

## Notes from Wairoa Stakeholder Group meeting 15.08.24 10am-1pm

Chaired by WDC CE Kitea Tipuna, as former independent Chair Lawrence Yule now appointed as flood mitigation project Crown Manager.

Mr Yule described his role as co-ordinating flood protection works for Wairoa. Explained his starting point is to work with people who hold the knowledge and information and to review the situation and make sure we can, as expediently as possible, get some solutions sorted and go out for public engagement.

Mr Yule said it is not his intention to push solutions onto the community, but instead show the community various options and solutions and try and get community engagement as best as possible.

Mr Yule explained his scope is greater than what the scope of the stakeholder group was and is to look at what happened in NC and Kopu Road and medium-term flood protection measures for the whole of the Wairoa township – this is a change in position.

He has yet to form a view of the future role of the stakeholder group.

Wants a very open and transparent process around information sharing.

Mr Yule explained the Crown is keen to see progress made but not at the risk of a sub-optimal option. Noting there are people in NC whose properties are in 2C who want to go to 1 and people on the south side yellow stickered.

Noted the soon-to-be-released Mike Bush report into the management of the Wairoa River mouth during the June flooding, acknowledging his role is to take into account what the report says.

In this case, Wairoa has \$70m and the key is to make sure it is spent as effectively and efficiently as possible to give Wairoa the best flood protection it can get. No flood protection is foolproof.

Mr Yule said his mantra is to try and avoid where at all possible impacting people's homes, properties, marae and urupā but it is not going to be possible to avoid everyone's property and all Māori land – we have to accept that.

The principles are:

- Transparency
- Want it to be the best flood protection scheme we can provide Wairoa within the funding envelope we've got.
- Want to try and minimise the impact of the scheme on people's assets and properties where possible.

Also aware of climate change factors.

Mr Yule said he is confident, based on the numbers I have been given by the engineers, that we can fix North Clyde and Kopu Road within the \$70m; "that's my opinion, and it is subject to land acquisition and structural costs."

The Government wants as much resilience built into the flood protection schemes for Wairoa as possible.

Options and reports that had been requested by the group were presented.

Reports have also been added to Dropbox.

Peer reviewer Gary Williams presented information on alternative option 1D and its iterations, a wider option that impacts more land and less houses.

Group presented a dredging options report by Beca which suggested high costs with regulatory, environmental and engineering impacts and any dredging benefits could be mitigated by tides being so close to the coast. Request for river depth data.

Tonkin Taylor presented on management of the Wairoa River mouth.

Described the bar as complicated, with the risk of flooding increasing significantly once the bar moved west past Pilot Hill.

If the river mouth is in the right place, the river will widen it. Goes back to management, timing, local experience and knowledge.

There is a trend for the mouth to move from east to west, and the only way to bring the mouth back is to breach the river through the bar.

Mouth can move quickly, up to one metre in a day.

There is also a trend of pushing the bar upward in line with sea level increases where the crest of the bar can be 5m and the town 3.5m with the bar effectively creating a stopbank.

The key is on-the-ground information and regular maintenance.

Discussed training walls like Opotiki which cost \$100m and still has siltation issues. Wairoa's complexity, environment and weather mean the cost would be higher.

Report recommends intense management in the short term while looking towards a single groin off Pilot Hill to make it easier for manual breaches. Gave an example in Balclutha, where a similar approach was taken and has been successful.

Options presented, including over-design.

Need to complete a cultural assessment and discussion to engage a person from out of town to run that, as not the capacity or capability of Wairoa.

Group members were asked if they would support options 1C and 1D (with tweaks) going forward as the recommendation from the Stakeholder Group to the Tripartite Group so they could go to community engagement. At least three members of the stakeholder group did not support the two options expressing concern over losing Māori land- counteracted with how the mitigation would also protect Māori land. Request for representation from the Māori Land Court to be included in the process.

Raising homes discussed, not within the scope of the group, can be expensive and complicated, and estimated at \$95,000 per house, based on recent Tairāwhiti figures, does not include garages, sheds, etc.

Acknowledging that no unanimous agreement on preferred options was reached amongst the

stakeholder group, the decision was made to take the conversation to the Tripartite partners for further discussion and consideration.