



## Media release

12 November 2007

### **Simulated volcanic eruption in Auckland: NZ's biggest civil defence emergency management exercise begins**

What will become New Zealand's biggest national civil defence emergency management (CDEM) exercise, officially begins on Tuesday 13 November 2007.

Auckland's acting regional CDEM group Controller, Ewen Hutchinson, said that Exercise Ruaumoko will test the country's response in the lead up to a simulated volcanic eruption in Auckland.

On November 13 at Mt Smart Stadium about 115 people will be briefed at a meeting hosted by the Auckland regional CDEM group. The participants will be from emergency services, local authorities, the CDEM sector, science organisations, welfare organisations, utilities, first responders and central government.

Within the exercise, they will be told that the simulated first rumblings of the Auckland volcanic field have been detected and will culminate in a simulated eruption on 13-14 March 2008.

"While the lead at this stage of the exercise lies firmly with the regional group, we must take the precaution of being prepared more widely. Our preparation and response must be at national, regional and local levels," Mr Hutchinson said. "A major event in Auckland would have social and economic implications for the whole country and for our international reputation."

The exercise will involve more than 100 national, regional and local organisations. Many of them do not have day-to-day working relationships but the exercise will make them plan and work together.

"For example, a local council, GNS Science and the central government agencies are unlikely to have often worked together on a particular issue. However, that is exactly what Exercise Ruaumoko is going to make us all do," Mr Hutchinson said.

"We will have to work through leadership, business, community and safety themes."

The sorts of issues to be worked through include:

- Who exactly will make decisions, and how? Decisions that have international, national, regional and local consequences for New Zealand and our communities must be co-ordinated and consistent.
- Planning for and managing continuance of business, the economy and government.
- Understanding and managing social implications, e.g. people's reactions to a possible eruption, and continuance of services to the population.
- Planning and distributing information about preparedness, response and recovery.

Mr Hutchinson said that Ruaumoko will be a desk-top exercise. "Exercise control" has planned a scenario that will roll-out over the next four months. The organisations involved do not know the full details and will have to respond to simulated events as they are advised of them.

The organisations will react by getting together, pooling information and planning their responses. The wide range of documents that they produce, including common standard operating processes, response plans, evacuation plans, public information etc, would become the blueprints for responding to an actual eruption should that ever occur.

The exercise will not include physical field activities. It will not cause any disruption to Auckland, and while public warnings, evacuations and the like will be drafted and planned, they will not be issued or carried out.

### **Related documents downloadable from the MCDEM website**

Background information

Ruaumoko brochure

### **Media contacts**

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