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Animal Welfare Emergency Response Taskforce (AWERT)

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ANIMAL WELFARE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TASKFORCE (AWERT)

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Preparedness strategy

- So, why should we be prepared?
 - Corporately, meets the expectations of the Community, Councillors, Civil Defence and pet owners.
 - Establishes clarity around "who does what" and promotes strong community awareness.
 - Crystallises your extraction, evacuation, identification, welfare and recovery plans.
 - Sets clear guidelines for volunteers on "their roles" and the importance for these roles.
 - Identifies gaps in your systems and resources.



Hurricane Katrina – August 2005

- Huge hurricane, massive property damage, flooding and devastation to the City of New Orleans.
- Reported human death toll -1833.
- Lady perched on her roof with her dog.
- Her pleas to save her dog before herself.
- Risks involving rescuers, the lady and her dog.
- How that event emotionally affected me.
- Left a huge imprint on me.



Preparedness - training

- Enrol in Civil defence training, modelling and procedures
 - Operation "Genie" – 2007, 2008
 - Operation "How" – 2008, 2009
 - Operation "Pandora" – 2010
- Prepare for an emergency
 - Conduct table top or field operations training under near emergency situations.
 - Crystallised our extraction, evacuation, identification, welfare and recovery plans.
- Opens doors to net work – animal welfare agencies, volunteer groups, Red Cross and USAR response.
- Identified gaps - resources, goods, training, services.



he started it - went to Civil Defence



Preparedness - key stakeholders



- **Networking with other animal welfare/enforcement agencies greatly enhances your ability to deliver your plan.**
- **Also builds strong working relationships with like minded community groups.**
- **Civil defence logistics – animal food, drinking water, water to wash down kennels, animal bedding and food bowls and extraction and evacuation of pets**
- **Welfare agencies – Salvation Army, Red Cross, Work and income, welfare groups, neighbourhood support and welfare centres.**
- **RSPCA, cats protection, boarding kennels, vets.**

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Preparedness - Command centre



- **Clearly identify command roles:**
 - Leadership, chain of command, direct reports.
- **Shared leadership roles:**
 - roster - operating hours allows each commander to personally recover.
 - manage their own family issues and to obtain daily rest and nourishment.
 - establish feedback platforms where outcomes can be shared with others.
 - Clearly establish a resource list, delegation and tasks to complete.
- **Create a staff roster for volunteers.**

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EARTHQUAKES – EARTHQUAKES



- **4 September 2010, 4.35 am, Christchurch city struck by a 7.1 magnitude quake.**
- **Shook the living soul out of the city for 45-60 seconds, 2 mega tonnes of TNT.**

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Communications strategy

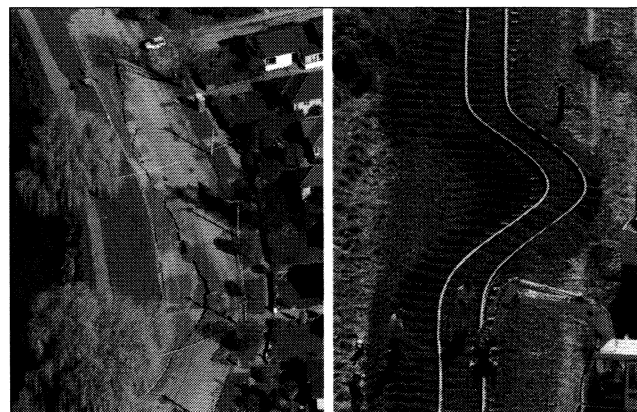


- **Establish prearranged communication centre.**
- **Media liaison officer – delivering key messages to public.**

Administration

- **Lost and found database – rapid response reuniting pets and owners.**
- **Registration process – tagging pet and owner.**

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10 September 2010





September 2010



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Animal Welfare Emergency Response Taskforce



- **Extraction and evacuation teams**
 - Primary objective – assisted by Civil defence logistics - enter evacuation zones, enter properties to locate, capture and contain domestic animals and evacuate to the animal welfare centres for identification and registration teams.
- **Identification and registration teams**
 - Primary objective – Conduct pre entry assessment of animals; register owner and animal details into the central database and to handover to welfare and recovery teams.
- **Welfare and recovery teams**
 - Primary objective – to receive animals at the Animal welfare centre and to provide ongoing basic welfare and medical needs.

Animal welfare centres

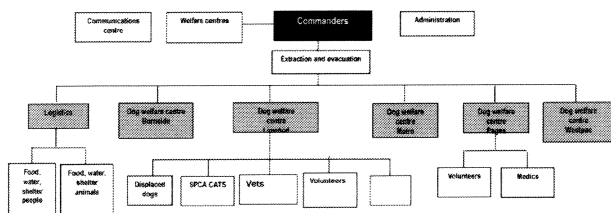


- **Set up 5 animal welfare centres**
- **Welfare agencies Red Cross, Public health, Salvation Army provided food, shelter, water, medical supplies and assistance to displaced people at these centres.**
- **Animal Welfare Emergency Response Taskforce (AWERT) were deployed and commenced welfare and recovery centres adjacent to welfare centres providing food, shelter, water and medical care to animals.**



ANIMAL WELFARE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TASKFORCE

AWERT COMMAND CONTROL



Extraction and evacuation teams



- **Over 500 pets were reported lost/found or homeless.**
- **200 pet animals (including cats and dogs) were extracted/evacuated from devastated areas.**
- **Owners cared for their pets as best they could.**
- **People went to welfare centres.**
- **AWERT set up 5 welfare centres around the city.**
- **AWERT cared for these dogs until reunited.**



29 February 2011

Welfare and recovery teams



- Volunteers provided animals with comfort, food, water, shelter and exercise.
- Volunteers monitored the animals 24 hours.
- Rosters ensured volunteers received breaks.
- Reunited animals back to owners.
- Some owners did not return for their animals.

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Identification and registration teams



- Over 600 pet animals were identified and registered at welfare centres.
- Medics checked animals for injuries as required.
- Staff registered owners and animals on database.
- Staff tagged both owner and animal with ID tags.

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- 2,299 porta-loos.
- 25,340 chemical toilets.
- 15 water distribution points.
- 825 km road network needs repair.
- 8000 street lights destroyed.
- 55 bridges/main culverts need repair.
- 80% trunk sewers broken.
- September 2010 = 30,000 tonne silt.
- February 2011 = 500,000 tonne.

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About the Author

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Employed by the Christchurch City Council, New Zealand for 35 years—the last 30 years as Team Leader Animal control. Responsible for the care and control of 35,000 dog population, with nine amazing field officers and 11 administration staff.

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