



7 July 2014

▶ **Submission to the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management regarding the NCDEM Revised Plan**

Submission Provided by:

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▶ **Introductory Points**

1. This submission by Volunteering NZ relates to the Revised National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan and its amendments.
2. Volunteering New Zealand has canvassed its membership about the submission by seeking responses to three specific questions:

➤ *Should volunteer effort be more specifically acknowledged in the revised Plan?*

(Currently, volunteers are mentioned as being part of community resilience, but there is no explicit acknowledgement of the important role played by volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations and groups, in sustaining and building community-based capability and capacity, in relation to all the 4 R's).

➤ *Do you agree that we submit that the Plan explicitly recognises four commitments in the current government policy on volunteering? They are stated below:*

- i. ensuring that volunteers have appropriate protection under law
- ii. ensuring good practice in volunteer programmes which government directly manages

- iii. encouraging community and voluntary organisations to develop and maintain good practice in supporting and involving their volunteers
- iv. reducing barriers associated with volunteering in legislation, policy and practice.

3. *Should there be a statement about diversity, as a factor in community resilience?*

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## ► Submission

- 4. Current policy on community development and volunteering aims to ensure that volunteers have appropriate protection under law and that barriers associated with volunteering in legislation, policy and practice are reduced. To this end, we agree with the intent of the Revised Plan as it relates to the volunteering community, and we support the broader content of the Plan, in principle.
- 5. Specifically, we support that the Revised Plan makes reference to the import and significance of an engaged and diverse volunteer community ‘ready and able’ in all the four stages of emergency management. Specifically in the following sections:

*s19(7): Volunteers do not have roles and responsibilities in this plan but they are acknowledged as an important resource and are often an integral part of response and recovery activities.*

*s101(2)(f) and (g): The CDEM competency framework provides a foundation for recruitment, selection, performance management, and needs-based capability development for roles in CDEM, including—*

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*(f) management, staff, and volunteers from emergency services; and*

*(g) management, staff, and volunteers from community service and welfare agencies who have a role to play during emergencies;*

- 6. While the Plan makes reference to the import and significance of volunteers in Emergency Management and their training and development, there is no specific direction provided as to who provides the increased support mechanisms and principles of engagement needed to ensure this level of commitment to resilience can be sustained. This creates a burden of risk that will be carried by some volunteer-involving organisations, and potentially ignored by many.
- 7. In assessing how to manage risks associated with a national emergency, it is difficult for anyone to have a true picture of the capacity and capability of the volunteer sector to contribute or otherwise. If the potential of the volunteer community to add to community resilience is underestimated, this may result in more public spending than necessary. In the case of overestimating volunteer capacity and capability, impacts would be across the spectrum of social, economic, environmental.

8. Volunteers are involved and central to all four R's of emergency management. Some in official emergency management capacities (e.g. The volunteer centre in Nelson works directly with Nelson Civil Defence staff about how to manage volunteers in the event of a disaster, or the Volunteer Student Army helping with recovery efforts in Christchurch or official New Zealand Fire Service volunteers) but many as touch points or managers of people and resources within groups they volunteer for in the wider community.
  9. The current Government Policy (2002) on Volunteering recognises that volunteering is an essential element of civil society and as such makes several commitments to increase and enhance volunteering within government agencies. These commitments could be articulated within the Revised NCDEM Plan. For the purposes of this submission we list the relevant commitments below:
    - a) ensuring that volunteers have appropriate protection under law
    - b) ensuring good practice in volunteer programmes which government directly manages
    - c) encouraging community and voluntary organisations to develop and maintain good practice in supporting and involving their volunteers
    - d) reducing barriers associated with volunteering in legislation, policy and practice
  10. We believe that explicitly stating (and thus giving recognition to these commitments within the Plan), will also fulfil a need for diversity to be acknowledged as an important factor in developing and sustaining community resilience.
  11. MCDEM has a duty of care to support and care for all volunteers under this Act and there should be clear statements about the use, care and protection etc. of volunteers.
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