



Whakaari/White Island Eruption Recovery

Briefing for CDEM Group
Joint Committee

26 June 2020
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Whakaari Eruption – 09 December 2019

- 🚧 The eruption lasted about 10 minutes
- 🚧 47 people on the Island at eruption; all severely injured
- 🚧 7 nationalities, 24 of the 47 being Australian
- 🚧 Response ended and transitioned to Recovery on 20 December 2019
- 🚧 As Whakaari/White Island is a separate territorial authority outside the BoP CDEM Group, the recovery is led by Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Recovery Manager on behalf of the Minister of Local Government

The People

(as at 08 June 2020)

Of the 47 people who were on the island at the time of the eruption:

- 🚨 24 survivors not in hospital (many in ongoing treatment)
- 🚨 0 remain in hospitals in New Zealand or Australia
- 🚨 2 remain in hospital in Germany
- 🚨 21 have passed away (including 2 unaccounted for who have been determined by the Chief Coroner to be deceased)

Introduction

The Bay of Plenty CDEM Group is the lead agency for the Whakaari/White Island Eruption recovery, in partnership with Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa.

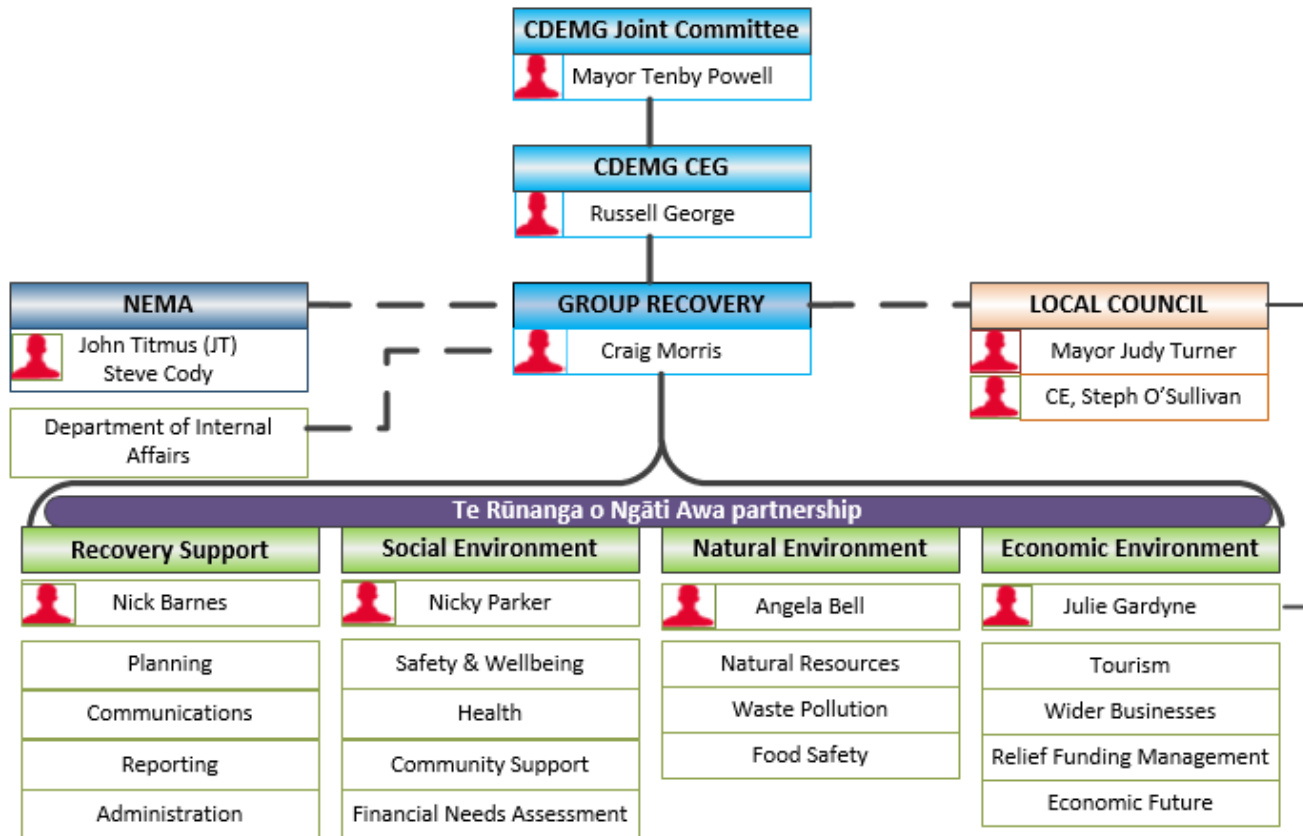
A Leaders' Group consisting of senior representatives from key support organisations and iwi was established and will continue to support recovery efforts



The Challenges

- ⚠️ Rapid escalation from a local event, to a national to an international event in a matter of hours
- ⚠️ The specific skills and facilities required to care for the victims overwhelmed New Zealand hospitals and required coordination across the country
- ⚠️ Whakaari is a privately owned island and not part of the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group
- ⚠️ Continuing media interest at ‘anniversary’ dates

Group Recovery Office



Leaders' Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose

1. The Whakaari/White Island Leaders' Group (Leaders' Group) is a group of entities that have roles and responsibilities in recovery.
2. Its purpose is to:
 - support the CDEM Recovery effort following the response to the Whakaari/White Island eruption on 09 December 2019;
 - ensure the effective coordination of recovery activities;
 - provide effective and proactive leadership;
 - resolve issues with recovery if they arise, including identifying the need for policy interventions or extra measures of assistance;
 - provide recovery related information to the National Emergency Management Agency and receive recovery related information from the National Emergency Management Agency in order that appropriate policy advice can be provided to their respective parties;
 - ensure good communication channels between Group members; and
 - monitor and report on progress of the recovery.

Mandate

3. The Leaders' Group has an oversight, rather than a governance, role.
4. Members of the Leaders' Group will directly lead recovery related work in their entities where doing so supports a timely and effective recovery.



Social Environment Impacts

- 🚧 The eruption has had far-reaching impacts on the victims, and their families and friends It has also had a lasting impact on the community including first responders, witnesses, operational staff, Ngāti Awa hapū and iwi and affected businesses
- 🚧 This event is only 2 years after the flood that severely impacted Edgecumbe and surrounding communities
- 🚧 The main social impacts have been caused by injury to or loss of loved ones, cultural trauma, exposure to deeply distressing injuries, and financial uncertainty
- 🚧 The compounding effect of COVID-19 has made it impractical to support the social and cultural environment separately, so this environment will be supported through COVID-19 Recovery

Economic Environment Impacts

- ⚠️ A number of businesses have been directly affected by the eruption
Tour operators face an uncertain future, which has created financial challenges for both employers and employees
- ⚠️ The event led to a decline in both domestic and international tourism; it impacted a number of businesses who rely on the tourism industry such as retail, hospitality and accommodation
- ⚠️ As economic impacts are realised by businesses it caused stress and anxiety to them and the wider community resulting in adverse social impacts
- ⚠️ The compounding effect of COVID-19 has made it impractical to support the economic environment separately, so this environment will be supported through COVID-19 Recovery

Natural Environment Impacts

- ⚠️ The specific impacts to the natural environment are currently unknown, although overseas and recent local research suggests that there may be a food safety (kaimoana) risk for more sedentary and filter feeder species, such as crayfish and mussels, directly around the Island
- ⚠️ Ministry for Primary Industries has taken precautionary measures to protect the health of the community through a food safety advisory
- ⚠️ Ministry for Primary Industries has also awarded a 2-year contract to the University of Waikato to study the impacts of the eruption on the natural environment
- ⚠️ The ongoing management of offshore islands is currently being reviewed by Department of Internal Affairs

Risk Management

- ⚠ Risk management of Whakaari/White Island is the responsibility of the Department of Internal Affairs on behalf of the Minister of Local Government, who is the territorial authority for the island
- ⚠ The future of Whakaari/White Island is of vital importance and Whakatāne District Council will be linked in to all discussions and meetings related to the future of the Island
- ⚠ GNS Science are also an important party as they monitor volcanic conditions on the Island

Where we are now

- ➊ The response and recovery actions for COVID-19 have largely overtaken Whakaari/White Island recovery activities in the Social and Economic environments
- ➋ Recovery activities in the Natural environment are longer-term
- ➌ Remaining activities include:
 - Revitalisation and diversification of economy [Whakatāne District Council]
 - Recovery of any victim personal effects remaining on the Island [NZ Police and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa]
 - Memorial to the victims of the eruption [Department of Internal Affairs and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa]
 - Reimbursement of Recovery costs [Department of Internal Affairs]
 - Ongoing public information [Whakatāne District Council]

