

RESULTS OF THE CIVIL DEFENCE SURVEY

A survey was sent out to residents and ratepayers in the northern parts of the Ruapehu District. The area covered was the rural areas north and west, and north/east of Taumarunui. Just over 500 surveys were sent, with a return rate of 28%. This is quite a high return rate for a mail out survey.

The purpose of the survey was primarily to canvass the best method for contacting people in a Civil Defence Emergency. This has been highlighted to staff as an issue since the closure of the only local radio station. In the past, local radio was considered to be the most appropriate method, but the survey has shown quite clearly that this is no longer the case. Almost 50% of rural people in the northern Ruapehu area do not receive any radio coverage. The remainder uses a wide variety of radio stations, with the National Station the highest at 17% of respondents. This is of concern to Council and needs to be addressed. Some of the comments from the respondents also addressed the issue. Suggestions include a text messaging system, linked siren system from local fire stations and schools, and improved cell phone coverage. Cell phone coverage was mentioned by a large number of respondents as being inadequate.

The survey took the opportunity to also ask a variety of other questions regarding Civil Defence and access to communication. The survey found that the use of Internet is below the national average, at 68%, and that a high number (83%) of people still use a landline (which is not cordless). This is important to have in case power goes out, as a power cut will not affect this phone service, but does affect internet and cell phone service in some cases.

Most of the respondents (87%), feel that they have enough information on civil defence, and nearly all (95%) have three days worth of supplies. This reflects that the survey covered the rural areas, and this level of high self sufficiency was not unexpected. Slightly lower (at 62%) of respondents have an emergency plan.

The survey also questioned how many respondents would go to a marae in an emergency. The result was 30%. A Marae, or a school are often a meeting points for the distribution of services in an emergency. The results are shown in the following table.

