



3 November 2023

Committee Secretariat  
Governance and Administration Committee  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

Tēnā koutou

## **RE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BILL**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Emergency Management Bill (the Bill) currently before the Governance and Administration Committee.

Engineering New Zealand (formerly IPENZ) is New Zealand's professional home for engineers. We're New Zealand's strongest and most influential voice on engineering issues, with more than 23,000 members who want to help shape the public policy agenda and engineer better lives for New Zealanders.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Engineering New Zealand understands and supports the need for reform and believes that a change to our emergency management system is needed. Overall, we support the direction of the Bill and view it as an improvement to the current legislative and regulatory framework. With climate change expected to increase the frequency of hazardous weather events, the time has never been more urgent to improve the performance of our emergency management system and to modernise the current legislative and regulatory framework. Our position is:

1. We support the transition from lifeline utilities to critical infrastructure
2. Climate change needs greater consideration in this Bill
3. There needs to be greater coordination with existing reforms
4. We welcome the enhanced role of iwi and Māori

## **TRANSITION FROM LIFELINE UTILITIES TO CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

Engineering New Zealand welcomes the transition from lifeline utilities to critical infrastructure in the Bill, as outlined in section 10 of the Bill. The previous definition of lifeline utilities was outdated and did not capture the full range of services that are essential to our society and economy. The new definition of critical infrastructure is more comprehensive and includes the dependencies and interdependencies between different services. This change is also aligned with wider policy work currently being undertaken by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to improve the resilience of our critical infrastructure.

## **An opportunity to expand the list of critical infrastructures**

Schedule 1 specifies that lifeline utilities encompass those entities delineated in both Schedule 1A and 1B of the Civil Defence and Emergency Management Act 2002 (CDEM Act). In addition, section 50 of the Emergency Management Bill empowers the Minister for Emergency Management to recognise critical infrastructure entities and critical infrastructure groups/sectors.

This presents an opportunity to expand the list of critical infrastructures to include stopbanks, waste management, and other essential services that had previously been left out in the CDEM Act. Stopbanks are essential for protecting communities from flooding, and solid waste management is essential for public health and safety. Additionally, urban storm networks and rural land drainage networks are critical for preventing flooding, but they are not considered as critical as water and wastewater services. Expanding the list of critical infrastructures to include these and other essential services will ensure that they are protected and can continue to function during an emergency. Climate change underscores the urgency of strengthening our flood defences. Recognising flood defences as critical infrastructure will help reduce the impact of emergencies on communities and businesses, building a more resilient New Zealand.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE NEEDS GREATER CONSIDERATION**

Climate change poses significant and unprecedented challenges to Aotearoa New Zealand, impacting our communities and critical infrastructure. While the Bill references existing climate change legislation, it is our view that it falls short in addressing this issue. The Bill needs to explicitly recognise the unique challenges posed by climate change and require Emergency Management Committees to take specific actions in response, to ensure that Aotearoa New Zealand is ready for the impacts of climate change.

Additionally, the Bill does not address the need for increased funding for recovery. This is a critical gap as the cost of responding to and recovering from climate-related emergencies will only increase in the years to come. The Emergency Management Bill is an opportunity to bolster New Zealand's resilience to climate change following events. The Bill should be amended to give climate change greater consideration and to provide additional support for recovery measures.

## **ENHANCED ROLE OF IWI AND MĀORI**

Engineering New Zealand welcomes the increased involvement of iwi and Māori within the emergency management system and the clear commitment to upholding the Treaty principles, as outlined in section 4. Additionally, we express our support for the establishment of a National Māori Emergency Management Advisory Group and the requirement to appoint Māori members within each Emergency Management Committee.

## **FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

### **Certainty needed with reform programmes**

We are concerned about how the uncertainty of the current resource management and water services reforms, given the recent change in Government, will affect this Bill. Both reforms are essential to New Zealand's emergency management system and to ensuring a resilient critical infrastructure system.

Building critical infrastructure takes time, and without certainty in these reform programmes, Aotearoa New Zealand will struggle to develop a resilient and effective infrastructure system that can withstand emergencies. Advancing the Emergency Management Bill without clear direction on other significant infrastructure reforms risks ongoing misalignment.

## CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Emergency Management Bill. As outlined, we generally support the overall direction of the Bill. The Emergency Management Bill is an important step forward to modernising Aotearoa New Zealand's emergency management system. If we can be of additional support, please do not hesitate to contact me by emailing [richard.templer@engineeringnz.org](mailto:richard.templer@engineeringnz.org) or 021 22 000 50.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Templer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

**Dr Richard Templer, FEngNZ**  
Chief Executive