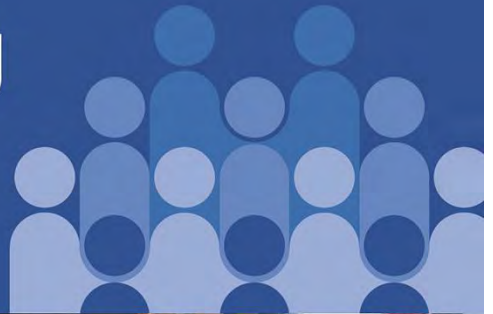


Ready For Anything

QUEENSTOWN LAKES COMMUNITY RESILIENCE GROUP NETWORK

Quarterly Update



Ready for Anything

Queenstown Lakes Community Resilience Group Network - Quarterly Update Sept 2026

In this edition: Be flood/El Niño ready | Events and training | Tools and resources | CRG updates | News and views | Social media in an emergency – five tips for CRGs

Kia ora CRGs,

Spring is here (well, according to the calendar anyway!), bringing longer days, warmer weather and a reminder to think about some of the seasonal risks that come with it. This year we have El Niño to contend with as well as the usual snowmelt, so now's a good time to encourage your communities to think about preparedness and take a few simple steps to reduce their risk.

It's also been a shaky old time, with several strong earthquakes recently reminding us that we can't control when they happen, but we can control how prepared we are. We'd be grateful for your help encouraging people to take part in the national ShakeOut exercise and make sure they know what to do at home and at work.

It's also a good prompt for parents to find out what their children's school emergency plans are. All schools are mandated to have plans in place, but it's important these are communicated widely so parents understand what will happen - including when and how they'll be reunited with their children. This can help reduce panic and keep people off potentially unsafe roads, giving emergency responders space to reach those most in need and carry out essential safety checks on roads, bridges and other infrastructure.

Read on for more great resilience mahi happening across the district, from stronger electricity networks and solar-powered schools to some cool community initiatives. As always, thank you for everything you do to support your communities and each other, and for continuing to share your news, ideas and learnings.

We're looking forward to catching up with many of you at our CRG Network get-together on 8 November.

Be flood/El Niño ready

A [strong El Niño event](#) is intensifying over NZ and is projected to peak in late spring or early summer (Nov - Dec). Frequent fronts and low-pressure systems are expected to bring periods of high winds and heavy rain, increasing the risk of flooding. Combine this with our usual snowmelt and river, stream and lake levels could rise quickly.

As CRGs, you can help raise awareness in your communities now by encouraging people to secure loose items outside, clear gutters and drains, understand whether their home or business could be affected by flooding, keep an eye on weather forecasts and river and lake levels, and have a plan for what they'll do if flooding threatens their property. It's also a good opportunity to check on more vulnerable neighbours who may need a hand preparing.

Adopt a Drain: Another simple way communities can help is by keeping an eye on local stormwater drains and safely clearing leaves and debris before heavy rain. [WAI Wānaka's Adopt a Drain initiative](#) is a great example of communities taking responsibility for their local drains. A few minutes spent removing leaves and other debris can help reduce localised flooding while also keeping rubbish and contaminants out of our waterways. The programme began in Wānaka, Hāwea and Luggate and has since inspired an [Otago-wide Adopt a Drain programme](#).



Events and training

CRG network get-together

Date: Sunday 8 November / Time: 12:30-3:30pm / Venue: Lake Hayes Pavilion / Lunch provided

We're hosting a CRG network get-together on Sunday 8 November to say thank you for your mahi and give everyone a chance to connect, swap ideas and learn from each other.

The afternoon will be practical and interactive, with plenty of time for discussion and networking. We'll explore some topics you've told us would be useful - including recruiting and keeping volunteers, social media, equipment and systems, and how CRGs can better connect with and support each other.

The aim is for everyone to leave with new connections, useful ideas and practical tips to take back to their own CRG. Is there something you'd particularly like to discuss, learn more about or get help with? Let us know and we'll see if we can build it into the afternoon.

RSVP by 30 October to Courtenay at Courtenay.Jamieson@otagocdem.govt.nz. Include any dietary requirements.

Get ready to ShakeOut

ShakeOut, our national earthquake drill and tsunami hīkoi, is on Wednesday 21 October, 1.30pm, and it's a great opportunity to get your communities talking about earthquake preparedness and practising what to do.

 Encourage people to sign up – Households, schools and businesses can register at www.getready.govt.nz/sign-up and receive instructions.

 Practise the actions – On ShakeOut Day, practise 'Drop, Cover and Hold' for 30-60 seconds. If you're in a tsunami (or lake seiche) evacuation zone, practise your hīkoi as well by immediately moving out of it to the nearest high ground or as far inland as you can.

 Make it a community activity – Share ShakeOut through your local networks, Facebook pages and newsletters, encourage neighbours and local businesses to join in, or organise a group exercise on the day.

 Prizes! There are 90 prizes up for grabs just for signing up and taking part.

Training tip – be ready to go old school

How well could your CRG operate if the power and communications went down? Make sure you have a printed copy of your essential information - including group member contact details, addresses and relevant Otago Gets Ready information - somewhere easy to find when you need it.

Better still, test it: could your CRG operate using only the information you have on paper? Set a reminder to review and replace your printed backup every three months so it stays up to date.



Tools and resources

New downloadable resources

New mental health and wellbeing resources, including 1737 helpline social media tiles, have been added to the [CRG Shared Resources Hub](#), our online CRG library of downloadable templates and promotional tools. You'll also find PDF versions of all our CRG newsletters there, ready to share through WhatsApp groups or other channels.

Help people find official information

After the recent earthquakes, social media lit up within minutes - a good reminder of how quickly information (and misinformation!) can spread. Here are some easy ways to help point your communities towards trusted, official sources before and during an emergency:

- Sign up to [Otago Gets Ready](#) for official emergency text and email updates from Emergency Management Otago, tailored to your neighbourhood. You can also privately list resources or skills you could offer in an emergency, such as a 4WD, Starlink or first aid training, and any specific support needs responders should be aware of.
- Sign up for [QLDC Community Text Alerts](#) to receive timely local alerts when needed.
- Follow [QLDC](#) and [Emergency Management Otago](#) on Facebook for local updates and information.
- Visit [QLDC's Emergency Management webpage](#) for local preparedness information, Community Resilience Group details and useful resources.
- Visit the [Emergency Management Otago website](#) for official information, resources and a list of local radio stations to tune into.
- Check out getready.govt.nz for practical planning templates, guides and resources to help prepare your home, workplace and school, including information in multiple languages and accessible formats.



CRG news

- **Albert Town fire lessons shared:** A huge thanks to the Wānaka CRG team for sharing lessons from the recent Albert Town fire on their Facebook page. One of the best reminders? Sometimes the most important first response starts with something as simple as knocking on a neighbour's door. Their [post](#) is a must-read, with some great practical advice that applies to all sorts of emergencies - and a good example of how they're engaging with their community. Consider sharing it on your own pages as a way to start a conversation and encourage more people to get involved with their local CRG.
- **Community meeting:** The new West Queenstown CRG is holding its first community meeting on 27 September to help get the group up and running. Details are on its [Facebook page](#).
- **V2G power:** Arrowtown CRG is on track for a NZ first - a Community Emergency Hub powered by vehicle-to-grid technology! The system being installed at the community centre will allow the building to draw power from compatible electric vehicles during an outage so they won't need to worry about running out of generator fuel. Josh from Rewiring Aotearoa has familiarised the group with the technology, and they're raring to go.
- **Stand by:** The Kingston Community Association has funded three handheld radios and a base set for the Kingston CRG to improve emergency communications and resilience. Radio training will be held this month.

Across the sector / news and views

New Emergency Management Act

The Emergency Management Act 2026 is now in force! It replaces the 2002 Act and reflects lessons learned from more than two decades of major emergencies, inquiries and reviews into NZ's emergency management system.

The Act strengthens the role of communities and iwi, clarifies responsibilities at national, regional and local levels, sets higher minimum standards for emergency management and aims to reduce disruption to essential services.

Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups are now called Emergency Management Committees, but the term 'civil defence' and the civil defence logo will continue to be used for frontline activities. Organisations previously known as lifeline utilities, like electricity providers, airports and ports, are now called Essential Infrastructure Providers (EIPs). [Read more](#).

New national Emergency Mobile Alert map

Ever wondered what an Emergency Mobile Alert said if you weren't in the area that received it? A new [national Emergency Mobile Alert map](#) lets anyone see current alerts issued across NZ, including the area they were sent to and the message people received.



Always take the weather (and emergencies) with you

[Download the new GovtNZ app](#) for an easy way to keep up with emergencies and severe weather - just save your favourite places and switch on notifications. The app brings together Emergency Mobile Alerts and MetService warnings in one place and is handy for staying up to date alongside official alerts and trusted information channels.

Pacific Wave tsunami exercise

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is running Exercise Pacific Wave, a national tsunami training event to test Aotearoa's preparedness in an emergency, on 14 October.

Strengthening Queenstown's power resilience

There's been progress on two projects to strengthen Queenstown's electricity network and meet growing demand. A recent upgrade to the [Cromwell–Frankton transmission line](#) has increased the amount of electricity that can flow into the district, while plans are underway for [Queenstown's first grid-scale battery energy storage system](#) at Frankton. The battery will store electricity for use when demand is high, helping manage peak demand and providing additional support during outages. It will start with 6.25MWh of storage, with the ability to grow to more than 24MWh as the region grows.

Solar on schools programme

Five local schools - Arrowtown, Remarkables Primary, Shotover Primary, Wānaka Primary and Te Kura O Take Kārara - have been selected for Solar on Schools, subject to site suitability. Assessments are planned from December.

The panels are expected to save schools around \$8,000 a year in electricity costs, while reducing emissions and providing kids with a great example of renewable energy in action. Shotover Primary also doubles as the Community Emergency Hub for the Lake Hayes Shotover Country CRG, so a more resilient power supply would be a win-win!

Arrowtown AED

Arrowtown has a new community-funded St John automated external defibrillator (AED) outside the school hall easily accessible in an emergency.

Social media in an emergency – five tips for CRGs

During an emergency, your CRG social media channels can complement official Civil Defence channels by providing hyper-local situational information and helping your community organise itself - connecting people with available help, identifying needs, matching resources, solving local problems and showing how people are helping each other.



- 1. Be the local layer.** Share official QLDC and Emergency Management Otago information and add useful, verified local detail - what's happening at your Community Emergency Hub, local road closures, where help is available and what your community needs.
- 2. Make every update time-proof.** Number evolving posts (*Flooding Update #1, #2...*) and include the location, date and time. Update the original post where feasible so old information isn't mistaken for current advice.
- 3. Help people help each other.** Use your social channels to connect people and encourage practical, safe ways to pitch in - checking on neighbours, passing information to people who aren't online, offering or requesting specific help, or supporting the Community Emergency Hub. Everyone has something to offer, whether it's first aid, cooking or baking, organising activities for kids, driving people around, coordinating supplies or simply keeping someone company. You don't need specialist emergency skills to contribute.
- 4. Listen as well as post.** Comments can tell you what your community needs to know. Watch for repeated questions, emerging issues and misinformation, and turn these into useful local updates. Share these insights with the Emergency Operations Centre communications team too, so wider information gaps and issues can be addressed quickly.
- 5. Show your community in action.** Share photos, videos and stories of people helping each other (don't forget to get their permission first though!). Amongst the warnings and disruption, showing what your community is doing can build confidence and connection, encourage others to pitch in and provide some much-needed hope.

That's it for now. Please keep in touch and share your ideas, suggestions and news with us - email Jen Andrews at jen@flyingsquad.nz.