

COVID-19 Local Government Response Unit

What you need to know

- The COVID-19 Response Unit is a dedicated working group led by the Department of Internal Affairs, Local Government New Zealand, the Society of Local Government Managers and the National Emergency Management Agency.
- The Unit's focus is to ensure local government Mayors, Chairs and Chief Executives can continue to make the necessary decisions to support the wellbeing of our communities to protect New Zealand and eradicate COVID-19.

Our role in supporting you

- Co-ordinating and uniting with local government to ensure the continued delivery of essential services to all our communities, in alignment with the Government's COVID-19 national response plan.
- Integrating the Department of Internal Affairs' response functions with LGNZ, SOLGM, NEMA, other agencies and national command structures.
- Ensuring effective two-way communications between central and local government to enable central government to provide nationally consistent guidance; and provide on-the-ground information to assist councils to understand and comply with relevant requirements of local government legislation, including any legislative changes or statutory overrides required.
- Keeping the Minister of Local Government informed of urgent issues and provide advice on legislative 'fixes'.
- Providing guidance and assistance to enable and support a rapid recovery post-lockdown by councils and their respective communities.

Where we need your support

- Continue to proactively monitor and raise any potential risk(s) at an early stage.
- Provide us with feedback on areas of priority, including what you see working well and where we can provide greater support.
- Communicate important All-of-Government information updates and messages to your communities.
- If your Council has specific feedback for the Response Unit, please direct this to: LGCGCovid19response@dia.govt.nz

What we are working on

Council Democracy and Governance Support

- Identifying legislative requirements that will affect local government's ability to govern and manage the impacts of COVID-19.
- Working across agencies to understand the implications of their legislation on local government, including the Resource Management Act and consenting issues.
- Progressing modifications to those legislative requirements required to enable ongoing effective governance.

Finance and Recovery

- Working across central and local government on the immediate COVID-19 effect on local government financial planning and viability.
- Working to ensure local government is well placed to support regional and local recovery effectively.

Social Wellbeing

- Supporting CDEM Groups and helping resource welfare responses, specifically focussed on vulnerable community members.
- Providing central guidance from the Ministry of Health and other key agencies to local groups to support the national containment strategy and minimise further spread of COVID-19.
- Developing additional guidance and resources as needed based on emerging international best practice.

Water

- Ensuring councils have a robust Business Continuity Plan for the delivery of essential water and wastewater services.
- Ensuring a robust response plan is in place for major risks, and that this is linked to a National Business Continuity Plan.
- Developing fast solutions to critical matters, for example, staff shortages.

Public Transport

- Assisting to connect local government with Ministry of Transport and NZTA to support public transport for essential workers.
- Assisting the analysis of financial implications of the public transport shutdown for councils.

Roading

- Connecting local and central government to support keeping the roading network open, including consideration of capital works or works in progress considered essential.

Solid Waste

- Guidelines for safe collection of household rubbish and recycling.
- Monitoring of supply chains for emerging issues.

Cemeteries, Crematoria and Funerals

- Providing information to central government on local government cemeteries and crematoria.
- Providing any assistance to local government, including central government guidance, on keeping these services running over the shutdown.

Key contacts:

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