

Flood protection stakeholder notes 07.03.24

Presentation by Ministry for Environment re community consultation on the Order in Council (OiC). Developed under legislation for all HB flood mitigation to make protection more achievable to protect communities. OiC refers to a controlled activity where consent must be granted, but conditions still exist.

Speeding up the process is necessary to achieve timelines - in Wairoa's case, to have flood protection completed in 4 years.

Stakeholders expressed concern over the OiC, stating there is no provision for Te Tiriti o Waitangi to be honoured, no right of appeal, and no ability to go through the high court.

Identified difficulty in making decisions without knowing what is being decided on and the impacts, particularly culturally. Group members expressed feelings of heavy-handedness, feeling uneasy and fear in the room due to being rushed through a process with no right of appeal.

Discussion re 'affected people' and how there could be impacts from flood protection that have not yet been identified, or people affected who have never been affected by flooding before, and how that can be quantified if it's still unknown.

Discussion around 18 options reduced to three preferred. The presentation by the MfE included three preferred options, which the group said should not have been included as no decisions have been made.

Group acknowledged they want to speed the flood protection process up and get people back into their homes and protected, but not at the cost of losing something precious.

The option of 1C and bringing a wall of water through town is not an option. The stakeholder group expressed it feels like it is being held to ransom and pushed to come up with a plan to get to 2C. Urged HBRC to be brave enough to make that change to 2C so people can get back into their homes.

Mayor Craig Little said the presentation should not have included the three options identified as preferred by the HBRC, particularly as they haven't been confirmed by the stakeholder group and show a sense of predetermination. He stressed that if we can move to 2C now, we should. Mr Little said the inclusion of the three options in the MfE presentation unfortunately took the conversation away from OiC and instead back to river protection.

The stakeholder group expressed concern that they had not agreed to the three identified options. They asked for more options to be explored and wanted additional information on why some of the other options won't work so they could explain them to the community.

One stakeholder identified that Wairoa was not ready. All 18 original options are based on estimates, not Cyclone Gabrielle data.

Regarding submissions on the OiC, WDC confirmed it would make a submission, and stakeholders could make their own submissions, but a submission would not be made on behalf of the stakeholder group.