



Media Release

Bay of Plenty Civil Defence transitions welfare services

2nd June 2020

On Wednesday 3rd June the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group 0800 Call Centre will transition to an automated service directing people to other agencies for support.

The call centre was established during the lock-down to support those who were unable to access food or essential services, as a result of losing their usual support networks. This included people with limited mobility, people in remote isolated areas or with no access to internet and online shopping.

Since 31 March, the call centre has received 2737 calls from people requesting information, advice or support during the COVID-19 response.

The Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group has been supporting households and individuals as well as iwi and community groups, providing food deliveries to families in need, blankets and heating and even tank water refills for those suffering as a result of the drought.

Group Controller Clinton Naude says the response is not over yet and there are many families still in need across the region.

‘As a result of COVID-19, a wide range of services and support will continue to be delivered by social services. These initiatives include financial assistance such as the Ministry of Social Development’s Wage Subsidy and Leave Support Scheme that can help families in need’. The Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group now needs to refocus on its readiness and resilience role in case of future emergencies.

‘We want to thank the numerous community organisations and iwi/whānau support services who are, for the most part, volunteers donating their time to help those in need’ Mr Naude says.

‘It’s incredible to see the way our Bay of Plenty community can pull together during emergencies. Volunteers have been out in neighbourhoods delivering food and vital support to the elderly, isolated and vulnerable, spending time away from their families to help those in need’.

People suffering financial hardship are reminded that they may be eligible for financial support from the Ministry of Social Development and should call 0800 559009 to check their eligibility. Temporary housing is still being provided by Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and people can register for assistance through the Temporary Accommodation Support helpline on 0508 754 163.

New funding has also been made available for community groups such as food banks, many of whom have been supported by Civil Defence during the last few weeks. The Food Secure Communities funding will support organisations to continue the incredible work they have been doing in the community. Community groups should visit www.msdl.govt.nz for more information.

For further advice visit www.covid19.govt.nz or call the Government helpline which remains active on 0800 779 997.

ENDS

Noho Tawhiti. Tū Kotahi - Sit at a distance. Stand as one

For further media information, please contact the duty PIM officer pim@bopcivildefence.govt.nz

Bay of Plenty Emergency Management

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