



## Submission to the Governance and Administration Committee on the Emergency Management Bill

Friday, 3 November 2023

**The Healthy Families East Cape team appreciates the opportunity to provide written feedback on the ‘The Emergency Management Bill’.**

We recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi as Aotearoa New Zealand’s partnership document, defining respectful and meaningful partnership between tāngata whenua and tāngata Tiriti. We actively support Te Tiriti o Waitangi articles in policy and legislation.

Healthy Families East Cape is one of eleven Healthy Families NZ locations, each chosen for having some of the worst health statistics in the country. Healthy Families East Cape covers from Ōpōtiki, around the East Cape, to Te Tairāwhiti and is funded by Te Aka Whai Ora and is being led by Te Ao Hou Trust. Te Ao Hou Trust is a kaupapa Māori health and social service provider servicing the Ōpōtiki community for 20 years.

This submission is on behalf of Healthy Families East Cape, Te Ao Hou Trust, Māori Women’s Welfare League – Te Tairāwhiti, endorsed by Dr Hope Tupara – National President for Māori Women’s Welfare League.

**Te Tairāwhiti must be prioritised when forming the final Emergency Management Bill. We can no longer expect the resilience of the region and people to continue if they are not prioritised.**

Healthy Families East Cape follows a clear approach by back boning the mobilisation of communities and leadership that already exist in our Māori communities. Ngā Wāhine Māori Toko i Te Ora – Te Tairāwhiti, Maori Women’s Welfare, Te Tairāwhiti is one of our key kaupapa partners (stakeholders). Te Rōpū Wāhine Toko i te Ora was founded in 1951 to support Māori wāhine and their whānau. The organisation remains the longest and only national charitable Wāhine Māori organisation across Aotearoa, with more than 100 peka (branches). The organisation’s principles are focused on the wellbeing of Māori wāhine and their whānau.

### About Healthy Families East Cape

Healthy Families East Cape is part of a large-scale initiative that brings community leadership in the East Cape together in a united effort for better population health.

We aim to improve the health of our people – where we live, learn, work and play – in order to prevent chronic disease.

Our purpose is to challenge communities to think differently about the underlying causes of poor health, and to make changes – in our schools, workplaces, sports clubs, marae and other key community settings – that will help people make healthier choices.

[www.healthyfamilieseastcape.co.nz](http://www.healthyfamilieseastcape.co.nz)

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The Healthy Families East Cape strategic leadership group is responsible for providing strategic direction and leadership using and championing a systems-based approach to achieve healthier environments in the places where we spend our time.

The Healthy Families East Cape strategic leadership group is made up of representatives from across sectors and communities and includes the following members and organisations:

- Linda Steel, Te Ao Hou Trust Chief Executive (Chair)
- Josh Wharehinga, Gisborne District Council Deputy Mayor
- Lyn Riesterer, former Ōpōtiki District Council Mayor
- Stefan Pishief, Sport Gisborne Tairāwhiti Chief Executive
- Mel Turner, Te Whatu Ora Senior Portfolio Manager and Lead Healthy Families NZ
- Amohaere Houkamau, Rau Tipu Rau Ora General Manager
- Megan Tunks, Pou Oranga Ake, Te Pare o Toi

This submission is written on behalf of the Healthy Families East Cape team, and provides evidence and support to ensure we continue to strengthen the health, social, economic, cultural, and environmental wellbeing, and aspirations of our communities:

We are happy to provide further advice and clarification on any of the points raised in this submission. The contact for this submission is Ranui Maxwell, Healthy Families East Cape Communications Manager.

### ***Community-based feedback***

Te Ao Hou Trust, Māori Women's Welfare League and Healthy Families East Cape have worked collectively in gathering community-based feedback via surveys and discussions that express how the community can have input into the submission on the 'Emergency Management Bill'.

Te Tairāwhiti is considered one of the most isolated regions in Aotearoa. The region has been severely impacted by consistent rainfall caused by Cyclone Hale and exacerbated by Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023.

The roading network which was already impacted, was further damaged by landslides and flooding. Towns along State Highway 35 were cut off after the Hikuwai Bridge was destroyed and the road between Tolaga Bay and Te Puia Springs suffered serious damage.

"Te Tairāwhiti (Gisborne) and Te Matau-a-Māui (Hawke's Bay) were "the epicentre of devastation". The World Weather Attribution service investigates the extreme rainfall that hit this region over 13-14 February 2023. Their scientists could not determine how much more likely or intense this particular extreme rainfall event was as a result of climate change".

"The flood protection systems and infrastructure weren't built to withstand [the impacts] and were overwhelmed", Julie Arrighi from the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre told the press briefing. Meanwhile, the failures in electricity and communication services compounded the problem for already-vulnerable groups.

Tokomaru Bay completely lost access to the Enihau Spring which was considered a secondary water-supply on permanent boil-notice.

According to the study, the Te Matau-a-Māui and Te Tairāwhiti regions felt the most intense human impacts from the cyclone in part because the most intense rainfall arrived in the middle of the night, making communication difficult. Arrighi also notes that the most severely impacted areas are *“also home to one of the largest Māori populations”*. She adds that these Indigenous groups are *“disproportionately vulnerable and exposed”* to extreme weather – thanks to a *“long legacy dating back to colonisation”*.

There were 11 fatalities recorded in Aotearoa as a result of Cyclone Gabrielle, of those we surveyed, they noted one death in Te Tairāwhiti.

### ***Recommendations:***

Isolated areas, particularly those that were cut off by bridges and significant road damage are prioritised. This means ensuring that they are resourced now, this should be reflected in policy and legislation.

Participants from our survey recommend that Iwi and local agencies are at the core of providing care and services within the community. That Marae are adequately resourced as many of them became evacuation centres for people that had to evacuate their homes.

Iwi should have statutory decision-making powers, in line with what they are already providing in the community.

Members of the Māori Women’s Welfare League (MWWL) to be appointed to the Emergency Management group that is facilitated by Gisborne District Council, this should also be reflected in Policy. There are 12 financial branches that are in the Tairāwhiti rohe, from Potaka to Poutaka near Wairoa. Representatives from Mangatu, Ngāti Uepohatu, Tapuaroa, Tawhiti, Te Hapara, Turanganui and Whakatu Wāhine. The membership of these branches are connected with every isolated community in Te Tairāwhiti (most of these communities were given no to little support during and post Cyclone Gabrielle).

### ***Why is this important?***

Te Tairāwhiti communities and the roading network infrastructure has been underinvested in for many years despite being continually impacted by heavy rainfall and Cyclone’s. These communities will continue to be impacted if solutions to roading, resourcing of emergency management infrastructure is not addressed or reflected in policy. Investment this end could minimise investment at the other end. Given the mounting cost of damage to critical infrastructure there is a strong case for case change in how resource-flow is currently being allocated.

### ***What does this look like in practice?***

Healthy Families East Cape recognises that people are the experts in their community, we support their aspirations to be involved with the development of policy in response and prevention plans. Policy should reflect long-term solutions not short-term fixes.

Communities are resourced as they are already undertaking emergency management functions. Having a Emergency Management container provisioned with emergency communication devices, diesel to run generators, food, medical and other critical provisions.

Ensuring that capacity and capability of communities are prioritised, this could include and not limited to shifting power dynamics to those with lived-experience.