

Report            **13.1010**  
Date              5 November 2013  
File              Z/01/04/19

Committee        **CDEM Group**  
Author            **Bruce Pepperell, Regional Manager**

## **The Joint Centre for Disaster Research (JCDR) / Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (WREMO): “International Centre of Excellence in Community Resilience: Wellington” (ICoE:CR)**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the CDEM Group of the launch of the International Centre of Excellence in Community Resilience (ICoE:CR).

### **2. Background**

This paper provides an outline of the UN-International Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) International Centre of Excellence in Community Resilience based in the Wellington Region. The Joint Centre for Disaster Research at Massey University/GNS Science, and the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office, are coordinating this region-wide International Centre of Excellence to answer the question “How does a community make itself resilient to future disasters?”

### **3. Who is the IRDR?**

The Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) is a decade-long, interdisciplinary research programme sponsored by ICSU in partnership with the International Social Science Council (ISSC), and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR). It is a global initiative seeking to address the challenges brought by natural hazard events, mitigate their impacts, and improve related policy-making mechanisms.

### **4. What are International Centres of Excellence?**

Through the IRDR Scientific Committee and the relevant National Committees, a limited number of IRDR International Centres of Excellence (ICoE) are being established to provide regional and research foci for the

IRDR. Each ICoE embodies an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction that directly contributes to the IRDR Science plan (2008) and objective. As outlined in the IRDR Strategic Plan (2013-2017), “each ICoE will collaborate to provide global contributions towards achieving the IRDR legacy and, in particular, enable regional scientific activities through geographically-focused contributions based on more localised inputs and by being visible centres of research to motivate participation in the IRDR programme.”

Since the request made in 2012 to become an IRDR International Centre of Excellence, the following other International Centres of Excellence have also been established:

- Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute, University of South Carolina
- Academia Sinica/START International, Taipei, Taiwan

Applications are currently being assessed by IRDR for other potential International Centres of Excellence.

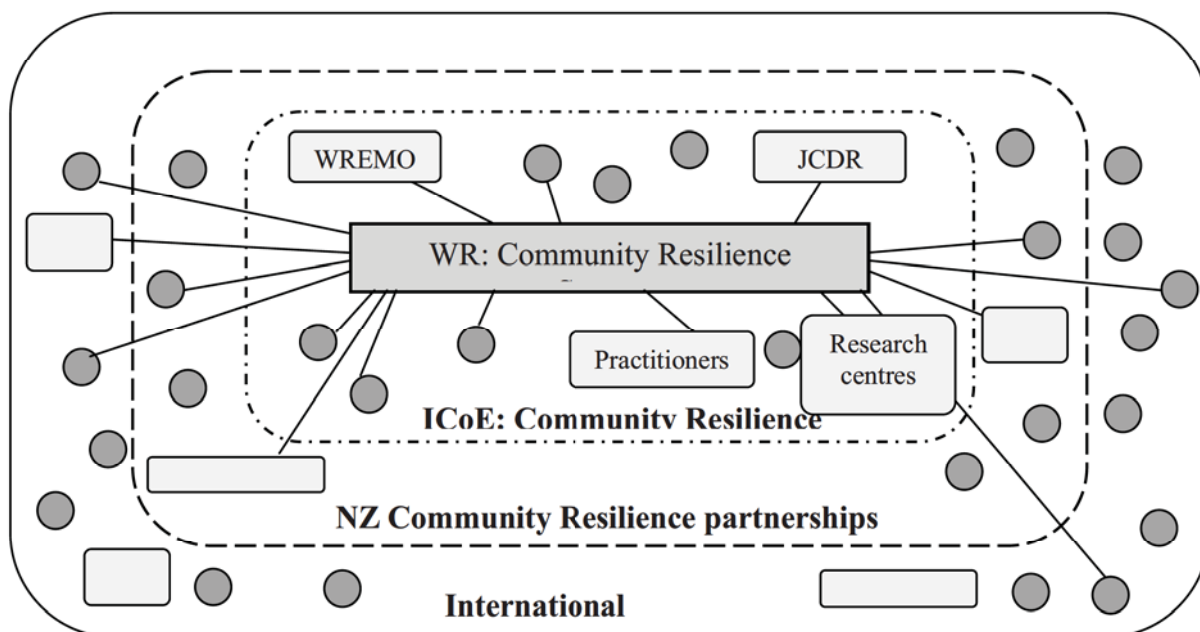
## **5. Vision and objectives of the ICoE:CR, Wellington**

The ICoE:CR will encompass key organisations across the region to develop the science-based models, methods and metrics that provide empirically-based support for community resilience practices. Its overall vision is to be:

- An internationally recognised region-wide centre of excellence to research community resilience to disasters, with active collaboration with individuals, organisations, and communities in the Wellington Region
- With the key objectives of the ICoE:CR being:
  - To provide an evidence base for the Community Resilience Strategy
  - To act as a vehicle to share international good practice in Community Resilience
  - To promote the Wellington Region as a living laboratory for research and learning.

## **6. Membership and structure**

The core of the ICoE:CR is the Wellington Region Community Resilience Strategy, and it is expected that all members of the ICoE:CR feed their outcomes and findings back to the strategy such that we can all enhance the resilience of the Wellington Region. WREMO and the JCDR thus act as the co-ordinating organisation(s) of the ICoE:CR, through which they help facilitate engagement with the ICoE at regional, national and international level, as depicted below:



## 7. Future Activities of ICoE:CR

In line with the core goals of the ICoE:CR, the JCDR has initiated a number of future activities including:

- On-going collaborative research between WREMO and research partners;
- The World Social Science Fellows Seminar, Wellington & Christchurch, NZ, December 2013, “Decision-making under conditions of uncertainty”. In partnership with ISSC, ICSU, UNISDR, RIA Working Group of IRDR, ICoE Taipei and START;
- Massey University/GNS Science Emergency Management Summer Institute, March 2014, Wellington, NZ; and,
- The 7th Australasian Natural Hazards Management Conference, August 2013, Wellington, NZ.

## 8. Benefits to the Wellington Region

The ICoE will demonstrate the Wellington Region’s capability to act as a living laboratory for research and practice into developing Community Resilience, a global issue for disaster research. The Wellington Region will be showcased as an example of excellence for disaster research and practice and supported by the IRDR directly as part of their Strategic plan. Through its membership with the UN-IRDR, ISDR and ISSC, this ICoE has the potential to increase economic activity throughout the region as researchers and practitioners partner with local stakeholders working in this field.

## **9. Costs**

The activities of the ICoE will be carried out through the existing expenditure of the two host organisations, the JCDR and WREMO and will not require any additional funding.

## **10. Recommendations**

*That the CDEM Group:*

- 1. Receives the report; and*
- 2. Notes the contents of the report.*

Report prepared by:

**Bruce Pepperell**  
Regional Manager