



# WEST COAST EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

GROUP

**MEDIA RELEASE – 6 June 2018**

## **Planning for the big one**

In a large scale event, such as an Alpine Fault earthquake, West Coasters, both communities and businesses will be required to do without road access to Canterbury, Nelson, Marlborough and Otago for an extended period of time.

“Essential food supplies, fuel and building materials, normally transported daily into the region by trucks, will become scarce in the event of multiple state highway closures,” said Mel Sutherland, Chair of the West Coast Lifelines Utilities Group.

“Supplies of food and fuel already on the Coast will also be impacted with any loss of power.”

The West Coast Lifeline Utilities Group, representing the four West Coast Councils and other major utility providers, including Transpower, Buller Electricity, Electronet, Trustpower and Chorus, is one of the Groups spearheading the emergency resilience effort on the Coast. Meeting three times a year, the Group has been planning readiness activities in the event of a major earthquake as well as for flooding and other possible hazards.

The West Coast Civil Defence Emergency Management Group is also working with local businesses to plan for the continuity of essential services and infrastructure. Part of this work includes encouraging service stations and supermarkets throughout the region to install emergency generators to decrease their dependence on mains power supply.

A Fuel Plan for the West Coast has been developed by the Lifelines Group. Taking into account the potential for all road access to the region being lost for an extended period in a major emergency, and the limited amount of fuel available within the region, the Plan helps determine priority uses and protocols to ensure that the most important needs will be met in the response and initial recovery phases.

A comprehensive report has been prepared for the West Coast Civil Defence Emergency Management Group titled “Improving Resilience to Natural Disasters”. This is available on the West Coast Civil Defence website, under search for Lifelines.

“It goes back to the old saying,” said Mr Sutherland, “forewarned is forearmed.”

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