

Situation Report – Cyclone Gabrielle

ECC EOC Location: **Northland Regional Council**

Emergency: **Cyclone Gabrielle**

SITREP number: **006**

Activation status: **ECC Activated**

Effective as at: **1500 hrs
Wednesday 15 Feb 2023**

Declared area: **National**

Declaration status: **Declared**

Time declared:

Regional: 1630 hrs 12
Feb 2023

National: 0843 hrs, 14
Feb 2023

Declaration expires:

Regional: 1630 hrs 19
Feb 2023

National: 0843hrs, 21
Feb 2023

Note: Updated information from previous SitReps is in **blue text**.

Highlights:

- Northland is experiencing multiple impacts from this event, including road closures, extensive power outages, communications outages, and localised flooding.
- The New Zealand Government declared a National State of Emergency at 0843hrs Tuesday 14 Feb, to assist in the response to Cyclone Gabrielle. A National State of Emergency gives the National Controller legal authority to apply resources across the country in support of a national level response.

Summary of event:

Cyclone Gabrielle has crossed Northland, leading to heavy rain and winds. The region is continuing to experience extensive power outages, flooding, and local road closures. **All weather warnings have now been lifted for Northland.**

State highway network significantly impacted. SH1 **Dome Valley**, Brynderwyns and Mangamuka are closed. **Alternate routes are now open.**

Critical Factors:

- Closed roads, power outages, and cell/mobile coverage outages are now extensive across the region. Along with power lines down on roads, and high winds, the situation overall makes coordinating Response efforts more difficult.

Weather:

From MetService:

Heavy rain and strong wind warnings have lifted.

Forecast: Partly cloudy. Possible shower or two this afternoon. Southwesterlies, gusting to 26 km/h in the Far North, easing this morning.

NRC Hydrology

- No significant rainfall in Northland in the last 12 hours and all rivers are now falling.
- One river above warning level: Mangakahia peaked at 14.8m, above the 12m warning level for widespread flooding at Tangiteroria and Mangakahia Road, but is slowly receding.



- One river above alert level: Waiharakeke is at 4.819m, just above the warning level of 4.8m indicating potential flooding at the Three bridges at Kawakawa. River level is receding.
- Main concern is now the Northern Wairoa, as the flood peaks travel down through Tangiteroria, SH14 bridge at Kirikopuni and into Dargaville.
- Wairua/Hikurangi Swamp flood peak into Dargaville about 21:30 tonight – Next Dargaville High tide about 18:30 tonight so this is offset by about 3 hours
- Mangakahia flood peak into Dargaville: 0700 16 February – This coincides with high tide in Dargaville. This has the potential to elevate the high tide levels in Dargaville up towards the warning level of 5.9m.

Regional Update / District Updates / Engagement:

Northland CDEM Group Emergency Coordination Centre

- Fully staffed EOC operational at the Northland Regional Council Building, 36 Water Street.
- Staff moving into detailed support and planning for region.
- Forward planning for portaloos and portable showers in the event of long-term power outages.

FNDC

- Communication outage for all mid and far north - restored at 1225pm.
- Power supply across the Far North still widely impacted with some communities on the Aupouri Peninsular, mid north, Peria and the Hokianga having been without power for up to 4 days. Some power outages may continue through to at least 2100hrs Sunday 19 Feb 2023.
- Due to compromised and unstable traffic routes south of Whangarei, delivery of food, fuel and medications is fragile.
- FNDC have asked residents to conserve water. Reservoirs are struggling to draw and treat water due to power outages. Our reservoir in Kawakawa-Moerewa is down to 30% full.
- Drinking water: Omanaia offline. Bottled drinking water supplied to the community. A water tanker will provide additional water requirements (such as toilets).
- Wastewater – a number of plants are offline due to power outages. Not aware of any waste water spills.

KDC

- Dargaville high tide at 07:44am did not present any issues.
- Wairoa River levels are off-set from high tide tonight, however Mangakahia river flood peak will coincide with the Thursday morning tide around 8.30am.
- Tangowahine, Settlement Rd part of the stopbank has burst. FENZ are currently assessing the situation.
- Finlayson park, and Te Houhanga a Rongo Marae in Station Road remain flooded and continue to be monitored. The areas have been evacuated.
- Ruawai flooding has receded, and residents have been allowed to return to their homes.
- Obtaining FENZ building assessment information to enable Building/TA to undertake building assessments.
- The Evacuation centre at 58 Hokianga Road, Dargaville will remain open as the main location for any evacuees.
- Wide power outages remain with restricted access by power providers. Coordination plan underway between Roding and NorthPower.
- Numerous road closures continue and restricted access due to fallen trees, flooding and or slip
- Arranging basic supplies in Unimog to distribution to Kaihu area which is isolated from Dargaville.
- Managing any displaced residents into emergency accommodation.

WDC



- Power: outages across the region have left 30 000 Whangarei customers without power.
- Drinking water services are managing
- Wastewater services have a number of spills, long term power requirements currently being assessed.
- Portaloos have been delivered to a number of properties in Town and Hikurangi where systems are overload. These are known problem areas.
- Wastewater treatment plant at Okara has no power and is not functioning. WDC have contacted the DHB to issue a public notice.
- A Civil Defence Centre is operating at McKay Stadium
- Anticipate building assessments required in following days.

Communications Updates / Actions Taken:

Northland CDEM team continue to provide public communications via mass and social media.

Support Agencies:

FENZ

- Far North IMT in communication with Top Energy who are taking walk-in queries/logging of faults and have crews continually surveying main access roads for faults.
- Far North IMT support has checked pharmacies in Kaitaia - community concern due to lack of purchasing abilities due to lack of cash and eftpos/ATM.
- Ngati Kahu Social and Health Services set up community BBQ hub in town centre, and have resources needed. Kaitaia IMT only place with internet.

Police

- Reassurance Deployment planning underway for increased deployment and visibility in remote communities across District
- Service Prioritisation Business Continuity Planning underway. Assessment underway re what is temporarily turned off.
- SAR demand in Kaipara. Extra staff deployed to Kaipara to aid in rescue and recovery for next 3 days
- Anticipate possible increase in missing person reporting – investigators to be assigned
- Dedicated Road Policing coverage limited at present due to repurposing to assist in rescue and recovery. Planning underway to increase coverage/visibility.
- Support offered to DHB.

St Johns

- Nil to report.

Red Cross

- Disaster Welfare Support Teams (DWST) from Whangārei provided support at the McKay Stadium in Whangārei overnight, including psychosocial support. [Eleven people and one infant slept in this CDC overnight.](#) Facility continues to be busy with people coming in and out to use the facilities before going to prearranged accommodation.
- Equipment available: 50 stretcher beds, bedding, hygiene kits, 1 Generator.
- Have very low numbers of volunteers available in the upper North Island as many are also impacted by the event.

Iwi representatives:

- No update received for 15 Feb 2023
- Many marae and Iwi support services are ready across the region.
- Poverty-related welfare issues will also become a priority depending on the severity and length of the cyclone.
- Tai Tokerau Border Control assisting communities.

From Hone Dalton, Northland CDEM Group Iwi Representative:

Contact has been made with the Kaikohe EOC. Marae in Moerewa, Mangamuka, Ohaewai, Utakura Te Tii have opened their doors to people evacuating their homes. Kai Packs, water, generators and fuel have all been requested and actioned through the CDEM and other welfare channels.

Welfare:

GECC – Undertaking planning based on increased welfare needs across the region.

Priorities are:

- Rapid needs assessment drafted and will be distributed at the above meeting
- Welfare Comms sheet and Power Outage information sheet has been prepared and will be circulated at the above meeting.
- Ensure needs assessment information is collated (amount conducted) and shared in status reports to their District Councils and occupancy of welfare centres daily.

FNDC

- FNDC EOC have been in contacts with CLC and can confirm that all their needs have been met. Currently road teams are on the road ensuring needs continue to be met and to deliver care packages. Ground teams are checking known vulnerable communities and active CLC's and conducting welfare needs assessments. These crews have drinking water on hand to distribute as required.
- 7 community led centres open sheltering people and others are on standby to open if needed. Have delivered welfare food packages to support marae and local groups.
- Number of people that are currently sheltering: Morehu marae Pawarenga – 8 people, Kura Kaupapa o Whangaroa – 23 people, Kaikou marae, Matawaia – 10 people, Hiruharama marae – 2 people, Parawhenua marae – 9 people, Rawene Town Hall – Open but unable to establish communications to check how many people are sheltering, Kaikohe Methodist Church – no people currently sheltering.
- Operationalizing long term power outages plan. Assessing availability of resources such as portable toilets, showers, diesel fuel, gas.
- Tai Tokerau Border Control are supporting whānau in isolated communities with no power and no comms is the priority for Iwi.

MPI – Regional: Aware of animals in Civil Defence Centres and available to support if needed.

MSD – Civil Defence payments application has been forwarded to Wellington. MSD have staff ready to deliver and assist with information on these payments if approved. MSD have sent support staff to assist in the Whangarei and Dargaville Civil Defence Centres. Council can request directly to MSD WCG leads or go through Group welfare.

Te Whatu Ora

- Communications re-established with Rural Hospitals.
- All hospitals working towards capacity, challenged by staffing gaps (staff comms and access) and the inability to discharge patients / transport. (Discharges are being hampered by patient's ability to return home and travel on roads).
- Expecting high demand over the next few days as road access is open and travel possible.



- Critical renal patients are being evacuated from high risk / remote areas to Whangarei. They will be accommodated in Whangarei until the end of the week.
- All ARC (Aged Residential Care) facilities have been contacted and supported as needed (thanks to WDC Welfare with support of generator acquisition). No evacuations have been necessary.
- Medically dependant and maternity patients have been contacted.
- Hokianga health (Rawene) currently has no power and no road access. They have been identified as a priority site for restoration and are being supported with fuel for generator. Concerned with lack of comms and ability to contact vulnerable patients / oxygen dependant. NZ Police is assisting medications to isolated / high need patients. Working with CDEM.
- Medical centres are opening where possible, utilising tele-health where appropriate however many remain closed. White Cross is open and being monitored.
- Inter hospital transfer have resumed including inter regional into Auckland.

Lifelines - ALL:

Main issues are:

- Access routes to Northland with SH1 and detour route [limitations](#).
- Access to Dargaville.
- Considerable damage to power networks, doubled overnight. Major damage to 2 sub-stations which will take at least a week to reinstate.
- Power and road closures impacting cell phone towers across the region.

Roading - State Highways (Waka Kotahi)

Closures:

- SH1 Brynderwyns to Waipu
- SH1 Mangamuka
- SH1 Dome Valley – escort required, 4x4 and light truck critical infrastructure vehicles
- [SH12 Dargaville – Omapere](#)
- SH14 Dargaville to Whangarei
- SH15 – Maungatapere to Twin Bridges

Roading – Local Roads (NTA)

SH1 Brynderwyns local detour routes:

- Cove Road via Mangawhai-Kaiwaka – Open, light vehicles only
- Paparoa-Oakleigh Road – OPEN – CAUTION REQUIRED
- Waipu Gorge Road CLOSED, caution advised due to slips
- Mangawhai/Tomarata Road CLOSED on Auckland Transport network due to large slip

Total of 158 roads closed and 104 down to one lane

Power

- Customers affected = 20 800 across both providers, Top Energy approx. 7 000, NorthPower approx. 13 800
- Areas effected maps: [Northpower Faults And Outages :: Northpower](#); [Top Energy Outage Centre](#)
- Priority is repairs to damaged substations at Ruakaka, Ruawai and Poroti

Telecommunications

- Cell phone towers offline = 214
- Spark have identified 13 critical sites [Northland Priority - Google My Maps](#); Spark outage map [Outages \(spark.co.nz\)](#)
- Underground Chorus customers outages = 26 139 (Broadwood and Towai now operational)

Water Supply and Wastewater

- Ruawai Water Treatment Plant flooded. All ponds full.
- Controlled discharge at Maungaturoto.
- No water supply at Omanaia due to pipeline failure (40 customers).
- Wastewater treatment pond inundation/flooding Ruawai.
- General surcharging of manholes and wastewater spills on all networks.
- Rawene is operational at 7%. Water carts supplying drinking water.
- Whangarei Heads and Taurikura have lost water supply. A low pressure line is being installed today and large landline planned for Friday.

Airports and Ports

- All airports operational.
- All ports services cancelled. Due to repone Thursday morning.
- Opuha ferry operational.
- Hokianga unknown.

Rail

- Closed due to a large slip across the track north of Helensville.

Fuel Distributors

- Garages Closed = 1
- Sufficient supplies at others

Outstanding Issues / Challenges / Problems

Power

- Access to sites closed roads, movement of resources, restoration will be based on when safe to do so and ability to reach sites.

Roading

- Alternative to closed SH1 detour routes not suitable for heavy vehicles

Telecommunications

- Due to the finite number of generators, focus is on deploying to hub sites that feed several other sites to maximise the coverage footprint. There are not enough generators available to deploy to every site impacted.

Water and Wastewater

- Tanker supply to Mania.
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Rural Status:

MPI

- More than 50 dairy farmers who had multiple days without milking; SVS (wholesaler) support with vaccines and antibiotics for those drying off; request for prioritisation for communication with power line companies. Rural industry reps (DairNZ, Fonterra, Rural Support Trust, MPI) setting up ground team to coordinate response and recovery - Wed. morning. RST overloaded with calls for farmer seeking assistance.
- Fonterra confirm 150 farms' milk not collected last night and large volume of milk disposed of on farm. Day shift is on hold until safety assessment is done this morning.

- Significant flooding and wind damage reported in Kaipara district with John Blackwell (Federated Farmers president) reporting over 100 trees down and one roof lost, the worst storm in his farming history.
- Rural Support Trust has reported a further 6 calls as at 0930 this morning (additional to 10 yesterday) from farmers seeking generators – still unable to locate any. 35 farms were impacted yesterday by lack of generators, further 21 today. Some farmers have purchased from Auckland but road access now challenging.

Recovery Implications:

- Recovery work from last week’s event will likely be compounded by Cyclone Gabrielle.
- Impacts of the cyclone will possibly have wide-reaching effects on both rural and urban infrastructure.
- Recovery now expected to cover an extended period.

Priority Actions:

- Planning underway for next operational period.
- Tasked Police SAR to visit commercial and residential buildings in tidal flood zones (as above) to warn occupants of likely inundation at peak times, waiting on response/report.
- WDC evacuation of CBD areas as concerns for rising river levels and anticipated high tides will affect lower CBD areas, businesses and possible some residential homes.

Predicted Development:

Extensive impacts from road closures, power outages, and flooding expected to occur.

Continued rain during Tuesday, with most effects on south of Northland.

Rain expected to ease Wednesday, but focussed on west coast, with strong south-west gales.

Increased Welfare requests.

Additional information:

Northland CDEM staff will continue to monitor the situation throughout the emergency.

Report authorised by: Evania Arani, CDEM Group Intelligence Manager

Report prepared by: Gail Townsend, Katrina Hansen
Emergency Management - Intelligence

Date/time of approval:
Wednesday 15 February 2023; 1500 hrs

Next situation report will be issued at:
Thursday, 16 February 2023; 1500 hrs