

05 February 2019

New Zealand Fly in Team (NZ-FIT) submissions
Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management
PO Box 5010
Wellington 6145
Rachel.walker@dpmc.govt.nz

Dear Rachel,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the New Zealand Fly in Team (NZ-FIT) concept paper 12 December 2018. As the document notes, the TAG review published in August 2018 recommended the establishment of national fly in teams to be comprised of professionals drawn from a variety of agencies to provide support to the local or regional Controller or Recovery Manager. On 30 August 2018 Government decisions about the emergency management system reform were announced, including new investment to establish New Zealand Fly In Teams. We acknowledge the Ministry for its rapid development of the fly in team concept from this stage.

We note that the feedback was due by 28 January 2019. We understand this is an urgent paper, noting that the timeline for response covers the main holiday period for New Zealand. It has therefore not been possible to synchronise our Group Meetings to discuss this paper, or to coordinate discussions with senior MCDEM staff, within the deadline.

The Auckland CDEM Group requested an extension of time to Tuesday 5 February to be able to discuss this important topic at its Coordinating Executive group (CEG) meeting, noting that its CDEM Group Committee discussion will not be held until 25 February 2019. This submission was considered and discussed by the CEG at its meeting on 04 February 2019, and the CEG agreed the following points, which are discussed in more detail below, noting that some of the National Agencies represented at our CEG have also fed back separately to MCDEM on a national basis.

In summary, Auckland CDEM group supports the general principle of FIT teams nationally. We note that the document is a concept proposal and recommend that further concept development incorporates the need for greater understanding of the distinction of the Auckland region specifics and the application of FIT teams within the Auckland context, including how we coordinate emergency management functions in Auckland, our governance arrangements and our super-diversity.

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We endorse and commend the intention to build capability in the sector and develop professional competences for emergency management staff and volunteers. Feedback in this submission focuses on the core areas that the proposal touches on being the implications of Fly In Teams to Auckland Emergencies and the availability of Auckland staff for FIT roles, in the context of not being full time emergency management professionals, and having other paid roles outside of emergencies. We welcome further exploration of how these volunteers can contribute to and learn from FIT arrangements.

The FIT team concept was discussed in development at the National Emergency Management Development Group meeting on the 24 October 2018. The feedback raises some of the wider points including in that discussion.

If you require any clarification on any aspect of the submission please contact Sarah Sinclair, Acting Director Auckland Emergency Management, on 021 331 767, or by email at sarah.sinclair@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Sinclair
Acting Director Auckland Emergency Management, Auckland Council

Submission to the

Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management

DRAFT New Zealand Fly In Team (NZ-FIT)

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Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the New Zealand Fly in Team (NZ-FIT) concept paper 12 December 2018. As the document notes, the TAG review published in August 2018 recommended the establishment of national fly in teams to be comprised of professionals drawn from a variety of agencies to provide support to the local or regional Controller or Recovery Manager. On 30 August 2018 Government decisions about the emergency management system reform were announced, including new investment to establish New Zealand Fly In Teams. We acknowledge the Ministry for its rapid development of the fly in team concept from this stage.

Summary

Auckland CDEM group supports the general principle of Fly In Teams (FIT) nationally. We note that the document is a concept proposal and recommend that further concept development incorporates the need for greater understanding of the distinction of the Auckland region specifics and the application of FIT teams within the Auckland context, including how we coordinate emergency management functions in Auckland, our governance arrangements and our super-diversity.

We endorse and commend the intention to build capability in the sector and develop professional competences for emergency management staff and volunteers. Feedback in this submission focuses on the core areas that the proposal touches on being the implications of FIT teams to Auckland Emergencies and the availability of Auckland staff for FIT roles, in the context of not being full time emergency management professionals, and having other paid roles outside of emergencies. We welcome further exploration of how these volunteers can contribute to and learn from FIT arrangements.

This document addresses the Auckland context further, before providing detail on each of the submission sections requested. We have identified areas where we may have materials or resources which will assist MCDEM in further development of the FIT concept. We have also suggested a workshop to explore some of the implications of FIT in Auckland.

Auckland Considerations around Implementation of FIT concept

It is understood that the purpose of the FIT is to support the CDEM Groups in the event of a large-scale local or regional emergency in the response and recovery phases. The document expressly refers to support being available to “assist the Local Group Controller/Recovery Manager in establishing an effective response and recovery when there are difficulties in doing this”, as well as advising on resourcing, giving others reassurance about the response being effective, and providing resource for large scale or enduring emergencies.

It is not clear who would make the decision around the need for support from FIT, and whether it would be requested or imposed. It is suggested that clear guidelines for requesting FIT team support are developed to support both Controllers and Recovery Managers in activation or declarations.

The scale and complexity of the Auckland Region is also worthy of consideration in the further development of a FIT team concept. This has been raised in discussion with MCDEM, noting the peculiarities of Auckland has both advantages and disadvantages. In a large-scale event, particularly a long duration event, it is clear that the Auckland region will need additional support, notwithstanding that some of these events may also impact elsewhere.

Auckland is fortunate in that by virtue of its size and unitary authority status, and associated resources, that we have access to a large number of trained staff who can fulfil emergency roles. These people acting in a voluntary role for CDEM, particularly Controllers and Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) function leads, often have “day jobs” where their individual accountability, funding and resources are greater than some of the whole of district councils in New Zealand. These managers are known to and trusted by our local and regional politicians and have strong relationships across Auckland Council family and our supply chain and suppliers. Our high levels of capital and operational expenditure across regeneration as well as renewal projects and events mean we have partnerships across our vertical and horizontal supply chains that reach widely, including internationally. We also have substantial departments of Council providing advice on communications, legal, procurement, health and safety and governance. Previous discussions with MCDEM have indicated that Auckland would have a much higher threshold than the rest of the country when it comes to declaring an emergency to be at a national level, however that has not been codified or explored in detail since the Council’s formation.

The Auckland Region comprises just under one third of New Zealand’s population producing just under half of NZ’s GDP. We are aware that a significant impact on Auckland would be a significant impact in New Zealand, with associated political interest. At present, we do not have the shared learnings of the amalgamated Auckland Region experiencing the scale of emergency that would lead to a local declaration, or a national emergency being declared. Therefore, the decision of when a FIT team would be required without there being a national scale emergency is not clear to us. This is further complicated by having the FIT team model reporting to the National Controller, which implies that for Auckland this would be similar to a national emergency at present.

It is suggested that a shared understanding of how a significant declared event would play out in Auckland be developed in theory. The Auckland CEG and Auckland Emergency Management would appreciate a workshop with the MCDEM FIT development team to explore how this could work in reality. This could explore areas which are unclear in the concept stage such as how decisions around when a significant event would move to a National Emergency versus a Regional Emergency with FIT support. We are also seeking

clarity of how an Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) would function under the FIT model, for example, with a full FIT team deployed, and how advice from the FIT team would be delivered. We suggest that workshopping this would help clarify when members of the FIT would be flown in to Auckland, how the decision would be made and how this would influence the Regional Controller's decision-making prior to a National Declaration.

The Auckland Region also has some local arrangements which are not addressed by the current FIT concept such as our Auckland Region Lifelines Coordination Function similar to the Welfare Function, which performs specialist advice and coordination roles, and reports directly to the Controller. This role has evolved because of the importance of lifeline utilities to Auckland as New Zealand's largest city. Of recent significant events, power, water supply, and wastewater disposal, have been demonstrated to be significant enough to be managed within this formal structure. Discussions with MCDEM have indicated that new training is silent on the structure of the CIMS model in relation to lifelines. However, for a FIT responder, we do not think that is appropriate for the Auckland model of lifelines to be unacknowledged or unfamiliar to a FIT team. A workshop would also be an opportunity to clarify the roles of the National Lifeline Utility Coordinator and National Welfare Coordinator in an Auckland-scale event. It would also be useful to clarify the interfaces with various subgroups such as the electricity providers group, the transport group etc.

In the Auckland governance model – as established under the Local Government Auckland Amendment Act 2010 - local boards and Auckland specific governance structure are unlike any other in New Zealand. The concept of FIT teams is silent on the concept of local governance and responsibilities and obligations of local authorities under the LGA, RMA and any other legislation. However, we are aware that local engagement and local understanding is critically important for both response and recovery. We also note that Auckland is super diverse, unlike much of the rest of New Zealand, which poses different opportunities and challenges for consideration in a FIT capability and deployment model. This could be addressed through induction processes to support deployments and ensure understanding and cultural sensitivity with diverse communities and should be included in the workshop. We have been working with MCDEM on outreach to diverse media and are very happy to contribute our experiences and lessons learnt to the FIT induction and training programmes.

The Auckland CDEM, like Wellington, have separated the roles of Director and Controller. The Director role, whilst outside the CIMS structure, is involved in media and governance updates and wellbeing of staff. This should also be included in any workshop or induction.

Benefits of NZ-FIT participation

The benefits to a CDEM group of developing professional capacity within its full-time staff are well articulated and we can see an alignment with the FIT team proposal. Auckland CDEM Group is strongly supportive of developing and increasing sectoral capability and endorses the FIT concept benefits generally.

Auckland Council has a team of 31 people working in emergency management, both in developing readiness and capability for our own response, and in developing resilience in our communities. Many of our incident response team leaders (ie, CIMS function leads) are volunteers, rather than Emergency Management professionals, who bring skills like crisis management, developing action plans etc., into emergencies. Whilst we applaud the motivation to increase the number of highly competent professionals in the sector, we suggest this could also reflect that many of them may not be in the sector full-time. For that reason, we suggest that the 'benefits section' might also include specific benefits to councils and ratepayers wider than those listed, as the skills developed will be widely useful.

The home agency's commitment might already be to release them from their day job to participate in emergency management exercises, responses, workshops and projects, for personal growth and to support the wider Council needs. Therefore, we suggest that benefits to home agency and members also consider benefits associated with people who are not full time emergency management professionals.

Measurement of success should include the additional cost of implementing this measure, to confirm the expected return on investment, therefore it will be important to understand where the investment is being made through home agencies as well as government. We suggest that costs to home agencies are documented and collated centrally as part of the NZ-FIT, as this will contribute to a shared understanding of the cost of emergency management to CDEM Agencies and groups.

Scope of NZ-FIT

Generally, what is 'in scope' and 'out of scope' as described in the proposal is easily understood and makes sense. We note that the scope does not include welfare or lifelines, both of which are important coordination functions – especially for the Controller and Recovery Manager roles, as discussed above. At a detail level, it would be good to understand the types of emergencies that NZFIT is intended to support, to ensure the scope is appropriate, possibly by exploring some scenarios around deployment.

At present, Controllers and Recovery Managers are appointed by each local Group. We request that you consider in more detail whether the local Group would be required to endorse any nationally appointed FIT team Controllers and Recovery Managers and what jurisdiction or decision-making powers the local Group would have in relation to FIT members being deployed in their region.

Other non-scope Feedback

We note the intention to change the CDEM legislation around Controllers, if needed. If the CDEM legislation is changing, we recommend the opportunity is taken to address some other gaps in the current legislation – such as the existence of unitary authorities as in the case of Auckland. Based on recent Auckland experiences, it would also be useful to change the lifeline utilities descriptors to include retailers, community facility operations (e.g. parks,

libraries, waste collection), and include some private utility operators that will be bound by this legislation. This may also be an opportunity to update the Act to reflect the FENZ legislation, and overlaps, with Emergency Management and help clarify within the wider context.

Duties and Responsibilities

Whilst we support the potential duties and responsibilities listed, we are keen to understand how the FIT will take account of local SOPs and local arrangements. Auckland Council and its CEG members have well developed SOPs which are currently being updated to reflect inter-Agency activations. Each of our Group CIMS function leads have been involved in workshopping and exercising to understand their roles and the overlaps, and to clarify these. We suggest the concept is developed to include location and event-specific training and integration at the start of deployment, plus confirmation that FIT will work to local arrangements rather than seek to impose a standardised central approach.

It is noted that when a FIT team is deployed, this may be at a time of peak activity of the ECC, hence we reiterate the need for a good in-depth understanding of the local arrangements. At present, the workshopping and exercising noted above is involving the Auckland Regional Emergency Management Advisor (REMA), to facilitate cross-MCDEM understanding. For concept development, it would be useful to explore the REMA role in a FIT activation or induction.

Composition and selection

We support the use of a variety of selection tools including those listed in the concept document. Understanding that the FIT ethos is focused on utilising emergency management staff, we would add the comment that Auckland has recently done some work to understand the core competencies associated with each of the specific CIMS roles within the Auckland region. For example, the planning manager needs to have good project planning capability, and an understanding of implementation and resourcing, to be able to develop good action plans. We are happy to offer our work, in addition to the CIMS specific competencies listed, to assist in selection or development of these functions in the FIT model.

We note that the Lifelines function is missing from the list of skills which may be needed in a FIT. Whilst Auckland might be the only region large enough to trigger a significant emergency with a lifeline outage (such as fuel or electricity), we note that the establishment of a FIT for the Auckland fuel disruption would be heavily lifeline oriented.

We also note that CIMS does not capture the need for engagement with communities, and this is a particular issue for Auckland's governance structure and super diversity. Community engagement was also a particular learning from the Christchurch Earthquake experience and we support the involvement of communication specialists, however note that the link with diverse communities and local boards (for Auckland) is critical for successful engagement.

As noted above, we are happy to share our own learnings and experiences around this, and we anticipate that other CDEM groups will also have specific local concerns and arrangements. Development of the FIT inductions will be a good opportunity to share these learnings and experiences amongst the regions and broaden our understanding of our sector.

Capability and Training

Generally, we note the importance of the roles is reflected in the training commitment. For many councils, the prospect of time commitment of senior staff is challenging, hence the note on requesting discussion on wider benefits above.

At present, the majority of Auckland's Controllers have been trained using the University of Auckland and Auckland Council co-designed programme. This included specific insight into our local governance arrangements and Auckland specific legislation, and the importance of lifelines in Auckland, alongside national obligations and responsibilities under the MCDEM Act. It was also developed within the context of Auckland being a multi-cultural and diverse city with over 200 languages being spoken, and an equivalent or higher number of distinct cultures, some of whom are relatively self-contained.

We understand that all FIT Controllers will be required to undertake the new Controller training, which we have not seen the scope of to date. We suggest that Auckland can share some of the training materials that we have developed to ensure that any FIT teams coming to Auckland have training on our local arrangements, and the implications of the super diversity of Auckland. We would also seek to ensure that FIT teams are specifically trained in community engagement and understand cultural diversity challenges, as these have affected some of our communities in recent events.

The Controller training that was run in Auckland necessitated a high time commitment for staff. We understand that the FIT Controllers, who are advising other Controllers and assisting on priorities will not be deployed until they have undertaken the new Controller training. None of the CDEM groups have seen the content of this training yet, and we have no indication of what it includes and how different it is from our Controller training. We also have no indication of whether our existing training will be "grandfathered". There is, we believe, potential for the training of FIT Controllers to be perceived by outsiders as 'better' which raises unfortunate implications for our own Controllers. We would like to discuss this area more with MCDEM.

As other Controllers around the country will have also completed other training courses and the required qualifications to be current as Controllers this requirement could have wider implications than just Auckland. Consideration could be given to refresher or add-on training module for those that already have had significant training, prioritised to ensure that there were no perceived gaps in capability around the regions.

Relationships are important - not just the relationship amongst the FIT team, but relationships and trust throughout the wider response team and the elected members. We do not support the concept that training individual FIT teams together will build a high trust high relationship unit, as we believe this will create a clear and marked difference between the FIT teams and the rest of the Incident Management Team (IMT). Rather, we endorse the current proposal that each FIT member is trained with the wider group and focusses on building relationships with the whole local or regional IMT at location - once deployed.

We support good record keeping, especially for decision making and suggest that any templates or centralised data management systems are circulated widely for use across groups.

Activation and Deployment

As noted above, for our senior volunteers, time availability is a challenge as is the cost to councils. We suggest that the system needs to be as flexible as it can be to maximise the likelihood of individual staff versus team availability.

We commend MCDEM for supporting the cost of training the FIT teams. We understand from discussion that the training itself would be funded, and that time would not be funded. It would be good to get confirmation on whether travel and accommodation for training would be funded in the current proposal.

We note that the deployment would not be funded by MCDEM. Whilst this is not unreasonable for a one off 14-day deployment, we suggest that consideration is given to funding longer term deployments – as the impact on council's budgets and delivery responsibilities could be significant.

Health and safety of our staff is a particular concern, and we seek more clarity about the overlap between home employer responsibilities and the responsibilities of MCDEM and the receiving agency for FIT volunteers safety and wellbeing during deployment. This would need to be resolved and confirmed within the July 2019 Terms of Reference, and sufficient consultation time allowed for Council safety and legal teams to review.

We would anticipate that any psychosocial debriefings of a personal nature would result in any important issues being conveyed to their business as usual functional managers, as appropriate. We suggest the mechanism for this is worked through, taking into account health and safety considerations, in July 2019. We are currently exploring a post event welfare survey format, which is anonymous, which we are happy to also discuss with MCDEM.

Conclusions

We endorse the NZ-FIT initiative as a national initiative which will improve the capability of response in New Zealand and we suggest that the wider benefits of the initiative are articulated. We applaud MCDEM for developing the concept quickly, and we understand that there are continuing short timeframes to implement this - we have noted some aspects which we believe should be included in the next stage of development.

Auckland CDEM is keen to further workshop the detail with MCDEM for how NZ-FIT concepts would work in Auckland, and we have articulated some specific differences that we are keen to explore, outside of the consultation questions. We support the ongoing development of the NZ-FIT approach to include more regional concepts and detail around deployment and implementation. We are also happy to share materials or resources that we have developed, to support the NZ-FIT initiative.