



# AIDE-MEMOIRE

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

## Delivering better responses to emergencies: national structures

**Date:** 5 March 2019  
**For:** Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of State Services  
**Report No:** SSC2019/0057

### Delivering better responses to emergencies: national structures

**Purpose** GOV  
**Date of meeting** 7 March  
**Minister** Minister Faafoi, Minister of Civil Defence

**Proposal** That, subject to the Budget process, a new national emergency management agency (NEMA) be established as a Departmental Agency (DA), initially hosted by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC).  
 Following the Budget process, both you and the Minister of Civil Defence will determine next steps and report back to Cabinet on a range of matters, including drafting the Order in Council and the appointment of a new chief executive.  
 A review will be undertaken a year after NEMA is formed to consider progress, including the role of DPMC as host agency of the DA.

**Key issues** The findings of the Ministerial Review on, "Better responses to Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies", found that the emergency management system requires stronger, more proactive, leadership. It recommended setting up a DA to replace the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (MCDEM), a branded business unit within DPMC.

**Our advice** SSC has been fully consulted by DPMC on the Government's response and supports the Cabinet Paper.  
 You considered a draft of the Cabinet Paper that sought "agreement in principle" to the DA. This has been changed to a noting recommendation as the Minister of Finance wants to preserve the integrity of the Budget process.  
 An operational body that requires proximity to Ministers aligns well with the DA form. The proposed DA will facilitate greater role clarity, with DPMC able to focus more on strategic policy and risks to New Zealand's resilience through its oversight of the National Security System (NSS).  
 A review will take place at least a year after NEMA is formed to consider progress, including the role of DPMC as host agency. Other options for the host agency were considered during the current policy process. These considered

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both the influence NEMA required in central government and the need for it to build relationships with local government and communities.

NEMA's predecessor, MCDEM, is currently located in DPMC. DPMC's central position, and the continuity it offers in being able to respond to an emergency during the transition to a DA, provides a strong argument for making DPMC the host agency. However, role clarity between the chief executive of DPMC, as leader of the National Security System, and the chief executive of NEMA will have to be clear and maintained.

Note that the DA chief executive position would need to be funded out of DPMC's Budget bid, which would also determine the nature and size of the role.

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We recommend

- that you do not release this aide-memoire as its under active policy consideration.

**Proactive Release**

Agree/disagree.

Hon Chris Hipkins

**Minister of State Services**

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**Author:** Philip Stables, Senior Analyst, System Improvement, Strategy and Policy

**Responsible Manager:** Mereama Chase, System Improvement, Strategy and Policy

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