

## **Organisational Excellence Committee**

**28 April 2026**

### **Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [4]**

**Department: Strategy & Policy**

**Title | Taitara: Emergency Management Update**

**Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko**

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The purpose of this report is to provide the Organisational Excellence Committee with an update on Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC's) emergency management readiness, the key capability development work underway, the upcoming Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite, and the national and regional developments that are shaping Council's future emergency management responsibilities.

**Executive Summary | Whakarāpopototaka Matua**

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The emergency management environment is becoming more demanding. The proposed Emergency Management Bill signals a significant increase in statutory expectations on local authorities, with clearer duties across hazard and risk management, readiness, response, recovery, community engagement, essential services coordination and assurance. At the same time, regional and national work programmes led through Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and lifelines partners are continuing to raise expectations around demonstrable readiness, alternative communications, planning quality and cross-sector coordination.

In response, QLDC has established a focused 2026 Emergency Management Development Work Programme to strengthen organisational readiness and Emergency Operations Centre capability. The programme is structured around eight linked workstreams covering governance and strategy, training and exercising, facilities and communications resilience, response and recovery capability, Alpine Fault planning, sector coordination and community resilience. Together, these workstreams provide a practical pathway for lifting capability in line with both current district risk and the higher level of assurance likely to be expected under the emerging national framework. The level of current capability will be tested in the upcoming Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite which occurs on 20 May 2026.

This report also outlines the current status of the National Fuel Plan and its relevance to the QLDC Emergency Operations Centre. While fuel allocation decisions remain nationally led, a significant or prolonged disruption would have important local consequences for Queenstown Lakes. QLDC's likely role would centre on local consequence management, situational awareness, support to priority arrangements under national direction, and coordination across critical services, lifelines, communities and key sectors, if disruption escalates.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka

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That the Organisational Excellence Committee:

1. **Note** the contents of this report;
2. **Endorse** the participation of QDLC Emergency Operations Centre in the upcoming Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite; and
3. **Note** the national Emergency Management reforms and their implications for QLDC.

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31 March 2026

**Reviewed and Authorised by:**



**Name:** Pennie Pearce  
**Title:** Acting GM Strategy & Policy  
2 April 2026

## Context | Horopaki

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1. This report is the first Organisational Excellence Committee (the Committee) update on QLDC's Emergency Management activity area. It provides the Committee with an overview of the current readiness position, key capability development work underway, and the national and regional developments that are shaping QLDC's emergency management responsibilities.
2. Emergency Management is a strategically important core council service. The district's hazard exposure, dispersed communities, visitor economy, infrastructure dependencies and potential for prolonged isolation during a major event mean that emergency management must be treated as a planned, organisation-wide capability rather than a largely reactive operational activity. This report is therefore intended to support governance oversight of both current readiness and the ongoing development of that capability.
3. Emergency Management in Queenstown Lakes is delivered through a shared regional and local model. QLDC is a member of the Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management Group and works alongside Emergency Management Otago (EMO), which provides regional coordination, planning, training, lifelines coordination, community resilience group development and advisory support across the Otago councils.
4. Emergency Management capability at QLDC is led internally by the Resilience & Climate Action team within the Strategy & Policy directorate, working in close partnership with EMO. This reflects a delivery model where QLDC retains responsibility for local readiness, capability development and local response arrangements, while drawing on the regional emergency management system for technical support, training and development, planning and exercise coordination and specialist expertise.
5. During emergency events, QLDC leads the response coordination through the activation of the local Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). The EOC operates using the Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS), which is the standard emergency management framework used across New Zealand. The CIMS model involves a range of functional teams which are staffed by trained volunteers from across Council, supported as required by EMO personnel and partner agency liaison staff. This cross-council staffing model is important because effective emergency management depends on a wider organisational response capability, not only on a small specialist emergency management team.
6. The EOC is led by a Local Controller, supported by a Response Manager and wider Incident Management Team structure. The Controller holds delegated statutory responsibilities and powers under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 during a declared state of emergency, including authority to direct and coordinate the local operational response. These powers sit alongside the governance role of the Mayor and Elected Members in relation to declarations, extensions and transition periods.

## Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

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7. This report is provided for noting only. No discrete options are presented because its purpose is to update the Committee on the current state of emergency management readiness and the external reforms that are influencing QLDC's responsibilities and future capability expectations.

### **NATIONAL LEGISLATION REFORM**

8. The Emergency Management Bill (No.2), introduced in December 2025, proposes the most significant legislative reset of New Zealand's emergency management framework since 2002. It would replace the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 and introduce clearer system architecture, stronger national leadership and assurance, expanded planning and recovery provisions, and enforceable minimum standards across the national Emergency Management system.
9. For local government, the Bill materially strengthens statutory expectations. It introduces clearer local authority duties across hazard and risk management, readiness, response, recovery, community engagement and resourcing, alongside stronger national assurance and compliance powers. Across the sector, this is being viewed as a step-change toward a more regulated framework in which emergency management is increasingly treated as a core local government responsibility rather than a specialist response function.
10. In parallel, the Government's wider local government reform programme has continued to signal that Emergency Management will remain as a core council service. Taken together, these reforms reinforce the expectation that councils continue their investment in Emergency Management capability, supported by clear governance, adequate resourcing, and stronger organisational assurance.
11. Of particular relevance to QLDC is that the Bill introduces clearer local authority responsibilities for hazard and risk management, readiness, response, recovery, community engagement, and resourcing, alongside stronger expectations that councils maintain suitably trained personnel, organisational structures, and the material, services and information needed to perform those functions. In practical terms, this points to emergency management being treated less as a volunteer operational team and more as a whole-of-council assurance responsibility.
12. The Bill also expands what regional and local planning must cover. This includes stronger planning roles and offers of assistance, recovery arrangements, animals in emergencies, and the integration of essential services planning.
13. The proposed reform also broadens the system focus from traditional lifeline utilities toward a wider essential services model. For QLDC, this is important given the district's dependence on transport access, telecommunications, electricity, fuel, water, wastewater, health services, airports and visitor-related infrastructure. The practical effect is likely to be greater emphasis on

vulnerability mapping, essential services coordination, lifelines governance, and clearer interface planning between the EOC and major infrastructure and service providers.

14. A submission on behalf of the Otago CDEM Group was developed through the Coordinating Executive Group and subsequently endorsed by the Joint Committee at its 5 March 2026 meeting (Attachment A). That submission covered QLDC's interests as part of the regional position. The Otago submission was prepared as the representative regional view, reflecting Otago's statutory responsibilities, delivery model, hazard profile and implementation realities. It supports the intent of the Bill, while identifying several critical implementation risks that need to be addressed for the reforms to be effective in practice
15. A key concern across the sector is implementation cost. The Regulatory Impact Statement for the Bill estimates additional costs to local government of approximately \$82.8 million over four years, with no identified mitigation. Otago's submission notes that the Bill introduces significant new obligations without a dedicated funding pathway
16. The main implementation risk identified by both Otago and the wider sector is not policy intent, but delivery. Key concerns include unfunded mandates, implementation timing, compliance obligations without full local control, and the risk that nationally uniform standards may impose significant cost without adequately reflecting regional and district realities. These concerns are directly relevant to QLDC given the district's hazard exposure, dispersed communities, tourism population surges, infrastructure dependencies, and the likelihood that emergency operations may need to be sustained in degraded conditions.
17. At the time of writing, the Governance and Administration Committee is due to report the Bill back to the House on 8 June 2026.

#### **QLDC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT WORK PROGRAMME**

18. In response to the increasing maturity expectations signalled through national reform, QLDC has established an Emergency Management Development Work programme for 2026 (Attachment B). The purpose of the programme is to provide a practical and coordinated pathway for strengthening QLDC's emergency management capability across governance, people, systems, facilities, planning and external coordination. It is intended both to address current readiness gaps and to position Council for the higher expectations that are likely to emerge through legislative reform and national assurance processes.
19. The work programme is organised around eight workstreams:
  - Emergency Management Governance and Strategy
  - EOC Training and Development Programme
  - EOC Facilities and Equipment Investment Plan

- Response Capability Improvement Programme
- Recovery Capability Improvement Programme
- Alpine Fault Planning
- Sector Group Programme
- Community Resilience Group Programme

20. Together, these workstreams are intended to strengthen the core building blocks of a mature emergency management function. This includes clearer leadership and governance, a deeper and more capable workforce, fit-for-purpose facilities and systems, stronger operational doctrine, improved recovery planning, and more effective coordination with infrastructure providers, partner agencies, sectors and communities.

21. The most immediate operational emphasis sits within the training, capability, facilities and response development components of the programme. Priority actions include strengthening induction and training pathways, integrating CDEM training into QLDC systems, improving training reporting, preparing for the annual EOC exercise, progressing a business case for long-term EOC facility investment, developing temporary EOC arrangements, deploying Starlink capability, and auditing communications and IT equipment.

22. The programme also has a strong forward-looking resilience focus through its Alpine Fault Planning, Sector Group and Community Resilience workstreams. Current priorities include the Coordinated Air Response and Evacuation (CARE) Project, an Emergency Food Charter, electricity and roading vulnerability assessments, a Rapid Relief Logistics Plan, and a Fuel Continuity and Prioritisation Plan. Alongside this, the programme is designed to strengthen readiness across critical sectors such as health, lifelines, tourism and accommodation, while continuing to build community resilience through stronger Community Resilience Group arrangements. This broadens emergency management from an internal response capability alone to a district-wide readiness effort involving infrastructure providers, key sectors and local communities.

23. To support delivery, QLDC has also established a clearer governance and operational coordination framework (Attachment C). This framework introduces a structured meeting schedule spanning governance, strategic leadership and operational coordination. At the governance level, oversight is provided through OEC, the Coordinating Executive Group and the Joint Committee. At the strategic leadership level, this is supported by Regional Liaison Group, QLDC–EMO leadership coordination, and quarterly Controller briefings. At the operational level, delivery is supported through a monthly Workplan Coordination Group, quarterly IMT briefings and wider EOC staff briefings.

24. Overall, the development work programme demonstrates that QLDC is already taking practical steps to improve the maturity of its emergency management function. This places QLDC in a

strong position to respond both to its current risk environment and to the higher assurance expectations that are likely to emerge through the reform process.

### **ANNUAL EXERCISE WHAKARITE KIA RITE**

25. On 20 May 2026, QLDC will participate in the regional emergency management exercise **Whakarite Kia Rite**. See Attachment D for the Warning Order.
26. Led by Emergency Management Otago the exercise will involve the simultaneous activation of the Group Emergency Coordination Centre and participating Emergency Operations Centres across the Otago CDEM Group area. The exercise is designed to test regional response arrangements and strengthen interoperability between the GECC (Group Emergency Coordination Centre), district EOCs and key partner agencies through a Tier 2 multi-agency functional exercise conducted within the Coordinated Incident Management System framework. For QLDC, participation will provide an important opportunity to test local response arrangements, operational leadership, information management and coordination with the wider regional emergency management system.
27. QLDC is preparing to participate through a structured two-shift model, with designated functional leads across intelligence, planning, operations, logistics, public information management, welfare, recovery and lifelines coordination. This will enable Council to test staffing depth, shift handover arrangements and functional leadership within a realistic operational environment.
28. The exercise is expected to provide valuable assurance on current readiness, while also identifying opportunities for further improvement across training, systems, communications and operational procedures. As such, Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite will be a significant milestone within the 2026 Emergency Management Development work programme and will help inform QLDC's ongoing programme of emergency management capability uplift.

### **NATIONAL FUEL PLAN AND IMPLICATIONS FOR QLDC**

29. Given the increasing national and regional attention on fuel supply disruption risk, it is appropriate that this report briefly outlines the National Fuel Plan and its relevance to QLDC Emergency Operations Centre. Considerable work is also underway from a Business Continuity Planning perspective which will be covered through other reporting.
30. The National Fuel Plan provides the framework for coordination between government, CDEM Groups and the fuel sector during a major fuel supply disruption. The lead agency for the national response is Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (MBIE), supported by NEMA with the Fuel Sector Coordinating Entity providing industry coordination.
31. Regions are not expected to make independent decisions on fuel allocation or restrictions. Instead, the role of Otago and member councils is to maintain situational awareness, review plans, validate critical customer information, and remain ready to implement national direction if required. The National Fuel Plan anticipates that local CDEM arrangements may need to assist

with critical customer identification, priority retail outlet coordination, and wider consequence management where supply constraints begin to affect essential services.

32. For the QLDC EOC this could result in the following responsibilities:

- Maintaining situational awareness of impacts across emergency services, lifeline utilities, freight, welfare, airport operations and isolated communities.
- Validating local critical customer needs into the wider Otago and national system.
- Supporting the operation of any priority fuel retail arrangements introduced under national direction.

33. If a disruption were to coincide with a declared emergency, the Local Controller could also potentially rely on statutory powers under the CDEM Act relating to the conservation and supply of essential goods, requisitioning as a last resort, and directing actions necessary to limit the extent of the emergency.

#### **NEMA, PARTNER AGENCY AND LIFELINES UPDATES**

34. This section summarises the most relevant recent updates from Emergency Management Otago, NEMA and key partner agency and lifelines workstreams. While much of this activity is being led at regional or national level, it is directly relevant to QLDC because it shapes the systems, relationships, infrastructure dependencies and capability expectations that underpin the district's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from major emergencies.

35. At the March 2026 Joint Committee Meeting NEMA representatives provided an update on the Emergency Management System Improvement Programme (EMSIP), including work on incident intelligence, a modernised warning system, resilient communications, national coordination tools and a future common operating picture. Next Generation Critical Communications is expected to begin offering Public Safety Network cellular services to organisations such as CDEM Groups from mid-2026. Taken together, the legislative reform programme and NEMA system improvement work indicate that future council expectations will increasingly centre on demonstrable readiness rather than general intent. For QLDC this means the Committee should expect a growing focus on evidence of capability, including workforce depth, facility resilience, business continuity integration, alternative communications, trained function leadership, and the ability to coordinate effectively with community networks and essential service provider.

36. Emergency Management Otago is continuing to progress work across risk reduction, readiness and response, community resilience and governance. Current activity includes integration of the Regional Vulnerability Assessment into the next Group Plan, ongoing GIS and common operating picture development, deployable capability work, welfare needs assessment automation, and continued support for community resilience group development. This work is relevant to QLDC because it strengthens the wider regional system that local readiness and response arrangements depend on.

37. Otago Lifelines' coordination is also progressing work that is directly relevant to district readiness. In early 2026 QLDC Councillor Jon Mitchell was appointed Co-Chair of the Otago Lifelines Group alongside Nicole Felts from NZTA. Current lifelines priorities include an alternative communications plan based on the PACE model, review of the regional generator management plan, review of the Otago and Southland Fuel Plan, integration of lifelines into D4H, and further development of the Otago lifelines GIS viewer. Updates from lifeline agencies also reinforce issues that matter locally, including roading resilience pressures, water and wastewater continuity, electricity restoration dependencies, generator logistics, airport resilience and telecommunications backup arrangements.

### Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

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#### Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

38. This matter is of low significance because the report is primarily for noting and does not seek a substantive policy decision, a change in level of service, or new unbudgeted expenditure.
39. The persons affected by or interested in this matter include the residents, ratepayers and visitors of the Queenstown Lakes district, emergency services, lifeline utilities, Emergency Management Otago, community response groups, mana whenua, and internal QLDC teams with response and recovery responsibilities.
40. No formal public consultation has been undertaken for this report. Relevant engagement has occurred through the Otago CDEM Joint Committee and CEG (Co-ordinating Executive Group) processes, the Otago Lifelines Group, regional partner agency forums, and development of the draft QLDC EOC workplan.

#### Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

41. This report references regional emergency management processes in which mana whenua are participating, including CEG membership and work to better integrate marae response groups into CDEM arrangements. No separate QLDC-specific iwi consultation has been undertaken for this quarterly noting report. Targeted engagement with iwi and hapu will continue to be important as local planning, community resilience and response arrangements are developed further.

### Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

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42. This matter relates to the Strategic/Political/Reputation risk category. It is associated with RISK10017 Ineffective Council response to, or recovery from a civil defence emergency event within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a high residual risk rating.
43. The approval of the recommended option will allow Council to implement additional controls for this risk. This will be achieved through the Emergency Management Development work programme, the integration of training programmes into QLDC learning management system,

exercising, alternative communications planning, improved lifeline coordination, and fuel readiness activity.

#### Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

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44. No additional operational or capital expenditure is requested through this report.
45. However, the proposed Emergency Management Bill is expected to create additional cost pressure for local government through expanded planning, assurance, compliance, engagement and capability requirements. The Otago CDEM Group submission has highlighted the risk that, without additional funding support or staged implementation, these obligations may compete directly with operational readiness and capability uplift. For QLDC, this reinforces the need to progressively consider emergency management capability requirements through future work programming, business case development, Long Term Plan processes and organisational planning.

#### Council Effects and Views | Kā Whakaaweawe me kā Tirohaka a te Kaunihera

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46. The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:
- Vision Beyond 2050, particularly the community outcomes relating to disaster-defying resilience and strong communities, as effective emergency management capability is an important enabler of community resilience and recovery.
  - Long Term Plan 2024-2034, as emergency management capability, facilities, training and organisational readiness need to be progressively considered through future work programmes and investment planning.
  - QLDC Risk Management Framework and corporate risk register, as the report relates directly to Council's exposure to ineffective response and recovery arrangements during a major emergency.
  - Relevant organisational business continuity and resilience planning arrangements, as emergency management capability depends on coordinated cross-council preparedness and continuity of critical functions.
  - The QLDC Disability Policy is considered in the development of all CDEM response plans <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/FINAL-Disability-Policy-May-2018.pdf>
47. The recommended option is consistent with the principles of QLDC's strategic framework because it supports Council's role in strengthening local resilience, maintaining readiness for disruptive events, and protecting community wellbeing during emergencies. The report does not propose any inconsistency with existing Council policy or strategy.
48. This matter is included in the Long Term Plan/Annual Plan.

### Legal Considerations and Statutory Responsibilities | Ka Ture Whaiwhakaaro me kā Takohaka Waeture

49. The report is prepared in the context of the current Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 and the proposed Emergency Management Bill currently before Parliament. While the Bill has not yet been enacted, it signals a likely future strengthening of local authority duties, national assurance powers, planning requirements, and compliance expectations. No specific legal decision is sought through this report, but the proposed reform is relevant because it reinforces the expectation that councils maintain mature arrangements for readiness, response, recovery, community engagement, and coordination with essential services.

### Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions | Te Whakatureture 2002 o te Kāwanataka ā-Kiaka

50. Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states that the purpose of local government is to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities, and to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future. Effective emergency management capability supports this purpose by helping Council prepare for, respond to and recover from disruptive events in a way that protects communities, reduces harm, supports continuity of essential services and strengthens long-term district resilience. As such, the recommendations in this report are consistent with the purpose of local government under section 10.

51. The recommended option:

- Can be implemented through current funding under the Long Term Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not significantly alter the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

### Attachments | Kā Tāpirihaka

A	Otago CDEM Group Submission on the Emergency Management Bill
B	2026 QLDC Emergency Management Development Work Programme Summary
C	QLDC Emergency Management Governance & Operational Meeting Framework
D	Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite Warning Order



**Emergency  
Management Otago**  
Te Rākau Whakamarumarū Ōtākou

Emergency Management Otago  
70 Stafford St  
Dunedin

30 January 2026

## **OTAGO CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP**

### **Submission on the Emergency Management Bill (No. 2)**

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#### **Tēnā koutou**

The Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group thanks the Governance and Administration Committee for the opportunity to submit on the Emergency Management Bill (No. 2) (the Bill).

The Otago CDEM Group supports the intent of the Bill to modernise and strengthen New Zealand's emergency management system. The proposed legislation represents a substantive evolution from the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, introducing clearer system architecture, strengthened national leadership and assurance mechanisms, modernised planning and recovery provisions, and enforceable minimum standards across the emergency management system.

However, as a statutory Group directly responsible for implementing the legislation, the Otago CDEM Group is concerned that the Bill introduces significant new obligations, compliance mechanisms, and planning requirements without sufficient attention to sequencing, guidance, capability uplift, and resourcing. Without these enabling components, there is a material risk that the intended benefits of the Bill will not be realised in practice.

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#### **1. Submission Summary**

From an Otago delivery perspective, the reforms proposed in the Bill are timely and necessary. Otago is a geographically large and diverse region with a complex hazard environment that includes high seismic risk, tsunami exposure, severe weather and flooding risk, landslide exposure, wildfire and drought risk, critical infrastructure interdependencies, and significant seasonal population variation across the region.

Effective emergency management in Otago relies on strong regional coordination across six local and central government agencies. The scale and diversity of these partnerships mean that successful implementation of new legislative requirements depends heavily on clarity, sequencing, and resourcing.

This submission places particular emphasis on the importance of commencement being linked to system readiness rather than fixed statutory timeframes alone. The Otago CDEM Group supports strengthened national leadership and assurance powers but considers that these must be exercised proportionately, transparently, and with meaningful consultation. The Group considers that Emergency Management Committees must be supported by professionally staffed regional partnership should be strengthened at the governance level.

The Group also considers that compliance mechanisms should support capability uplift and system improvement rather than drive premature enforcement activity. Finally, the Group considers that unfunded mandates present a critical implementation risk, and that strong alignment is required between emergency management planning, planning reform, and wider local government reform.

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## **2. Submitter Details**

The submitter is the Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management Group, which is a statutory emergency management group established under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 and proposed to continue as an Emergency Management Committee under the Bill. The Otago CDEM Group comprises the Otago Regional Council as administering authority, along with Central Otago District Council, Clutha District Council, Dunedin City Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council, and Waitaki District Council. Together, these councils collectively govern, fund, and deliver emergency management arrangements across the Otago region.

The Group is supported operationally by Emergency Management Otago (EMO), a professionally staffed regional emergency management office. EMO provides governance advice, coordinates regional readiness and planning activity, supports response and recovery operations, leads regional training and exercising, facilitates lifeline utility coordination, and works alongside communities and iwi to strengthen regional resilience.

This submission reflects the Group's role as a delivery body responsible for preparing and maintaining the regional emergency management plan, coordinating readiness, response and recovery across multiple councils, supporting elected members and chief executives, working alongside iwi, emergency services, lifeline utilities and communities, and implementing national policy and legislative change at both regional and local levels.

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## **3. Commencement and Phasing (Priority Issue)**

From an Otago delivery perspective, commencement design is one of the most critical determinants of whether the Bill succeeds in practice.

The Bill introduces new planning, coordination, assurance, and compliance obligations that will require the development of national rules, standards and operational guidance, workforce capability uplift across councils and partner agencies, changes to governance and operational arrangements, and alignment with concurrent local government and planning reforms.

The introduction of compliance orders represents a fundamental shift in the emergency management assurance and accountability framework. From an Otago Group perspective, a six-month lead-in timeframe is unlikely to be sufficient unless thresholds for issuing compliance orders are clearly defined, compliance expectations are stable and well understood, and the relationship between assurance, improvement, and enforcement is clearly articulated. Premature commencement risks diverting limited professional capacity away from readiness and community engagement into defensive compliance activity.

The Otago CDEM Group considers that compliance orders should not commence until guidance, thresholds, and escalation pathways are published and councils have had a realistic opportunity to address known capability gaps.

The proposed requirement for territorial authority chief executives to coordinate emergency management resources outside of declared emergencies represents a significant uplift in expectation. From an Otago delivery perspective, this requirement will need clear national guidance on scope and prioritisation, clarity on how these responsibilities interact with regional coordination arrangements, and sufficient implementation time for councils to establish resource inventories,

agreements and supporting systems. The Otago Group also notes the absence of regional council chief executives from this provision despite their critical role in regional coordination.

The Otago CDEM Group considers that the commencement of these provisions should be tied to the availability of guidance, allow for realistic implementation timeframes, and include regional councils.

The Otago Group supports new planning requirements relating to disproportionately affected communities, offers of assistance, and animal management in principle. However, the Group considers that these provisions require nationally consistent definitions, templates, and guidance to avoid fragmented or inequitable implementation across regions.

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#### **4. National Leadership and Assurance**

The Otago CDEM Group supports stronger national leadership and assurance through the Director-General of Emergency Management, including the availability of default and step-in powers where system performance is at risk.

However, these expanded powers represent a material centralisation of authority. From a regional delivery perspective, their effectiveness will depend on proportionality, transparency, and meaningful engagement with Emergency Management Committees.

The Otago CDEM Group is concerned that informal guidance, statements, or expectations could become de facto mandatory without appropriate consultation or transition time.

The Group considers that national assurance powers should be exercised to strengthen regional capability and consistency rather than undermining local delivery through uncertainty or unfunded expectations. Mandatory consultation on secondary instruments that drive compliance is considered essential.

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#### **5. Regional Governance and Delivery**

The Otago CDEM Group supports the transition from Joint Committees to Emergency Management Committees and supports the clearer delineation between committee functions and individual council responsibilities.

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does not reflect the strategic governance role iwi already play in many regions. The Group considers

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governance level while allowing flexibility for regions to design partnership arrangements that reflect local tikanga, relationships, and capability.

The Otago Group's operational experience demonstrates that effective modern emergency management requires a professionally staffed regional emergency management office rather than administrative support alone. The Group considers that the Bill should explicitly recognise the need for suitably resourced regional emergency management offices led by emergency management professionals and accountable to Emergency Management Committees.

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#### **6. Compliance, Enforcement and Liability**

The Otago CDEM Group supports the availability of modern compliance and enforcement tools and expanded civil liability protections.

However, the Group considers that compliance tools must support system improvement rather than create fear-based compliance environments. The Group considers that compliance orders should be a last-resort tool used where there is a clear risk to system performance and after improvement-focused mechanisms have been exhausted.

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## **7. Implementation Risk, Resourcing and Hazard Planning Alignment**

The Bill introduces significant new obligations without dedicated funding pathways. For the Otago CDEM Group, this risk is amplified by the scale and geographic diversity of the region, the reliance on shared service delivery across multiple councils, and the increasing frequency and severity of emergency events. Without funding support, implementation activity will compete directly with operational readiness and response capability.

The Otago CDEM Group is particularly concerned about the interface between emergency management hazard identification duties, land-use hazard management under planning reform, and long-term infrastructure and investment planning under local government legislation. Without alignment between these systems, there is a risk of duplication, inconsistent hazard treatment across regulatory frameworks, and increased cost to local government and communities.

The Group considers that national templates, standardised methodologies, aligned plan review cycles, and clear statutory alignment between emergency management plans, spatial plans, and long-term plans are essential to effective implementation.

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## **8. Conclusion**

The Otago CDEM Group supports the overall direction of the Emergency Management Bill (No. 2). The primary implementation risk lies not in policy intent, but in implementation design.

The Otago CDEM Group urges the Select Committee to ensure that commencement is tied to system readiness, national powers are exercised proportionately, regional delivery capability is properly supported, compliance tools are improvement-focused, and hazard planning obligations are aligned across the wider legislative system.

The Otago CDEM Group welcomes the opportunity to appear before the Committee to speak to this submission.

Neil Gillespie  
Chair  
Otago Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group

# Emergency Management Work Programme

## PROGRAMME SNAPSHOT

- The work programme is organised around eight linked workstreams that together cover governance, training, facilities, response, recovery, Alpine Fault planning, sector coordination, and community resilience.
- Most actions are still in early set-up stages, with timing budget, and status fields completed in the workbook.
- The strongest signs of progress are currently in the governance and strategy area, where the Emergency Management Bill submission is complete and several enabling actions are underway.
- A significant share of the programme is focused on building the operating foundations QLDC needs to function as a mature emergency management service, including governance settings, EOC systems, recovery arrangements, and partner coordination.
- Many actions are enabling pieces that need to be in place before operational maturity can improve, including delegations, meeting structures, training systems, equipment audits, and templates.
- The programme recognises that response capability alone is not enough. Recovery governance, impact assessment, infrastructure prioritisation, and community recovery planning are all included as dedicated development tasks.

## WORKSTREAM OVERVIEW

Workstream	Objective focus
<b>1. Governance &amp; Strategy</b>	Establish a clear strategic framework that positions Emergency Management as a core council service, aligning governance, policy, and investment decisions with legislative reform, risk profile, and long-term resilience outcomes.
<b>2. Training &amp; Capability</b>	Build a trained and capable Emergency Operations Centre workforce with clearly defined roles, competencies, and exercise experience with sufficient capacity to manage the EOC across two operations shifts.
<b>3. EOC Facilities &amp; Equipment Investment</b>	Develop and maintain fit-for-purpose EOC facilities, systems, and equipment that enable reliable, scalable, and sustained response operations under a range of emergency scenarios.
<b>4. Response System Development</b>	Establish robust response systems, processes, and protocols that enable timely, coordinated, and effective decision-making and operational delivery during emergency events.

# Emergency Management Work Programme

<b>5. Recovery System Development</b>	Establish a structured and scalable recovery framework that enables timely transition from response to recovery and supports coordinated social, economic, cultural, and infrastructure recovery outcomes.
<b>6. AF8 Planning</b>	Ensure QLDC is prepared for a large-scale, prolonged disruption scenario by developing and embedding coordinated planning, response, and continuity arrangements aligned with AF8 impacts and national frameworks.
<b>7. Sector Group Programme</b>	Strengthen coordination and readiness across lifeline utilities and key sectors to support integrated response, prioritised service restoration, and critical infrastructure resilience during emergencies.
<b>8. CRG Programme</b>	Empower communities to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to emergencies through strengthened local networks, capability building, and clear links to the formal emergency management system.

## 1. GOVERNANCE & STRATEGY

**Objective:** Establish a clear strategic framework that positions Emergency Management as a core council service, aligning governance, policy, and investment decisions with legislative reform, risk profile, and long-term resilience outcomes.

### 1.1 KEY ACTIONS

- **Emergency Management Bill submission.** Review draft Emergency Management Bill and develop plan for QLDC submission
- **OEC- Governance Reporting.** Provide quarterly Emergency Management Update reporting to Organisational Excellence Committee
- **Delegations Register Update.** Update QLDC Delegations Register for CDEM Act 2002 responsibilities and financial delegations for Controller role
- **EM Governance & Operational Meeting Framework.** Develop a framework for all Governance and Operational coordination meetings for the Emergency Management function
- **Cost Centre restructure.** Update the 105 cost centre so it has an appropriate financial account structure to support both peace-time cost management and response costs management

## 2 TRAINING & CAPABILITY

**Objective:** Build a trained and capable Emergency Operations Centre workforce with clearly defined roles, competencies, and exercise experience with sufficient capacity to manage the EOC across two operations shifts.

# Emergency Management Work Programme

## 2.1 KEY ACTIONS

- **QLDC Induction.** Add CDEM to Proud to Be induction workshop. Ensure that there is a slide in the presentation and that EMO staff are assigned to each workshop.
- **Transfer CDEM Courses into QLDC LMS.** Develop summaries of each of the four CDEM training courses and upload these into the new QLDC Learning Management System (LMS).
- **EOC Training Programme Presentation.** Develop a presentation to explain the EOC Training Programme.
- **QLDC EOC Training Reporting.** Develop new training reporting structure with P&C and EMO to ensure that QLDC EOC training stats are up to date and can be fed into the CEG and Joint Committee reporting.
- **EMO Training programme.** Deliver the EMO training programme for QLDC Staff. Provide quarterly update reporting.

## 3 EOC FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT INVESTMENT

**Objective:** Develop and maintain fit-for-purpose EOC facilities, systems, and equipment that enable reliable, scalable, and sustained response operations under a range of emergency scenarios.

### 3.1 KEY ACTIONS

- **EOC Facility Business Case.** Develop business case for long-term investment options for a QLDC EOC facility.
- **Temporary EOC Plan.** Develop a set of operational plans that show how a temporary pop-up EOC can be set up in various sites within Council's existing property portfolio, including QEC.
- **Starlink Communications.** Deploy the handout of all 10 starlink modules.
- **Communications Equipment.** Conduct audit of current equipment and then develop business case and inventory list of required communications equipment upgrades.
- **EOC IT equipment.** Conduct audit of current IT equipment and then develop business case and inventory list of required IT equipment upgrades.

## 4 RESPONSE SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

**Objective:** Establish robust response systems, processes, and protocols that enable timely, coordinated, and effective decision-making and operational delivery during emergency events.

### 4.1 KEY ACTIONS

- **EOC Booklets.** Hand out the EOC booklets to all EOC staff
- **D4H Process Improvement.** Ongoing improvement programme to update D4H forms, procedures, registers and document libraries.

# Emergency Management Work Programme

- **Build EOC and ICC Operating Model.** Confirm how the EOC, WICC and any Queenstown urban ICC will operate together, including reporting lines, tasking flows, liaison arrangements, and delegation of functions.
- **EOC Activation Playbook.** Produce a practical EOC activation playbook for the first 0 to 12 hours covering triggers, notifications, staffing call-out, initial controller actions, comms checks, declaration processes.
- **EOC Communications PACE plan.** Develop a PACE plan for the EOC that specifies Primary, Alternate, Contingency and Emergency communication channels.

## 5 RECOVERY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

**Objective:** Establish a structured and scalable recovery framework that enables timely transition from response to recovery and supports coordinated social, economic, cultural, and infrastructure recovery outcomes.

### 5.1 KEY ACTIONS

- **Develop QLDC Recovery System Framework.** Prepare a district-wide recovery system framework that defines how QLDC will organise, lead, and coordinate short, medium, and long-term recovery following a major emergency.
- **Finalise Recovery Governance Structure.** Establish the proposed governance and management structure for recovery, including roles for Local Recovery Manager, governance oversight, recovery leadership team, and links to Otago regional recovery arrangements.
- **Build Recovery Information Library.** Collate and localize recovery information resources that will help guide how the function will operate, including team structure, reporting, planning cycle.
- **Develop Recovery Impact Assessment Framework.** Establish a framework for gathering and analysing recovery impacts across the social, built, economic, cultural, and natural environments to support recovery prioritisation and decision-making.
- **Develop Community Recovery Planning Approach.** Create a district approach for community-led recovery planning, including engagement with affected communities, CRGs, iwi, business groups, and local partners to identify priorities.

## AF8 PLANNING

**Objective:** Ensure QLDC is prepared for a large-scale, prolonged disruption scenario by developing and embedding coordinated planning, response, and continuity arrangements aligned with AF8 impacts and national frameworks.

### 5.2 KEY ACTIONS

# Emergency Management Work Programme

- **Coordinated Air Response & Evacuation (CARE Project).** Establish a coordinated, scalable air evacuation and logistics system to support mass movement of people, reconnaissance, and critical supply delivery in a severely isolated district.
- **Emergency Food Charter.** Establish a coordinated framework with local suppliers, logistics providers, and welfare agencies to ensure equitable access to food and essential supplies for the community for at least 14 days following an Alpine Fault event.
- **Electricity Network AF8 Vulnerability Assessment.** Work with Transpower, Aurora and Powernet to assess the resilience of the local electricity network under an Alpine Fault scenario to identify critical vulnerabilities, prioritise restoration of key assets, and inform investment in backup power and distributed energy solutions.
- **Roading Network AF8 Vulnerability Assessment.** Work with NZTA Waka Kotahi to identify and assess vulnerabilities across the roading network to determine priority routes, likely failure points, and restoration strategies required to support emergency response.
- **Rapid Relief Logistics Plan.** Develop a scalable logistics system to enable the efficient receipt, staging, and distribution of critical supplies into and across the district during periods of isolation following an Alpine Fault event.

## SECTOR GROUP PROGRAMME

**Objective:** Strengthen coordination and readiness across lifeline utilities and key sectors to support integrated response, prioritised service restoration, and critical infrastructure resilience during emergencies.

### 5.3 KEY ACTIONS

- **Emergency Services (COLES).** Coordinates operational planning and information sharing across Police, Fire and Emergency NZ, St John, Coastguard and other emergency response partners to strengthen readiness for major emergencies.
- **Health Sector Group.** Brings together health and public health partners to plan for the continuity of health services and the management of mass casualty, medical evacuation, public health, and psychosocial support needs during emergencies.
- **Otago Lifelines Group.** Supports coordinated planning across lifeline utilities and infrastructure providers to improve resilience, situational awareness, and restoration priorities during emergencies.
- **Tourism Operators Group.** Provides a forum for tourism operators to strengthen emergency preparedness, business continuity, and operational coordination in a district with large visitor volumes and high tourism exposure
- **Accommodation Sector Group.** Supports accommodation providers to prepare for their critical role in sheltering, informing, and supporting visitors and displaced people during emergencies.

## 8. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE GROUP PROGRAMME

**Objective:** Empower communities to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to emergencies through strengthened local networks, capability building, and clear links to the formal emergency management system.

### 5.4 KEY ACTIONS

- **CRG Communications and Knowledge Sharing Project.** Develop a district-wide CRG communications project including a regular newsletter, shared updates, case studies, lessons learned, and a simple mechanism for groups to share resources and learnings.
- **Community Hub Signage Programme.** Invest in consistent signage so all Community Emergency Hubs are clearly identified before and after an event, including permanent external signage and deployable hub signage kits.
- **Establish Queenstown Central CRG.** Form a new Community Response Group for Queenstown Central, including recruitment of local champions, venue identification, hub model, governance support, and onboarding.
- **Annual CRG Hui.** Coordinate an annual district-wide hui bringing all CRGs together for relationship building, shared learning, guest speakers, scenario discussion, and work programme alignment.
- **CRG Exercise Programme.** Deliver an annual exercise programme for CRGs, ranging from tabletop to hub activation drills, including one district-wide exercise involving multiple groups.

## EM Governance & Operational Coordination Framework

### 1 PURPOSE

This framework establishes a structured governance, leadership and coordination meeting structure to support delivery of the 2026 QLDC EOC Workplan and position Emergency Management as a core council service.

Its purpose is to strengthen alignment between QLDC and Emergency Management Otago (EMO), provide oversight of the EOC workplan delivery, lift capability across Controllers, IMT, and the wider EOC workforce, and embed Emergency Management as a core council service.

It provides clear line of sight from operational delivery through to executive and political governance, ensuring readiness risks, capability uplift and Inter-Agency dependencies are actively managed.

### 2 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OVERVIEW

The framework is split across the following tiers:

- **Strategic Governance (Oversight & Accountability):** Organisational Excellence Committee (OEC), Coordinating Executive Group (CEG), Joint Committee
- **Strategic Leadership (Direction & Alignment):** Liaison Group, Controller Briefing, QLDC-EMO Leadership 1:1,
- **Operational Coordination (Delivery):** Workplan Coordination Group (WCG), IMT Briefing, All EOC Briefing

### 3 STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE

#### 3.1 JOINT COMMITTEE

- **Purpose:** Provides political governance and assurance that Emergency Management arrangements across the Otago region are fit for purpose, including oversight of capability development and readiness.
- **Frequency** – Quarterly
- **Lead-** Councillor Jon Mitchell

#### 3.2 COORDINATING EXECUTIVE GROUP

- **Purpose:** Provides executive-level coordination across lifeline utilities and agencies, with a focus on readiness, interdependencies and system-wide risks.
- **Frequency** – Quarterly
- **Lead-** Michelle Morss

## 3.3 ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

- **Purpose-** QLDC Governance oversight of Emergency Management capability development and activation reporting
- **Frequency** – Quarterly
- **Lead-** Bill Nicoll

## 4 STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

### 4.1 REGIONAL LIASON GROUP

- **Purpose-** Senior leadership coordination of regional Emergency Management capability development
- **Frequency** – Quarterly
- **Lead-** Bill Nicoll
- **Members:** CODC, WDC, CDC, DCC

### 4.2 QLDC-EMO LEADERSHIP1:1

- **Purpose-** Leadership coordination of EMO and QLDC Workplans
- **Frequency** – monthly
- **Lead-** Bill Nicoll, Courtenay Jamieson

### 4.3 CONTROLLER BRIEFING

- **Purpose-** Controller briefing of strategic and operational updates
- **Frequency** – Quarterly
- **Lead-** Bill Nicoll
- **Members:** Tony Avery, Katherine Harbrow, Ken Bailey

## 5 OPERATIONAL COORDINATION

### 5.1 WORKPLAN COORDINATION GROUP (WCG)

- **Purpose-** Operational coordination of EMO and QLDC workplans
- **Frequency** – Monthly
- **Lead-**
- **Members:** Craig Gibson, Dave Grimes, Jacqui Lambeth, Courtenay Jamieson, Bill Nicoll, Allan Wainwright, Christine Schafer, Shelley Dawson, Simon Jopson

- **Key Outputs:** Updated workplan status (RAG), Identified delivery risks and mitigation actions, Agreed next-month priorities.

## 5.2 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (IMT) BRIEFING

- **Purpose-** CIMS Functional Manager briefing on progress of workplan and key strategic and operational updates
- **Frequency** – Monthly
- **Lead-** Bill Nicoll
- **Members:** EMO Staff, all QLDC Functional Managers

## 5.3 ALL EOC BRIEFING

- **Purpose-** Briefing for all QLDC EOC staff on progress of workplan and key operational updates
- **Frequency** – Biannual
- **Lead-** Bill Nicoll, EMO staff
- **Members:** All EOC Staff

# EXERCISE ‘WHAKARITE KIA RITE’ WARNING ORDER

“Prepare to be ready”

The purpose of this warning order is to provide advance warning that Emergency Management Otago’s **Exercise Whakarite Kia Rite** will be conducted on **Wednesday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2026**. Your agency will be formally invited to participate by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

## 1.0 Overview

<b>Exercise need</b>	To test regional response arrangements to ensure the Otago CDEM Group is meeting the expectations set out within Section 17 of the <i>CDEM Act 2002</i> .
<b>Exercise aim</b>	To strengthen regional coordination and enhance interoperability between the Group Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC), District Council Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs), and key response stakeholders and partners, by practising integrated response arrangements within the CIMS framework during a simulated emergency scenario.
<b>Exercise location</b>	All participating EOCs/GECC will stand up simultaneously on May 20, 2026.
<b>Exercise type</b>	<p>Tier 2 Multi-Agency - Functional Exercise</p> <p>These events occur in an operational environment and require participants to perform the functions of their respective roles (CIMS). A complex response activity is simulated, lacking only the personnel “on the ground” to create a full-scale exercise. Participants interact within a simulated environment through an exercise control group that provides prewritten injects and responds to questions and tasks developed out of the exercise. Injects will be district-specific, link to the exercise objectives, and include opportunities for both sending and receiving information with the GECC/EOCs.</p>
<b>Exercise dates</b>	<b>Wednesday, the 20th of May 2026</b>
<b>Participation</b>	<p>The exercise will be conducted via 2x 4-hour shifts</p> <p>Shift 1 – 8:30am – 12:30pm</p> <p>Shift 2 – 11:30am – 3:30pm</p> <p>The following Otago Territorial Authority Emergency Operation Centres (EOCs) are invited to participate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ORC – GECC,</li> <li>QLDC – EOC</li> <li>DCC – EOC</li> <li>CDC – EOC</li> <li>CODC – EOC</li> <li>WDC – EOC</li> </ul> <p>Several support agencies will be invited to participate in the exercise on the day, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki</li> <li>Te Rūnanga o Moeraki</li> <li>Ōtākou Rūnaka</li> </ul>

