

Cyclone Gabrielle Recovery Taskforce

Context

1. Cyclone Gabrielle has caused significant damage to the northern and eastern parts of the North Island. While the full impacts of the cyclone continue to be assessed, it is clear that the damage is significant, and compounded by the Auckland Anniversary floods. The investment required to reconnect our communities and futureproof our nation's infrastructure will be significant and will require hard decisions and a whole-of-government approach.
2. The Government is committed to working closely with the local communities, iwi, and the private sector to respond, recover and rebuild. It is important that Government is guided closely by the advice and the needs of those affected on the ground. The Cyclone Recovery Taskforce (the 'Taskforce') will enable this by its engagement with regional structures, public sector, Minister for Cyclone Recovery, and Cabinet Extreme Weather Recovery Committee.

Purpose and scope of the Taskforce

3. The high-level purpose of the Taskforce is to pull together and align the economic and infrastructure recovery efforts and those who will work on the recovery; and ensure local, iwi, and business voices have input into decision making. It will provide an independent perspective to the Minister for Cyclone Recovery and Cabinet on what is required for the recovery efforts and to improve resilience in the future. It will advise ministers on the prioritisation and sequencing of needs for each region and provide assurance on implementation of activities to meet those needs.
4. The Taskforce covers all regions affected by the January and February floods and cyclone. Its initial focus will be on the immediate recovery, including whether or not some devastated areas should be rebuilt. It will also lead on planning for future resilience, which will become its greater focus over time. While primarily concerned with economic and infrastructure issues, the Taskforce will have regard to relevant social issues e.g., employment and training to support the infrastructure rebuilds.

Role

5. The Taskforce will:
 - a) Be a key interface between the regional groups, iwi, ministers and central government to ensure their needs are recognised and inform advice to and decision-making by ministers;
 - b) Integrate local views with members' own knowledge and expertise to advise on priorities for recovery and planning and the sequencing of recovery efforts;
 - c) Act as a clearing house both for problems and opportunities, including identifying regulatory, policy, funding, and operational barriers to recovery efforts, and areas where co-ordinated action would be preferable to individual activity (eg, clearing silt across many properties);
 - d) Identify commonalities and differences between the regions to ensure advice considers consistency of approaches or deliberate variations;
 - e) Identify prioritisation and sequencing of work, including policy, to ensure the balance to short-term and long-term responses;

- f) Identify, where and if appropriate, options for retreating from areas of high risk of flooding / damage in the future, along with potential approaches to funding and regulatory implications;
 - g) Ensure the integration and alignment of Government resources with respect to infrastructure to the identified and agreed needs of the regional communities;
 - h) Identify, if necessary, areas where future developments might occur to lessen natural hazard risks in the future;
 - i) Collate and share information and, where relevant and possible, de-conflict views;
 - j) Provide an independent view on the effectiveness of recovery activities (this could include reporting itself or commenting on / recommending amalgamated reporting from the Cyclone Recovery Unit or other relevant parties such as insurers);
 - k) Begin identifying opportunities to build more resilient infrastructure.
6. The Chair will also comment on relevant Cabinet papers.
7. The following functions are outside the scope of the Taskforce's role:
- a) Decisions about policy and funding – they are the responsibility of the Extreme Weather Recovery Committee and councils;
 - b) Welfare and social support response – this will be the role of the relevant agencies;
 - c) Procurement or contracting – this will be the role of the relevant agencies; and
 - d) Operational delivery.
8. The Taskforce will work closely with the public sector, including relevant Crown entities, in performing its roles.

Reporting and accountability

9. The Taskforce will report in, via the Chair, to the Extreme Weather Recovery Cabinet Committee. The Committee and the Minister for Cyclone Recovery will be able to give the Taskforce specific tasks. It may also initiate its own activities.
10. The Taskforce will meet regularly with the Minister on behalf of Cabinet.

Membership

11. Sir Brian Roche is the Chair of the Taskforce.
12. Members will be drawn from following:
- a) Business New Zealand and one other person with business experience
 - b) NZCTU;
 - c) Local government; and
 - d) Iwi.
13. The Chief Executive of the Cyclone Recovery Unit and the Secretary to the Treasury will attend meetings.

14. The Taskforce may establish sub-groups for certain sectors or issues, eg, insurance. It may co-opt members onto the subgroups as required. Initially, the following sub-groups will be established:

- a) Insurance and banking;
- b) Utilities and telecommunications; and
- c) Infrastructure, construction and roading (including Waka Kotahi and Kainga Ora).

15. Members will be appointed for 12 months with a possible further 12 months.