NEMA's website](#).

**You do not need to answer all questions.**

## Objectives for reform

The Government's proposed objectives for reform are to:

- strengthen community and iwi Māori participation in emergency management
- provide for clear responsibilities and accountabilities at the national, regional, and local levels
- enable a higher minimum standard of emergency management
- minimise disruption to essential services
- ensure agencies have the right powers available when an emergency happens.

*Refer to pages 8–9 of the discussion document to answer the question in this section.*

### 1. Have we identified the right objectives for reform?

☒ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

These are the right objectives. Strengthening community involvement is important and will make emergency management more inclusive. Clear responsibilities and higher standards will improve responses and giving agencies the right powers will help them act quickly. Minimising disruption to essential services is also key for maintaining stability during emergencies.

## Objective 1: Strengthening community and iwi Māori participation

### Issue 1: Meeting the diverse needs of people and communities

We have identified options to ensure the emergency management system better meets the diverse needs of communities, with a particular focus on those who may be disproportionately affected during an emergency.

*Refer to pages 10–13 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

### 2. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☒ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Alzheimers New Zealand agrees with how the problem is described and supports the focus on communities and those who are at particular risk during emergencies. Their

needs, including the needs of people living with dementia require specific attention in emergency plans, to ensure that the challenges they face, like confusion, difficulty following instructions and disorientation in unfamiliar environments, are minimised. Including people living with dementia and other cognitive impairment conditions in emergency planning would ensure that appropriate support is in place before, during and after emergencies.

**3. Are there other reasons that may cause some people and groups to be disproportionately affected by emergencies?**

Please explain your views.

Yes, in addition to the reasons mentioned, the following factors can also lead to disproportionate impacts:

- Cognitive impairment: People with dementia may not understand warnings, remember emergency steps, or know how to evacuate safely.
- Dependence on familiar environments: Changes caused by emergencies like evacuation can increase anxiety and behavioural issues for people with dementia.
- Carer, family/whānau dependence: If carers, family/whānau are injured, displaced, or unavailable, people with dementia may feel afraid as others helping are not known to them, and they may not get support they need.
- Inaccessible communication: Emergency messages are often too complex to be easily understood by those with communication or comprehension challenges.

**4. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

We support Option 2: Develop guidance on meeting diverse needs and Option 3: Require CDEM Group plans to include how people and communities that may be disproportionately affected will be planned for. These options would lead to better outcomes and coordination, and less traumatic for those most at risk. While they may require more time and resources, leaving these voices out could lead to greater harm and higher costs during and after emergencies. Alzheimers NZ and similar groups have strong connections with vulnerable people and should be involved in planning at all levels.

**5. What would planning look like (at the local and national levels) if it was better informed by the needs of groups that may be disproportionately affected by emergencies?**

Please explain your views.

Inclusive planning would mean:

- Involving community organisations like Alzheimers NZ in advisory and planning groups.
- Including people with lived experience of dementia or cognitive impairment in emergency response planning.

- Training emergency staff to support people with cognitive impairments.
- Ensuring messages are clear, simple, and available in different formats which everyone can understand.
- Identifying at-risk people ahead of time and linking them with local support.
- Providing dementia-friendly safe spaces in evacuation centres.

**6. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Yes. We suggest:

- Creating national guidelines for supporting people with cognitive impairments including people with dementia during emergencies.
- Developing a safe registry to help provide support to people with dementia.
- Including people with dementia and their carers, family/whānau in emergency drills to test how inclusive plans are.
- Designing emergency spaces like shelters to be dementia-friendly, with clear signs and simple layouts.

## Issue 2: Strengthening and enabling iwi Māori participation in emergency management

We have identified options to recognise the contributions made by iwi Māori in emergency management, to the benefit of all people in New Zealand.

*Refer to pages 13–16 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**7. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

**8. Have we accurately captured the roles that iwi Māori play before, during and after emergencies?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

**9. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

**10. How should iwi Māori be recognised in the emergency management system?**

Please explain your views.

**11. What should be the relationship between Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups and iwi Māori?**

Please explain your views.

**12. What should be the relationship between Coordinating Executive Groups and iwi Māori?**

Please explain your views.

**13. What would be the most effective way for iwi Māori experiences and mātauranga in emergency management to be provided to the Director?**

Please explain your views.

**14. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

**Issue 3: Strengthening and enabling community participation in emergency management**

We have identified options to improve communities' ability to participate in emergency management. This includes making it easier for individuals, businesses, and other community organisations to offer resources to the "official" emergency response.

*Refer to pages 16–18 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**15. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

We agree that communities and community-based organisations, including those supporting people with dementia, are not engaged enough. This makes it harder for these groups to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

**16. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

We support Option 2: Develop and update guidance and strengthen public education, because it focuses on community-led emergency responses and helps people understand what to do in an emergency. This option is simple and can work well if clear

procedures are in place. In an emergency, communities can connect directly into the emergency system, which can speed up the response. This option is also cost-effective over time. Local groups like Alzheimers NZ and our regional teams can play a strong role in making communities more prepared and resilient. It also helps communities identify people who may need extra support, like those living with dementia, and be better prepared to support them before, during, and after an emergency.

**17. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Yes, there should be specific ways to fund and involve health and disability support organisations in local emergency planning. They should also be included in the strategy development and risk assessments.

**Issue 4: Recognising that people, businesses and communities are often the first to respond in an emergency**

We have identified options to address barriers that may stop people, businesses, and communities from acting during an emergency.

*Refer to pages 18–19 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**18. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**19. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**20. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Other problems relating to this objective**

**21. Should we consider any other problems relating to community and iwi Māori participation?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Objective 2: Providing for clear responsibilities and accountabilities at the national, regional, and local levels**

## Issue 5: Clearer direction and control during an emergency

We have identified options to make it clearer who is in charge of the operational response to an emergency.

*Refer to pages 20–25 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

### 22. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### 23. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### 24. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### 25. Do you think more fundamental changes are needed to the way direction and control works during the response to an emergency? If so, why?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Issue 6: Strengthening the regional tier of emergency management

### Issue 6.1: Resolving overlapping CDEM Group and local authority roles and responsibilities

We have identified options to ensure it is clear what CDEM Groups and each of their local authority members are responsible for.

*Refer to pages 26–28 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

### 26. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### 27. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

Insert response



**28. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**29. Do you think more fundamental changes are needed to the way emergency management is delivered at the local government level (for example, the CDEM Group-based model)? If so, why?**

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Issue 6.2: Providing for clear and consistent organisation and accountability for emergency management**

We have identified options to ensure CDEM Groups are organised effectively, with clearer lines of accountability.

*Refer to pages 28–31 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**30. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**31. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**32. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Issue 6.3: Strengthening the performance of Coordinating Executive Groups**

We have identified options to strengthen how Coordinating Executive Groups provide advice to and implement the decisions of their CDEM Groups.

*Refer to pages 31–32 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**33. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**34. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**35. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## **Issue 7: Keeping emergency management plans up to date**

We have identified options to make it easier to update the National CDEM Plan and CDEM Group plans, reflecting changes to roles and responsibilities.

*Refer to pages 33–34 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**36. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**37. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**38. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## **Other problems relating to this objective**

**39. Should we consider any other problems relating to responsibilities and accountabilities at the national, regional, and local levels?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Objective 3: Enabling a higher minimum standard of emergency management

### Issue 8: Stronger national direction and assurance

#### Issue 8.1: Strengthening the Director's mandate to set expectations and monitor performance

We have identified options to enable a wider range of mandatory standards to be set, and strengthen the Director's ability to provide assurance about the performance of the emergency management system.

*Refer to pages 36–37 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

#### 40. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

#### 41. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

#### 42. Which aspects of emergency management would benefit from greater national consistency or direction?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

#### 43. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

#### Issue 8.2: Strengthening the mandate to intervene and address performance issues

We have identified options to better ensure those with legal emergency management responsibilities are meeting them sufficiently.

*Refer to pages 37–39 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

#### 44. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**45. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**46. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Issue 9: Strengthening local hazard risk management**

We have identified options to strengthen the way CDEM Groups and their members manage the risk of hazards in their areas, including by using CDEM Group plans more effectively.

*Refer to pages 39–42 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**47. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**48. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**49. What is the right balance between regional flexibility and national consistency for CDEM Group plans?**

Please explain your views.

**50. What practical barriers may be preventing CDEM Group plans from being well integrated with other local government planning instruments?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**51. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**52. Do you think more fundamental changes are needed to enable local authorities to deliver effective hazard risk management? If so, why?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Issue 10: Strengthening due consideration of taonga Māori, cultural heritage and animals during and after emergencies**

**Issue 10.1: Considering taonga Māori and other cultural heritage during and after emergencies**

We have identified options to ensure the impacts of emergencies on taonga Māori and other cultural heritage is considered appropriately.

*Refer to pages 43–45 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**53. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**54. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**55. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Issue 10.2: Considering animals during and after emergencies**

We have identified options to ensure the impacts of emergencies on pets, working animals, wildlife, and livestock is considered appropriately.

*Refer to pages 45–47 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**56. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**57. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**58. Noting that human life and safety will always be the top priority, do you have any comments about how animals should be prioritised relative to the protection of property?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**59. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Other problems relating to this objective**

**60. Should we consider any other problems relating to enabling a higher minimum standard of emergency management?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Objective 4: Minimising disruption to essential services

### Issue 11: Reducing disruption to the infrastructure that provides essential services

#### Issue 11.1: Narrow definition of “lifeline utility”

We have identified options to extend emergency management responsibilities to a broader range of infrastructure that provides essential services.

*Refer to pages 50–52 and Appendix C of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**61. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**62. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**63. If we introduced a principles-based definition of “essential infrastructure”, are there any essential services that should be included or excluded from the list in Appendix C of the discussion document?**

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

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**64. If you think other essential services should be included in the list in Appendix C, what kinds of infrastructure would they cover?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**65. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

#### Issue 11.2: Strengthening lifeline utility business continuity planning

We have identified options to ensure lifeline utilities have planned effectively for disruption to their services.

*Refer to pages 52–54 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**66. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☒ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**67. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**68. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**Issue 11.3: Barriers to cooperation and information sharing**

We have identified options to strengthen cooperation and information sharing between lifeline utilities, CDEM Groups, and other agencies.

*Refer to pages 54–57 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

**69. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?**

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**70. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**71. Because emergencies happen at different geographical scales, coordination is often needed at multiple levels (local and national). Do you have any views about the most effective way to achieve coordination at multiple levels?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response

**72. Are there any other options that should be considered?**

Please explain your views.

Insert response



## Issue 12: Strengthening central government business continuity

We have identified options to ensure central government organisations have planned effectively for disruption to their services. This includes options to expand the range of central government organisations recognised in the Act.

*Refer to pages 57–60 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

### 73. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### 74. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### 75. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Other problems relating to this objective

### 76. Should we consider any other problems relating to minimising disruption to essential services?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Objective 5: Having the right powers available when an emergency happens

### Issue 13: Managing access to restricted areas

We have identified options to improve the way cordons are managed.

*Refer to pages 61–63 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

#### 78. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

#### 79. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

#### 80. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### Issue 14: Clarifying who uses emergency powers at the local level

We have identified options to ensure emergency powers sit with the most appropriate people at the local government level.

*Refer to pages 63–65 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

#### 81. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

#### 82. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

#### 83. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Issue 15: Modernising the process to enter a state of emergency or transition period

We have identified options to remove the requirement for a physical signature to declare a state of emergency or give notice of a transition period.

*Refer to pages 65–66 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

### 84. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### 85. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### 86. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Issue 16: Mayors' role in local state of emergency declarations and transition period notices

We have identified options to make mayors' role in local state of emergency declarations and transition period notices more explicit.

*Refer to pages 66–68 of the discussion document to answer the questions in this section.*

### 87. Do you agree with how we have described this problem?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure / no preference

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### 88. Do you have any comments about the likely impacts (benefits, costs, or risks) of the initial options we have identified? Do you have any preferred options?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

### 89. Are there any other options that should be considered?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Other problems relating to this objective

### 90. Are there any circumstances where Controllers or Recovery Managers may need other powers to manage an emergency response or the initial stages of recovery more effectively?

Please explain your views.

Insert response

## Other comments

### 91. Do you have any other comments relating to reform of New Zealand's emergency management legislation?

We strongly support the modernisation of the emergency management system. It is important that the new legislation recognises the needs of all groups in the community including people living with dementia and older people, who may need additional support during emergencies. We recommend continuing engagement with health and aged care sectors, including dementia advocacy organisations, to ensure emergency planning is inclusive and effective for all New Zealanders.