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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Wairoa flood mitigation kōrero continues to make progress**

The continued progress of the Wairoa Flood Mitigation project is a testament to the collective commitment to working towards safeguarding the future of the Wairoa township, with community kōrero continuing in the lead up to 2025.

Wairoa Flood Mitigation Crown Manager, Lawrence Yule, said the project team and partners have now engaged with the majority of potentially impacted home and landowners, with a number of direct discussions ongoing.

“Despite our shared commitment to minimising impacts on the people of Wairoa, whenua and cultural taonga, we acknowledge this is a difficult project and a tough time, particularly for those experiencing the most immediate challenges as a result of this important work.

“Back in mid-October, we commenced early engagement with mana whenua, including whānau, home and property owners potentially impacted by two of the most technically viable flood mitigation solutions – Options 1C and 1D.

“Over the last two months, I have been deeply impressed by the willingness of most of those potentially impacted people to engage in meaningful discussion, and the genuine desire to want to work with us to help ensure the safety of Wairoa for generations to come.”

Mr Yule says that more technical project refinements are underway and will occur at the same time as the ongoing community conversations.

“Thanks to the support of landowners, ground testing work is ahead of schedule and nearing completion, refinements to the more technically viable solutions are being considered, and a land access and compensation framework has been confirmed and agreed in principle.

“We have listened to concerns and suggestions of the community and modified potential flood mitigation solutions, and we will continue to do everything we can to come up with the best possible technically viable solution that simultaneously minimises negative impacts on whānau, their homes and their whenua.”

Mr Yule said that as a community, the people of Wairoa have experienced devastating flooding events over and over again, and that this continued flood risk is an important reminder of the need to put solutions in place to help protect people’s lives, homes, and businesses.

“We are now only two months away from the two-year anniversary of Cyclone Gabrielle and two months away from the point at which we are hoping to have a confirmed,

preferred flood mitigation option agreed, with the support of impacted land and homeowners.

“I want to acknowledge those in the Wairoa community who are experiencing the most immediate challenges as a result of what we all know is a massive undertaking. We continue to move at pace, and while our timeline is pressing, we remain committed to doing this right.

“While our immediate focus remains on advancing flood mitigation solutions for North Clyde, I want to reiterate that as Crown Manager, I have been tasked with looking at all options to help protect the community of Wairoa going forward.

“As I’ve said before, this includes looking at options for the long-term management of the Wairoa River Bar, including potential engineering solutions that may enable the Bar to remain permanently open in a hydraulically suitable location. It also includes ensuring the ongoing maintenance of Wairoa’s existing stormwater drainage network, as well as considering other longer-term environmental or infrastructure improvements to reduce flood risk.

“It’s still early days for this important mahi, but it all forms part of a more holistic approach to flood plain management and the team and I am committed to ensuring we do everything possible to get this right for Wairoa for the future.”

**ENDS**

**For more information, contact:**

Hannah Heberley

[hannah@hhcomms.co.nz](mailto:hannah@hhcomms.co.nz) or 021 272 8021