

**Briefing Paper:** Elected Member workshop – Lessons Learned Cyclone Gabrielle  
**Reporting Officer:** Emma Healy, Executive Officer  
**Date:** Workshop to be held Wed, 29 March 2023, 9.30 – 12.30

## Ngā whāinga | Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to understand from Elected Members –

1. What does good look like when responding to an emergency event?
2. In relation to Cyclone Gabrielle, what worked well, and what could be improved?

This information will be used to inform how Council can better respond to the next emergency situation.

## Horopaki | Context

Severe tropical cyclone Gabrielle devastated the North Island of New Zealand and affected parts of Vanuatu and Australia in February 2023. It is the costliest tropical cyclone on record in the Southern Hemisphere, with damages estimated to be at least NZ\$13.5 billion. It is also the deadliest cyclone and weather event to hit New Zealand since Cyclone Giselle in 1968, surpassing Cyclone Bola in 1988.

In summary, the timeline for the Far North was:

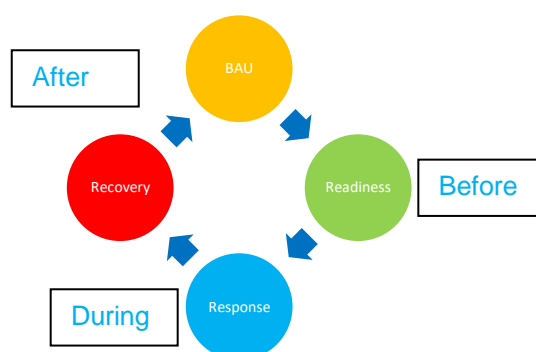
- 10 February – MetService NZ maintained a Heavy Rain and Strong Wind Watch for Northland associated with Cyclone Gabrielle. The rain watch was in place from 1am Sunday, 12 February to noon Tuesday, 14 February and a strong wind watch from noon Sunday to midnight Tuesday. In response FNDC began setting up an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Kaikohe.
- 12 February - A precautionary State of Emergency was declared for Northland at 4.30pm, for an initial period of seven days, as part of the regional response to Cyclone Gabrielle. The cyclone was to deliver widespread power outages caused by wind damage and heavy rain created the biggest challenge in the Far North with the impact causing issues with council water treatment plants, cellphone towers and to communities cut off with limited access to food.
- 17 – 20 February - There was liaison with Ngāpuhi Collective and information received in the EOC was used to help direct their efforts to deliver food and other supplies. 748 food packs and 60 sanitary packs were dropped to 47 locations with the support of 39 community-led centres. Food packs included bottled water, rice, soup, tinned meat, canned goods, flour, sugar, oil, toiletries, nappies, formula, sanitary pads, as well as cat and dog food.
- 20 February - Kahika (Mayor) Moko Tepania has established a Mayoral relief fund to assist people affected by Cyclone Gabrielle.
- 21 February – EOC stood down.
- 27 February – ‘Adopt a Community’ initiative stood up, with Waitaki, Tasman, and Clutha District Councils, all in the South Island; and Waipā District Council in the Waikatō supporting the Far North District Council.

The mahi to recover from the cyclone continues today. As of 22 March there are still 5 roads down to single lane, 4WD only or passable with caution, and applications to the Mayoral Relief Fund remain open until 31 March 2023.

## Ngā kōrerorero | Discussion

The discussion at the workshop will focus on defining what ‘good’ emergency response looks like from an Elected Member’s point of view.

Thinking about Cyclone Gabrielle, we will also discuss what worked well and what could be improved during the four phases of emergency response:



## E whai ake nei | Next Steps

Information Elected Members share at this workshop will be aligned with feedback staff have already provided and an action plan will be developed and implemented. A report will be presented to the the Mayoral forum.

## Ngā tāpiritanga | Attachments

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