Resources for Public Information Management

How to PIM

EMPA Conference 2024

Useful links and resources

- MetService (metservice.com): official source of weather warnings in New Zealand
- GNS Science (gns.cri.nz): national earthquake monitoring and information
- GeoNet Project (geonet.org.nz): national earthquake and volcano notifications
- PIM Contacts: contact information for duty PIMs and media officers across New Zealand
- CDEM PIM NZ Facebook group (private): https://www.facebook.com/groups/218795575239043

National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) | civildefence.govt.nz

- Consistent Messages for CDEM

  Consistent Messages for CDEM is a suite of nationally-agreed messages to support organisations in communicating to people to help them increase their resilience to hazard impacts.

  It incorporates the latest science and best practice advice, using accessible language. Its messaging is people-centred – acknowledging not just the risks to people and property, but to mental health and wellbeing.

  The content is organised around the 4 Rs of emergency management: risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery. It also collates messages applicable to all hazards, followed by hazard-specific sections.

- Public Information Management: Director's Guideline for CDEM Groups

  Although due for an update, this guide gives a thorough overview of PIM. It offers information, templates and structural guidance that can be adapted to meet your organisation's needs.

  Read more here: civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/guidelines/public-information-management

- Resources for media

  The National Emergency Management Agency has developed guides to provide media with an overview of some key aspects of Civil Defence Emergency Management in New Zealand.

  - About Civil Defence: A Guide for Media
  - Tsunami Warnings: A Guide for Media
  - Emergency Mobile Alerts Explained: A Guide for Media

Introduction

How to use this guide

This guide is by no means an exhaustive set of resources for managing an emergency response or public information function. Instead, it's a collection of useful tips, templates and information that a group of experienced public information managers have put together to share with our colleagues.

It's intended to be a starting point for your own PIM planning - to prompt your own preparation; to tailor to your organisation or circumstances; or to supplement what you've already got.

We recommend creating a shared file, folder, group or drive with your most useful templates, reference documents and drafts. You can then copy or open this 'event ready' file as soon as your response gets underway, without the need to start things from scratch.

This guide covers basic PIM planning and templates. You'll also need to consider templates for community engagement, fact sheets and collateral that need to be developed quickly in a response, social media assets and protocols ... the list goes on.

Someone, we're not sure who, once said that an emergency operations centre is, *"Where uncomfortable officials meet in unaccustomed surroundings to play unfamiliar roles, making unpopular decisions based on inadequate information and insufficient time."*

Whether you're an 'official' or not, we hope that this guide goes some way to making you feel more comfortable; more accustomed to your surroundings; more familiar with your role so that you can focus on the information you have to hand and the time you have to communicate it.

Michele, Jo, Glyn and Anthony

***Public Information Management* – PIM 101**
Emergency Media and Public Affairs Conference, Wellington, 2024

Aotearoa New Zealand's Civil Defence 'system'

- The National Emergency Management Agency provides leadership in reducing risk, being ready for, responding to and recovering from emergencies.
- Regional councils provide 'Group' leadership. Local councils respond locally. Unitary councils do both.
- Partner agemcies include Police, Fire and Emergency NZ, Hato Hone St John, Red Cross, the NZ Defence Force and government departments like Health, MSD and MBIE.
- Wider networks include scientists, weather experts, iwi, community groups, churches and faith-based groups, schools and media.
- Our work is focussed on 'The 4 R's' – reduction, readiness, response and recovery
- We work together under one framework – Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS)
- The PIM Function, under CIMS, primarily focusses on providing information and safety messages to the public, and ensuring those messages are consistent.

Templates

Keeping track of your response

It's helpful to create a log or workbook for your response. You can create individual logs or use a programme like Excel to have a single workbook to track all of your queries, actions, lists and databases, rosters and contact details.

Set your workbook up as a template before you need it, and adjust or adapt it for each response.

Save it in a file that can be accessed by your whole team. If you're using a collaborative work space like Microsoft Teams or D4H, save it in your response file and pin it to the top of your list for easy access.

Media log

Fields to use in your media log include:

- Date received
- Time received
- Deadline
- PIM lead
- Media outlet
- Journalist
- Contact details
- Query
- Response
- Spokesperson
- Response type
- Status

PIM function log

Sometimes called an action log, this is where you log all of the tasks, activities and actions that your function is tasked with delivering. If you're keeping an active daily action log or task list on your whiteboard, this is where you can transfer your activity for record-keeping purposes. It's also where you can track your actions from the response action plan. Fields to use in your PIM function log include:

- Date
- Time
- Action/task type
- Allocated to
- Action/task
- Status

Digital channel log

Keeping track of updates on your digital channels is important when you have a prolonged response, with many people working posting or updating your digital channels. If you need to report on your response, noting the time you updated a particular audience or channel, being able to refer to a channel log can be easier than scrolling back through a social media account to find the post. It is also important when you are replacing or updating content, especially if your CMS doesn't keep a record of previous versions. Fields to use in your digital channel log include:

- Date
- Time
- PIM lead
- Channel
- Content
- Status
- Link (to post/page)

Roster

Rostering is the bane of PIM managers lives! We work with the Logistics function to ensure that we have adequate staffing for our response. In a prolonged response this can include deployment from other groups or agencies; it can include round-the-clock shift management or single business-hours type shifts; and you might need to consider how you scale up (or back) quickly.

Your ECC or EOC should have a sign-in process for all staff but sometimes it’s useful to keep a record of hours worked for your team too.

Prolonged responses with multiple shifts will require more complex rosters but if you’re managing a smaller response, useful fields for a roster tab on your workbook include:

- Date
- Name
- Function role
- Time in
- Time out
- Notes

Media release distribution list

Keeping media release distribution lists up to date is essential. If you keep a list for your regular or business as usual work, think about how you can easily bring this into your PIM response.

Having a core list of contact details for all the main newsrooms in your area, region and nationally is also helpful. This should include phone numbers and alternative contact details, just in case you lose power or access to the internet. Useful fields to use when compiling your media release distribution list include:

- Media outlet
- Media type
- Journalist name
- Journalist title
- Phone
- Email

Make a note at the top of the page if there are any important things to remember when sending out your release. For example, remind senders to ‘bcc’ recipients.

A list of stakeholder and internal contacts who should also receive your media releases is important too. These could include:

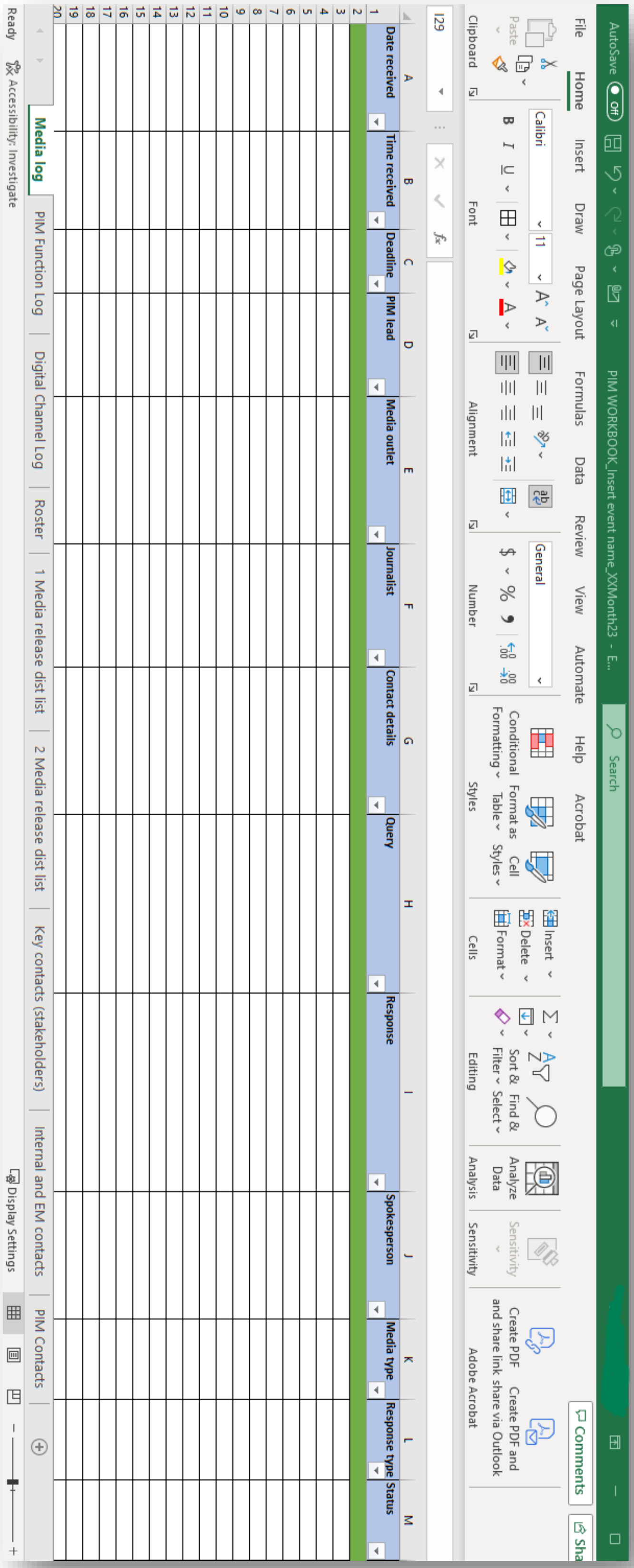
- All function inboxes
- Your executive leaders
- Your elected leaders
- Partner agencies
- NEMA PIM
- Local MPs & Ministers
- Your customer services team

Contacts

Create a worksheet or tab for your key contacts and add to it as your response progresses. These can be used for distribution lists, community outreach, your own PIM team’s details and partner agencies. Useful groups to consider having on your contacts list/s include:

- Local MPs & Ministers
- NEMA
- Fire & Emergency, Police, St John
- NZ Defence Force
- Government agencies
- Red Cross
- NSZL providers
- Translation services
- Lifeline utilities
- Animal welfare
- Your PIM team

Sample PIM Workbook



Media releases and advisories

Create templates for your media releases and advisories in advance. While we send media release out electronically as a rule, you'll need to be prepared for situations where there's no email/internet. It's also important to use templates for document control and good record-keeping.

Tips for preparing and sending media releases:

- Practice good version control – ensure drafts are clearly marked and save your final versions with a final file name.
- Always include your organisation's logo and contact details for authentification
- Using a table in your template helps keep your formatting neat and tidy – make sure you remove the gridlines. This is helpful when pasting the release into an email for sending too.
- Make sure your releases are dated and numbered. You may also need to include the time, if you're issuing regular updates.
- Even if they have been provided by another function, check (and double-check):
    - Data, statistics and the 'latest numbers'
    - The spelling of spokespeople's names and their titles
    - Te reo Māori spelling, including macrons
    - Website addresses
    - Phone numbers
    - Addresses, building names or locations (e.g. evacuation centres).

  It will be the PIM team's problem if any of these are incorrect!
- Make sure the PIM team's contact details are clearly provided at the end or in the email signature.
- Adopt a rigorous approval and sign-off process. At times of high stress we can all miss things so it's better to have multiple reviewers and proof-readers, and ensure you have high-level sign-off before your release goes out.
- Have your controller physically sign a hard copy for final approval and file this in your response documents.
- Before you hit send, make sure your spokespeople are ready to take calls or give interviews.
- BLIND COPY YOUR RECIPIENTS – no one wants to scroll through hundreds of email addresses to get to the copy; and you don't want to breach anyone's privacy by including private email addresses in the 'To' field.
- Consider sending a 'wrap' media release at the end of the day or the end of the week, especially if you're managing a complex response.
- When to send a media advisory (instead of a release):
    - Letting media know about a media stand-up or visit
    - Advising that your response is underway or has stood down.

YOUR LOGO HERE

MEDIA RELEASE

x Month 202X [Arial, 12pt]
Media release #X [Arial, 12pt]

Headline – Arial, 18pt

Body copy [Arial, 12pt]

ENDS [Arial, 12pt]

- Follow us on Facebook – facebook.com/yourname
- Follow us on X (Twitter) – @yourname
- Visit our website – your website

For further information please contact:
Public Information Management (PIM) Team
[*Your organisation*]
Mobile 02X XXX XXX (PIM Duty Phone)
@yourname | facebook.com/yourname | your website

*************** DELETE BEFORE SENDING ***************

Approvals and sign off

Media release writer	[name]

Approval	Date
Content provider or subject matter expert [name]	
Controller [name/s]	
Mayor, councillor or local board member [name/s]	
PIM Manager [name/s]	

Checklist	Tick
Embargoed? If yes, date and time:	☐
Image – 1-2mb size, ensure correctly labelled and permission to distribute	☐
Documents or links – check versions, labelling and that links are working	☐
Website	☐
Spokespeople – are your spokespeople available for additional comment/interviews	☐

When the media calls

Logging your media calls is a must during an emergency response.

- Enables start-to-finish tracking of calls and managing responses across shifts
- Creates a record of work carried out by the PIM team
- Helps identify trends, patterns and hot topics or emerging issues
- Logs contact details that you may need again later
- Helps identify duplication.

Tips for managing media queries

- One media phone number – have a duty phone or identify a single number for the media to call. Hand the phone over to the duty media officer to manage each shift. If diverting the number, remember that you cannot divert text messages.
- Use media query sheets, log books or dedicated notepads – writing notes on scraps of paper or in your own notebook can lead to details of a media call being lost or not logged. (See sample media query sheet below).
- Create a media log – have a tab in your PIM workbook to enter all media queries, media stand-ups and interviews.

YOUR LOGO HERE

Media Query

Date		**Time**	
Reporter		**Media outlet**	
Phone		**Email address**	
Query			
PIM	(name)		

☐ Query actioned/complete ☐ Query to be logged ☐ Logged in workbook

All media queries must be logged in the workbook for this response | Mark query sheet once logged and file (do not discard).

***Media Query Sheet** - this example is printed to A5. It is filled out when calls are taken and entered into the workbook as soon as time allows. Once entered, a strike is put through the page and it is filed as a response record.*

In the PIM room

Managing your PIM room, or the area you've been allocated in an ECC or EOC, or your response hub, is important to the success and efficient running of your function. It enables the smooth transition between shifts, good record-keeping and effective sharing of information across your team.

- Whiteboards – if you have access to whiteboards, use them. Whiteboards are great for planning, action and task lists, key messages, briefing spokespeople (they can literally stand in front of a whiteboard and give a phone interview) and giving a quick reference view of the day's PIM plan.

  Take photographs of your whiteboards at the end of each shift and save in your incident folder.

- Hard-copy document management – that scrap of paper with a note, diagram or phone number scribbled on it; documents (like media releases, scripts or EMA copy) that have been signed by the controller; media query forms and collateral drafts should all be saved in case they are needed again.

  In the event of a review or inquiry, these could be needed for an official investigation and would be considered under various agencies' official information obligations.

  Set aside a box or file to collect these documents from the outset or follow your response manager's instructions.

- Email and filing – consider creating inbox protocols, especially if you're using a shared inbox.

  - at the start of each day appoint an inbox wrangler
  - if you open an email that's not for you, mark it as unread
  - if you start working on an email, mark it as 'in progress'
  - flag emails for the PIM manager – and alert them to them
  - flag and categorise emails for other roles
  - once you've finished with an email, file it.

  Create similar rules for filing documents, ensuring version control. Make sure documents are dated. If saving images, add dates, a brief title or description, photographer/credit information and clearly mark anything that you don't have permission to share or use.

- Team briefings – at the start of each shift, brief your team and confirm your schedule for the day. Consider having this up on the wall or whiteboard if you have space. Briefing your team after the IMT meeting is helpful.

- The night shift – if you're running a 24 hour or limited overnight roster, work with your team to use that time well. While they might still be dealing with issues or incidents, they may have more down time or time when the phone isn't ringing. Night shift teams can often prepare for the next day ahead, for example:

  - Clearing the inbox and filing documents
  - Photographing whiteboards and re-setting them for the next day
  - Drafting key messages, newsletter copy, social media posts for the day ahead.

PIM and Recovery[1]

Build back better

Recovery is the coordinated efforts and processes that bring about the immediate, medium and long term holistic regeneration and enhancement of a community following an emergency (from the*CDEM Act 2002*). Recovery should:

- support cultural and physical well-being of individuals and communities
- minimise escalation of the consequences of the disaster
- reduce future exposure to hazards and their associate risks – i.e. build resilience
- rake opportunities to regenerate and enhance communities in ways that will meet their future needs (across the social, economic, natural and built environments).

Ask yourself: who is the community?

- What groups make up your communities?
- What don't you know about your communities? How are you going to find this information and use it strategically and tactically as PIM … for everyone's benefit?
- Who are their leaders? But will you only listen to their 'leaders'?
- What are their preferred channels of communication?
- What new channels might they need? Will you be that channel provider? Where will the single source of truth be found?

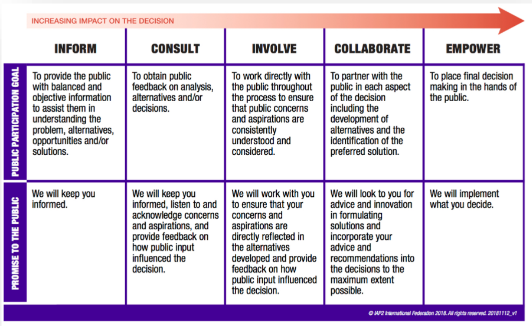
Setting up

- How is your organisation setting itself up to deal with recovery?
- Does it have budget - you can't do this on zero dollars
- Which other agencies and businesses do you need to work with to aid the recovery?
- How can you leverage off other departments and organisations?
- Finally - who is making the decisions?

Recovery and decision making

Emergencies disrupt the usual way that communities, groups and individuals function. Who is responsible for deciding what?

- **Useful resourse:** IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation assists with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process.
  - ➢ iap2.org.au/resources/spectrum



INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

[1] This guidance is based on Marlborough District Council's case studies into recovery from the Wairau River flood in July 2021 and the Marlborough Sounds Future Access Study work, and how subsequent events in 2023 were approached.

Checklists

Deployment checklist[2]

Priorities for the first few hours	✓
Introduce yourself to the response lead (e.g. the incident controller or controller) • Receive an initial briefing about the situation • Establish your level of delegated authority to issue communications/deal with media queries, and ensure mutual understanding about what the incident lead wants to see/sign off before it is released • Begin a log as PIM Manager and ensure you note all instructions you receive and significant discussions, including time / people involved / deadlines. • Introduce yourself to other IMT members/familiarise yourself with the facility you're working from and the operating environment.	
Establish liaison with the duty team or on-call media advisor • Confirm the working arrangements to be clear about what media-related activity and social media you are doing. This includes who will be the contact point for reporters • Initial discussion on PIM resource requirements • Confirm which channels will best reach the impacted community and ensure information is posted there first, then shared to other pages / social media with local reach.	
Create, get authorised and publish a holding line • What we know (and what we don't know) • What we are doing • What we want the impacted individuals/community to do/to not do • Intended time of next update.	
Arrange an initial media stand-up if required • Assess on-ground media presence and requests for interviews • Advise the Incident Controller and confirm any other agencies who should be represented (eg Mayor, emergency servies etc) • Provide talking points for the Incident Controller • Identify a suitable location – Logistics will assist if required	
Assess whether more PIM personnel are likely to be needed. Factors to consider: impact on the community, extent of stakeholder impact, foreseeable media interest, likely duration of the incident • Discuss your assessment with the incident controller • Make a formal request to Logistics if additional team members are needed. Be clear about urgency, the skills are required and likely duration of deployment.	

[2] Source: adapted from the *Fire and Emergency New Zealand PIM Deployment Checklist*

Priorities for the first few hours	✓
Create an initial public information plan for the event • Target audiences • Key messages • Channels/methods of communicating • Spokespeople • Timing of activities.	
Create community and stakeholder databases for this event and ensure they receive all external communications • Contact the liaison or welfare officer within the incident management team. Work together to identify stakeholders and confirm who liaison is already in touch with • Ensure all messages are consistent.	
Maintain close working relationship with all IMT members • Contribute to IMT meetings, SitReps, and the creation of the Incident Action Plan • Ensure information gleaned from community contact, including stakeholders and the public via social media, is shared with Intelligence to help create the common operating picture of the incident • Provide strategic communications advice to the controller. Flag emerging issues that could create reputational risk.	

Equipment checklist[3]

	✓
If you're working with your own organisation, you'll know your systems. If you're being deployed into another organisation, you might have to use your own equipment. Either way, this checklist offers some useful tips. If you are deployed into a remote area there won't be much in the way of facilities, you may need your own phone and laptop. We recommend taking: • Smart phone and charger; and laptop and charger • SIM card for your laptop or configured to hotspot from a phone • Access to your BAU work email account • Local contact/distribution lists for media, elected members and other stakeholders to use in addition to those that maybe provided • Basic stationery (pad, pens) and a USB stick, if you have an iPad and camera, these are also useful.	
Think about the environment you'll be working in and dress accordingly. Corporate or business attire is seldom required but you may need: • Sturdy and closed-in footwear, especially if asked to visit an incident site or attend a field visit • Smart clothing to facilitate media events or VIP visits • Comfortable, warm clothes and shoes for long shifts, overnight or long periods on your feet • PPE, high-vis and function vests are often provided but, depending on your deployment, you may consider bringing your own.	

[3] Source: adapted from the *Fire and Emergency New Zealand PIM Deployment Checklist*

PIM Function Checklists

If you're working in an ECC or EOC, or running your PIM function as part of an Incident Management Team (IMT) response, it's useful to have daily checklists and schedules to manage your workflow. These are examples of a schedule and action plan.

Daily schedule

TIME	ACTION	
8.00AM	ECC opens	Many ECCs or EOCs will open the day with a karakia and briefing from the response lead or controller.
8.05AM	PIM room welcome	PIM manager informally briefs the room, introduces any new team members and allocates roles or tasks for the day.
8.30AM	Incident Management Team (board room)	PIM manager attends the IMT meeting; updates the controller and other function leads on the PIM priorities for the day and takes tasks back to the team.
9.00AM	PIM room briefing	More detailed briefing following the IMT meeting where the PIM manager can discuss the day's tasks.
11.00AM	Status report due	Each function is required to complete a status report for inclusion in the SitRep (situation report). A team member may complete this for review/approval by the PIM manager.
1PM	Daily media stand-up	Scheduled daily media stand-ups are useful during a major or prolonged event.
3.30PM	PIM hui and forward planning Preparation for tomorrow	Set aside time for a review of the day's work, task review and preparation for the next shift or day ahead.
5.00PM	ECC closes	Many ECCs or EOCs will close the day with a karakia and briefing from the response lead or controller.

Daily tasks

	TASK
1	Turn overnight out of office OFF
2	Morning social media post
3	Task status report
4	Review daily task list and allocate tasks
5	Forward SitRep to (name recipients)
6	Clear inbox and file
7	Check and update daily tasks
8	Tidy PIM room • Close/save all documents on computers • Ensure all media calls are logged • File signed documents (hard copies) • Turn overnight out of office ON.

Media Stand-up Checklist

	✓
• Book a suitable room or arrange location – consider access, parking, ambient noise, space for cameras, nearby public areas or public access, lighting and air-conditioning • Arrange a lecturn and check branding (if it is branded) • Do you need signs, pull-up banners or flags?	
• Confirm speakers and coordinate what they are saying (to avoid duplication or conflict) • Confirm time speakers are to meet beforehand and ensure your lead and PIM have their names and titles. • Appoint a lead speaker / MC who will coordinate the stand-up, facilitate questions and assist with any issues. • Arrange a way of alerting your lead speaker if you need to communicate with them during the media stand-up (e.g. if there is breaking news, if a significant error has occurred etc). • Ensure your lead speaker can 'wrap' or bring the media stand-up to a close.	
• Inform media (media advisory) of the media stand-up: o When it will be held o Where it will be held o Who will be speaking o Whether there will be questions afterwards o If they can livestream o Parking and access arrangements.	
• Allocate a PIM team member to write notes for speakers and set deadlines for review • Allocate a PIM team member to prepare a media release, based on the stand-up, that can go out after the stand-up.	
• Arrange NZ Sign Language interpreters – interpreters will need access to the speaking notes ahead of the stand-up so they are familiar with the content. Point out any information that may be difficult for them (e.g. pronunciation of names, Te Reo, scientific information). • Ensure there is room for your speaker and NZSL interpreter to stand side-by-side. • Ensure your NZSL interpreter has a block colour background behind them. • Ensure your livestream does not cut out/off the NZSL interpreter. • Confirm that your livestream will have captions added (even if it is after the event). If you cannot arrange this, consider adding a transcript.	
• Set up and test your own livestream o Confirm the login details for the accounts you will be using o Ensure your equipment works, is in the correct place and is up the right way.	
• After the media stand-up o Follow up any outstanding questions o Facilitate any break-out interviews o If you've experienced technical difficulties, troubleshoot o Thank your line-up and escort them out (in case of any further media engagement).	