



ANIMAL EVAC.NZ
KARAREHE WHAKAWATEA
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Debrief Notes:

2023 North Island Weather Events

Report Date: August 2023

Event Date: January to February 2023

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Debrief Notes

Event	<p>The emergency responses to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. January 2023 flood event in Auckland 2. February 2023 cyclone event in Hawke's Bay
Aim of debrief	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To reflect on the experiences of Animal Evac NZ volunteers involved in emergency animal rescue and response immediately following the Auckland flood event from 31 January 2023 to 2 February 2023 and following the Hawke's Bay cyclone event from 14-17 February 2023. 2. Identify personal experiences and review decisions and actions relating to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Initial response b. Event progression c. Command and control d. Other 3. Views shared and discussed to establish: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What worked well b. What did not work well/could have been done better c. What could have been done differently d. Suggestions or recommendations that may address the identified learnings
Place of debrief	Plimmerton Fire Station
Date	Sunday 12 March 2023
Time	1.00pm – 3.55pm
Debrief led by	Gerry Prins
Initiator	Tony Sutorius
Participants	Tanya Christian (left at 1.50pm), Darren Gray, Simon Luke, Duncan Tabor, Sarah Malone, Brent Robertson, Heather Rodgers (via video call), Tony Sutorius
In attendance	Pinky Shah
Summary	<p>The debrief took place following a period of response activity by AENZ volunteers during two weather-related events which occurred in close succession.</p> <p>The debrief focused on each individual's personal learning and its future use. All were given time to reflect, to generate and express personal views, and to listen to others. All participants were given the opportunity to reflect</p>

	<p>on their roles and to contribute their views in discussion. The main issues raised, largely common to both responses are as follows.</p> <p>Main negative aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of equipment and scenario checklists. • Lack of accommodation, meals, key reporting area, logistics. • Lack of clear tasking and resourcing from MPI (pre-departure and on arrival). • Unclear/dysfunctional command and control structure. <p>Main positive aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crew were assembled on short notice, deployed, and got there. • Good, constructive relationship with HUHA. • Properly set up in terms of initial contact with EOC. • Every time someone needed to say “no” they spoke up. • Teamwork and knowing each other before deploying. • Team generally bonded well. • Debrief with the team before coming back home. • Good communication between the team members. • Everybody came back mostly uninjured. • Did the mahi and achieved the mission for the animals, which has improved AENZ’s public credibility and its viability as an organisation. • Ability to engage with communities looks extremely promising to create something transformative. <p>Lessons identified/what could be done differently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deployment needs to be fully self-contained and fully equipped for a period (e.g. tents to stay in makeshift accommodation and food/water/rations) so they are not a burden on local resources. ○ Include information about food, coffee, supplies in SOPs. ○ Create equipment checklists for different scenarios. ○ Develop an integrated plan to track equipment, maintain the readiness of equipment required (regular checks/recertification), keep it working in the field, and ensure regular training of equipment. ○ Provide basic equipment for rescues, e.g. dog leads to safely move animals, walking poles for additional stability, etc. ○ Ensure all deployed team members are familiar with equipment loaded in the trailer. ○ Improve communication, e.g. radios (including training), dry bags for communications equipment, back-up communication options (e.g. satellite phone (very expensive) or utilise new text message technology (iridium)). ○ Provide personal locator beacons for each deployed person.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review the uniform and equipment used by team members and find budget for better/appropriate equipment and uniforms. ○ Provide core team members their own kit/PPE and a grab/kit bag. ○ Review personal vehicle usage and develop personal vehicle use policy, e.g. mileage claim process, insurance (how does the insurance on a personal vehicle work when going into a disaster?), grooming of contaminated vehicles, etc. ○ Purchase of twin cab 4WD purchase (not a priority). ○ Supply each team member a backpack with water and snacks, basic first aid kit, etc. that they carry to avoid the need to return to the truck for supplies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administration/Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Team leader to have some sort of financial delegation. ○ Have a dedicated support structure to get things in place for each deployment. ○ Regular sitrep process, i.e. whenever things change. E.g. keeping a log on D4H. ○ Training for D4H. ○ New position within AENZ called Agency Command (enabling 24/7 contact point). ○ Use of sophisticated GIS system (e.g. roof images rather than street numbers). ○ Better coordination with USAR teams/NZRT certification. ○ Have a dry person in the team who can coordinate from the truck, e.g. informing HQ where the animal has been rescued from and where it is being taken. ○ Clarify existing need in the communities, which may include a more sophisticated FB/social media system to capture taskings in a particular area. ○ Better messaging to the public. ○ Add emergency management capability to MPI (work towards this goal). ● Command and Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reporting ICP needs to be given earlier. ○ Have an AENZ rep/liaison person inside the EOC/HQ getting instructions from MPI, dealing with the agencies, and ensuring logistics are ready to go for when the tech team arrives. ○ Require provision of accommodation, food, and location of ICP as a condition of deployment. ○ Always adhere to command structure. ○ Improve team dynamics, group decision making dynamics, know the team that you deploy with, and ensure there is a clear person in charge to avoid any necessary conflict in the group.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Health and Safety</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Safer duty cycles in terms of the hours people work on deployment.○ Dynamic risk awareness, assessment, and training; reporting structure and making calls on safety; safe person concept; ensuring one team person remains outside at all times when assessing a building; and 360 assessments of buildings.○ Support individual members who feel unsafe.○ Have the correct number of people responding.
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Overview of Discussion Relating to Each Event

January 2023 Auckland Flood Event

Initial Response

- Tony received the initial notification from MPI at 1600 on 31 January 2023, which was vague. This was after the main flood and they wanted the tech team and swift water team deployed to Wellsford based on a worsening weather forecast for the area.
- Last AENZ deployment was 2021 and therefore AENZ wanted to say “yes” when requested by MPI.
- Leader of the Tech Team had resigned earlier that day.
- Team with minimum of four people was identified as the safe minimum.
- Empty trailer was at ex-Tech Team leader’s house and equipment was at the cache located at Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC).
- No AENZ vehicle, so Brent used his personal vehicle.
- MPI confirmed they would provide more information on logistics, resourcing, tasking, etc.

Event Progression

- At 0700 the following day, after driving through the night, the team arrived at Wellsford EOC. The weather had not worsened and EOC personnel were relocating to Auckland.
- Team went to Manukau community hub and spoke to Māori wardens who told them to investigate two areas. There were no flooding issues.
- No accommodation or food/water had been organised for the team.
- The team was sent there based on a worsening weather forecast that did not eventuate. The team should have been stood down before they arrived.

Command and Control

- There were issues contacting AENZ Control in Wellington. This could have been related to network outages and/or individual handset issues.
- MPI was struggling to operate as it needed to. Animal welfare is way down on the welfare stream, away from the operational stream, which means it can take time to action logistical requests.
- New MPI personnel changed with no proper handover and no record of authorisations/agreements with AENZ made the day before.
- Agency Command (Wellington) was not able to maintain situational awareness of what the team were doing. Information was being gathered up after the fact, which meant accurately conveying progress to MPI was not possible nor was identifying and addressing any safety issues (e.g. working too many hours).

Other

- Deployed without any financial delegation and delays with reimbursement.
- General issues with upper support structure.

February 2023 Hawke's Bay Cyclone Event

Initial Response

- Tony received the initial notification from MPI. The brief was as vague as the previous event call. MPI wanted an animal rescue team with swift water capabilities to deploy from Hastings to Napier and beyond, and it was unclear how long for.
- Darren was appointed as Acting Team Leader. At first, there were not enough team members to safely deploy until Tony identified some FENZ personnel who could deploy with the AENZ volunteers. FENZ's extra skills and background would complement the AENZ team.
- Tony and Darren had both stated to MPI that accommodation was to be sorted before the team arrived.
- Pre-deployment communications with MPI and the team were clearer. Darren contacted MPI liaison. He handed over to the team when they arrived.

Event Progression

- MPI was advised that the team was on the way. MPI requested team to divert to Waipawa to help with some sheep.
- Reported to EOC in Hastings. A COVID test was required prior to entering the EOC. The EOC point of contact was not on site, so the team had to leave and return the following day.
- The team arrived at 0700 the next morning, but the MPI person was not on site until 1000.
- MPI only gave a very vague instruction to go where needed to assist animals.
- Issues identifying addresses in that roof images would have been more useful than street numbers given the level of flooding.
- General concerns about the amount of time spent looking for a single animal when there was still some distance to be travelled for the next rescue.
- Command and control issues within the team were raised, e.g. safe person concept, clear plans and direction from the team leader, group decision making dynamics, and ensuring all team members are heard.

Command and Control

- As there was no mobile coverage, the team were unable to inform Agency Command or Acting Team Lead that there were any issues.
- Tasked more by social media and contact with owners than by MPI.
- Initially, MPI sent out taskings, but the general observation was that the situation got too big too fast for MPI. The taskings were delayed and calls coming in were not going out quick enough to the groups that could help.
- It appeared that MPI was not aware of the realities on the ground (noting that SPCA was coordinating the rescue from the beginning as MPI could not get there in time).
- USAR was finding lots of animals but the comms from MPI/EOC to AENZ were not clear. The data was going in but not coming out as it was taking about 3-4 days to go from an emergency call to MPI to an AENZ tasking.
- AENZ did not have the mandate to receive reports and directly react and there was an expectation that AENZ operated through the right channels. Agency Command and the Acting Team Lead were unaware of the general instruction to assist where needed.
- Ultimately, the MPI/EOC command and control structure was very dysfunctional.

- Situational awareness issues for people away from the field. The primary responsibility of the team leader is to understand what is going on.

Other

- Motels would not take the team as there was no power. While there was one luxury motel, it was expensive and the team would have had to pay for it out of their own personal funds and then get reimbursed.
- While ordering pizza, the owner of the food cart connected them to someone who had accommodation.

Post-Debrief Disclaimer

Not all field responders participated in the debrief and some raised additional concerns and comments. They remain unvalidated but are a point of record for consideration.

Additional comments

- Lack of clarity on requirement to use INSARAG markings in multi-agency response.
- There was a lack of agreed values/rescue priorities in high volume rescue situation.
- Removal of property from one house that was not in scope.

Abbreviations

4WD	Four Wheel Drive
AENZ	Animal Evac New Zealand
AWEM	Animal welfare emergency management
CDEM	Civil Defence Emergency Management
CIMS	Coordinated Incident Management System
D4H	D4H Technologies (Incident Management System)
DAC	Duty Agency Commander (Animal Evac NZ)
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
FENZ	Fire & Emergency New Zealand (formerly NZ Fire Service)
GIS	Geographical Information System
HUHA	Helping You Help Animals (animal charity)
IAP	Incident Action Plan
ICP	Incident Control Point
IMT	Incident Management Team
INSARAG	United Nations International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries
NZRT	New Zealand Response Team
SPCA	Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SITREP	Situation Report
TLA	Territorial Local Authority
USAR	Urban Search & Rescue

Media Links

https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=embed_video&v=871940374097105

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/300808727/olly-the-dog-saved-from-hawkes-bay-floodwaters-by-animal-rescuers>

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2023/01/north-island-floods-how-to-keep-your-pets-safe-as-red-heavy-rain-warning-begins.html>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/auckland-top-stories/131089077/sheep-rescued-in-kayaks-stray-dogs-being-taken-in-as-aucklanders-refuse-to-leave-animals-behind>

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/auckland-flood-heartbreak-of-lost-pets-flooded-paddocks-sanctuaries-animal-rescue-teams-on-ground/I2GDAGOQTFH7THHS3OTHVFOTCY/>

<https://www.nowtolove.co.nz/news/real-life/sharon-parackal-animal-evacuation-46729>

<https://www.broadsheet.com.au/new-zealand/city-file/article/how-you-can-help-victims-cyclone-gabrielle>

<https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/AK2301/S00466/animal-evac-nz-assisting-with-flooding-emergency-response-in-auckland.htm>

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/viva/life/how-to-help-those-affected-by-cyclone-gabrielle/MEFTLETG2FGVPPTYXEDV7HCNLQ/>

<https://www.1news.co.nz/2023/02/20/cyclone-gabrielle-teams-work-to-reunite-animals-with-owners/>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/300809862/injured-and-contaminated-animals-rescued-in-hastings-after-floods>

Photos & Images



Pictured here is Claire and her son picking up feed for their horse and dog from one of our amazing volunteers Megan at the Centennial Hall Hub. Claire lives with her family in Esk Valley, one of the worst hit areas and spent 8 hours sheltering in the eaves of a barn after the flood waters rose too rapidly for them to escape until they were rescued by helicopter. Below AENZ and local animal charity volunteers support flood affected community members with supplying donated pet food.





Pictured here is Tina Chen and her cat whose house was flooded in Napier. Their house will be salvageable in time, but they are having to stay in the shelter until they find accommodation. Animal Evac NZ were able to Provide Tina with a brand-new large cat carrier that was donated by a lovely lady, Alara, that had travelled from Auckland to help.



AENZ swiftwater rescue technicians work to safely evacuate horses from flood affected areas in Hawkes Bay.



AENZ volunteer veterinary nurses undertake health checks on pets owned by those who have been impacted by the Auckland floods at an assistance centre.



AENZ volunteers attend an assistance centre in Auckland, to help evacuees and flood impacted communities with any pet related concerns.



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AENZ swiftwater rescue technicians work with other agencies including FENZ and Surf Lifesaving to ensure animals are rescued from floodwaters.



Animals being rescued in the Cyclone.

Tony Sutorius, Chairman of AENZ at the time of the events, is [interviewed by Maddie McLean on TVNZ's Breakfast show about the response](#). Thanks Tony for a job well done!

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