



## Proactive Release

The following document has been proactively released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet on behalf of Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Prime Minister:

### **National Risk and Resilience: Strengthening Accountability and Oversight**

The following documents have been included in this release:

**Title of paper:** National Risk and Resilience: Strengthening accountability and oversight (ECO-25-SUB-0143 refers)

**Title of minute:** Report of the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee: Period Ended 19 September 2025 (CAB-25-MIN-0324 refers)

**Title of minute:** National Risk and Resilience: Strengthening Accountability and Oversight (ECO-25-MIN-0143 refers)

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Where this is the case, the relevant section of the Act that would apply has been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

### **Key to redaction codes:**

- section 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand
- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

Office of the Rt Hon Christopher Luxon  
**Prime Minister**

Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

## **National Risk and Resilience: Strengthening accountability and oversight**

### **Proposal**

1. To update Cabinet on the status of government's national risk management, and seek agreement to proposals that enhance accountability for cross-government leadership, governance, and management of New Zealand's most serious hazards and national security threats.


### **Relation to government priorities**

2. Driving economic growth is a priority for this Government. Strategically and proactively reducing risk and building resilience is critical to safeguarding the Crown's fiscal position against future crises, providing essential conditions for economic growth, and enhancing the safety, security and prosperity of New Zealanders.

### **Background**

3. In December, Cabinet agreed the National Risk and Resilience Framework (attached at Annex A) and asked for a progress report on the status and effectiveness of national risk management, as well as opportunities to reduce risk and build resilience [CBC-24-MIN-0112].
4. Through implementing the Framework, this Government is taking decisive action to address New Zealand's most significant potential crises (National Risks), while actively seeking assurance they are being proactively managed.
5. We are also advancing a range of large-scale policy programmes, reforms, and initiatives that directly improve national risk management and resilience. Today, Cabinet will consider two key related items – Risk Financing (led by the Minister of Finance) and Establishing a National Adaptation Framework (led by the Minister of Climate Change) – which will strengthen policy development, improve risk management decision-making and enhance efficiency by deepening our understanding of natural hazard and climate risk exposure, including risks to public assets.

### **Current status of national risk management**

6. s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv), s6(a)  

7. While government is taking important steps to build New Zealand's resilience to National Risks, there is a widening gap between the increasing level and types of risks we face and our ability to deter, prevent, minimise, or respond to them. Crucially, the

way we are organised is getting in the way of our objective to reduce the cost and harm of future crises.

8. This is unacceptable in an operating context where, globally, we continue to face more complex, evolving, and interconnected challenges, including technological developments, economic volatility, increasing strategic competition, climate change, and population and demographic shifts.
9. The potential economic and social costs of National Risks are significant. Initial high-level modelling suggests there are several plausible catastrophic-level risk events that could have economic costs of between \$100-400 billion, even without including key social-harm costs such as deaths and injuries.
10. As Prime Minister, I require ongoing assurance that National Risks are managed effectively and efficiently. This means doing the basics well, and ensuring we have a strong, agile National Resilience System<sup>1</sup> that functions well in both crisis and in peacetime.

### **Maintaining momentum: clearer accountability and stronger oversight required**

11. The effectiveness of government's national risk management is undermined by unclear roles and responsibilities across agencies, and governance and oversight arrangements that are not working as well as they should.
12. Currently, there are four types of mandated agency roles that overlap, are overly complex, and inefficient:
  - 12.1 **Lead agencies for strategic crisis response** agreed by Cabinet in 2011 [DES (11) 1/1];
  - 12.2 **Lead agencies for response to an emergency** under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan Order 2015;
  - 12.3 **Strategic Coordination Agencies** for each core national security issue under the National Security Strategy [CAB-23-MIN-0343], and;
  - 12.4 **Risk-coordinating Agencies** previously noted by Cabinet as part of the National Risk and Resilience Framework.
13. The overlaps and different requirements across these roles create confusion for agencies, inertia, duplication of effort, and ultimately weaken accountability. During a crisis, this can hinder our response and exacerbate the consequences. We are too slow. In peacetime, it can mean significant risks go unmanaged because no agency has overall responsibility for coordinating a whole-of-government approach to managing them.
14. To address this, I am proposing changes that will improve efficiency and ensure agencies are clear about what they are expected to do. This requires shifting from four confusing, overlapping roles to two clear and distinct roles:

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<sup>1</sup> The National Resilience System comprises the various systems (national security, hazards, strategic crisis, and emergency management systems) that function collectively to improve resilience to our most serious hazards & threats.

- 14.1 **Strategic Coordination Agency** to coordinate the whole-of-government strategic approach to proactively managing specific National Risks and related National Security Strategy core issues, and;
- 14.2 **Lead Agency** to lead and coordinate preparation (including planning and exercising) for, and the response during, a crisis or emergency. This role clarification aligns with policy decisions Cabinet has made in relation to emergencies as part of the Emergency Management reforms [ECO-25-MIN-0117].
15. Ongoing responsibility for assigning these roles will be delegated to DPMC as the central agency system leader and assurer, to support timely, agile decision-making. DPMC will consult with relevant agencies and roles will be assigned to those with the appropriate legislative mandates and capabilities. Strategic Coordination Agencies and Lead Agencies will work together as appropriate where their roles intersect.
16. In addition, current governance arrangements are sub-optimal – in some cases overly bureaucratic, duplicative and siloed. Greater efficiency and alignment in the oversight of National Risks and cross-system resilience-building efforts is needed.
17. To achieve this, I propose to establish a National Resilience Board, chaired by the Chief Executive of DPMC and comprising key government Chief Executives. This Board will provide coordinated, whole-of-system governance and advice to relevant Ministers across all National Risks, with a strategic focus on building long-term resilience.
18. As part of this reform, the ineffective National Hazards Board will be disestablished. However, a dedicated focus on natural hazards will be maintained, given the importance and cross-cutting nature of the issues. Responsibility for cross-government oversight of natural hazard risk reduction will be delegated to the Ministry for the Environment (MfE), which aligns with its existing legislated leadership responsibilities for natural hazards under the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Environment Act 1986. MfE will work with DPMC to confirm governance arrangements that support the National Resilience Board and where possible leverage existing structures.
19. The National Security Board will continue its dedicated focus on core national security issues and provide advice on key cross-cutting policy challenges related to national security threats, in support of the National Resilience Board.
20. These changes are the simplest way to remove duplication or silos and create efficiencies, while ensuring National Risks are governed collectively by government Chief Executives and coordinated effectively by assigned agencies. This will ensure that in peacetime Ministers can have confidence National Risks are being given appropriate focus, so that in crisis, the risks we face are lessened, we have plans in place, and government is better prepared to effectively respond and recover. DPMC will review these arrangements as and when appropriate to ensure ongoing effectiveness.
21. s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv), s6(a)

s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv), s6(a)

## Implications

22. There are no direct or immediate financial implications relating to these proposals.
23. There are no legislative implications to the recommendations in this paper. This proposal does not change any existing statutory roles for the management of National Risks and their consequences. There are no other cost-of-living, climate, population or human rights implications to the recommendations in this paper.

## Impact Analysis

24. There are no regulatory or other impacts to the recommendations in this paper that require further analysis.

## Use of External Resources

25. External resources were not used to develop this paper.

## Consultation

26. This paper was drafted by DPMC and consulted with the following agencies; the Climate Change Interdepartmental Board Unit, NZ Customs Service, Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Justice, Ministry for Primary Industries, Ministry of Transport, New Zealand Police, Public Service Commission, The Treasury, Ministry of Health, Ministry for the Environment, National Emergency Management Agency, Ministry of Defence, NZ Defence Force, NZ Security Intelligence Service, Government Communications Security Bureau, Natural Hazards Commission, Fire and Emergency NZ, Ministry for Regulation and Civil Aviation Authority.

## Communications

27. Information on the National Risk and Resilience Framework is publicly available on the DPMC website.

## Proactive Release

28. I intend to proactively release this paper in full, within 30 business days, subject to necessary redactions under the Official Information Act 1982.

## Recommendations

The Prime Minister recommends that the Committee:

1. **agree** to establish a National Resilience Board, chaired by DPMC, that provides coordinated, whole-of-system governance and advice to relevant Ministers across all National Risks, with a strategic focus on building long-term resilience;

s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv), s6(a)

2. **agree** MfE will be responsible for cross-government oversight of natural hazard risk reduction, and work with DPMC to confirm governance arrangements that support the National Resilience Board, leveraging existing structures where possible;
3. **agree** to replace four overlapping agency roles for managing National Risks through the National Risk and Resilience Framework with two clear and distinct roles:
  - a. *Strategic Coordination Agency* to coordinate the whole-of-government strategic approach to proactively managing each National Risk and related National Security Strategy core issue;
  - b. *Lead Agency* to lead and coordinate preparation (including planning and exercising) for, and response during a crisis or emergency (consistent with policy decisions Cabinet has made in relation to emergencies as part of the Emergency Management reforms [ECO-25-MIN-0117]), and;
4. **agree** DPMC, in consultation with relevant agencies, assigns Strategic Coordination Agency and Lead Agency roles.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon  
Prime Minister

## Appendices

Annex A: National Risk and Resilience Framework

Annex B: s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv), s6(a)

Annex B is being withheld in its entirety under section 6(a), section 9(2)(f)(iv), and section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA.

Proactively Released

# National Risk and Resilience Framework



## In December 2024, Cabinet agreed the National Risk and Resilience Framework.

The Framework sets out the strategic actions government will take to proactively build resilience to National Risks and ensure New Zealand's safety, security and future prosperity.

The intent of the Framework is to:

- **Drive action** across central government to reduce the cost and harm of crises.
- **Prioritise and align** across national risk management and resilience-building efforts, positioning finite resources to where they are most impactful.
- **Provide assurance** that National Risks are being actively managed.

DPMC has been working with agencies, Chief Executive Boards, Chief Science Advisors and other experts, to implement the Framework.

## IDENTIFY + PRIORITISE

### NATIONAL RISK REGISTER

- Identify and assess National Risks – **the most serious hazards and threats** facing New Zealand.
- Identify key causes and major consequences, and **potential risk management gaps and priority actions**, across National Risks.
- Identify **agencies responsible** for advising on risk mitigations and plans.
- Track risk status and **priorities for focus and action**

## PREPARE

### NATIONAL PLANNING

- Have effective **operational plans** for National Risks **that mean we are ready to respond quickly and effectively in a crisis.**
- Agree roles and responsibilities ahead of time so we **know exactly who does what when a crisis hits.**
- **Lessons from past experiences are implemented in our future plans.**

### NATIONAL EXERCISE PROGRAMME

- Keep agencies and Ministers **crisis-ready through regular simulations** that test our capabilities and builds experience.

### PUBLIC COMMUNICATION & PREPAREDNESS

- Build national resilience and **empower New Zealanders by keeping them informed and prepared.**

## DELIVER

### PRIORITIES FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE

- **Take decisive, impactful action** to prevent, or reduce the potential likelihood and impact of, crises.

### STRATEGIC CRISIS RESPONSE

- Ensure **key decision-makers can set direction in times of crisis** based on good quality information and advice.

### MONITORING & REPORTING

- Keep **Ministers and other key decision-makers informed** on the status and effectiveness of national risk management.

Proactively Prepared



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

### Report of the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee: Period Ended 19 September 2025


On 22 September 2025, Cabinet made the following decisions on the work of the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee for the period ended 19 September 2025:

ECO-25-MIN-0143    **National Risk and Resilience: Strengthening Accountability and Oversight**    CONFIRMED  
Portfolio: Prime Minister

Out of scope



Out of scope



Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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# Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### National Risk and Resilience: Strengthening Accountability and Oversight

**Portfolio**                      **Prime Minister**

On 17 September 2025, the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee:

- 1        **agreed** to establish a National Resilience Board, chaired by the Chief Executive of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), that provides coordinated, whole-of-system governance and advice to relevant Ministers across all National Risks, with a strategic focus on building long-term resilience;
- 2        **agreed** that the Ministry for the Environment be responsible for cross-government oversight of natural hazard risk reduction, and work with DPMC to confirm governance arrangements that support the National Resilience Board, leveraging existing structures where possible;
- 3        **agreed** to replace four overlapping agency roles for managing National Risks through the National Risk and Resilience Framework with two clear and distinct roles:
  - 3.1      Strategic Coordination Agency: to coordinate the whole-of-government strategic approach to proactively managing each National Risk and related National Security Strategy core issue;
  - 3.2      Lead Agency: to lead and coordinate preparation (including planning and exercising) for, and response during, a crisis or emergency (consistent with Cabinet's decisions in relation to emergencies as part of the Emergency Management reforms [ECO-25-MIN-0117]);
- 4        **agreed** that DPMC, in consultation with relevant agencies, assign the Strategic Coordination Agency and Lead Agency roles.

Rachel Clarke  
Committee Secretary

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**Present: (see over)**

**Present:**

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon  
Hon David Seymour  
Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Hon Nicola Willis (Chair)  
Hon Chris Bishop  
Hon Brooke van Velden  
Hon Shane Jones  
Hon Paul Goldsmith  
Hon Louise Upston  
Hon Dr Shane Reti  
Hon Simon Watts  
Hon Chris Penk  
Hon Andrew Hoggard  
Hon Nicola Grigg  
Hon James Meager  
Simon Court MP

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Office of Hon Chris Bishop  
Office of Hon Dr Shane Reti  
Office of Hon Simon Watts  
Officials Committee for ECO

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