

WAIROA

FLOOD MITIGATION PROJECT

Community newsletter – April 2026

The Wairoa Flood Mitigation Project has reached another important milestone, with early enabling works now able to commence following a special karakia and blessing held for the contractors and crew in mid-April. Three years on from Cyclone Gabrielle, this project continues to move forward, and the community is one step closer to the long-term flood protection it needs. This newsletter provides an update on the key areas of work.

Early enabling works to commence

A special karakia led by Father Trevor Tindall from St Peter's Catholic Church was held in mid-April to bless and provide protection over Goodmans and their sub-contractors who are involved in this first phase of physical works for the narrowed Option 1C+ floodway. The blessing grounded the commencement of enabling works / pre-construction in the cultural values and tikanga that have guided the project from the outset.

Initial site clearing is now underway on HBRC-owned areas of the floodway, including the Wairoa A&P Showgrounds. These works include the felling of a small number of trees and vegetation clearance and represent the first physical activity for the project – an encouraging step forward for the community.

The timing of these works has been carefully planned in line with specialist ecological and environmental advice. Monitoring has identified pekapeka tou-roa (long tailed bat) activity in and around some of the trees that need to be cleared. It is important that tree felling is completed before the onset of winter, when pekapeka may enter a state of torpor and cannot be safely relocated. Getting these works underway now enables the project team to make the most of the available window ahead of that period.

Next phase of construction

While there is still a lot of work ahead before the main construction phase begins, these initial works are an important part of keeping the project on track.

Goodman Contractors, appointed through the Early Contractor Involvement process, are working closely with the design team to

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finalise construction methodologies. Detailed design continues to advance and is expected to be completed by the end of July 2026.

The main construction works are expected to commence from spring 2026 onwards.

South side of the Awa

Work continues to progress on the town side of the river, where stopbank construction will provide additional protection for the community. Town-side stopbank design has been finalised and detailed design continues to advance, with the project team actively engaging with property owners in the Mitchell Road and Churchill Avenue areas. We understand this can be an uncertain time and are committed to keeping affected residents informed every step of the way.

Planning is also underway for community facilities at Alexandra Park that will be impacted by stopbank construction, including the skatepark, campground facilities, ski club and boat ramp. Wairoa District Council is gathering feedback from the community around alternative locations, and the project team is working closely with Council to ensure these community assets are well catered for.

Community resilience

Wairoa District Council is also progressing its community resilience plan. This work sits alongside the flood mitigation project and is an important part of ensuring the wider community is well prepared for future weather events.

Nā tātou katoa – For all of us

You'll find the latest updates on the Wairoa Flood Mitigation project page visit wairoafloodproject.co.nz

hbrc.govt.nz/hawkes-bay/projects/restoring-flood-resilience

Wairoa River mouth longer-term solution

Alongside the main flood mitigation works, the longer-term solution for managing the Wairoa River mouth continues to progress. The river bar remains a significant area of community interest and concern, and we understand the anxiety many people feel every time heavy rain or seas are forecast.

Hawke's Bay Regional Council and the Crown Manager are actively looking at the merits of a permanent groyne to support a more stable river mouth east of Pilot Hill. The groyne would be a significant investment and there is currently no funding earmarked for its construction, but work is progressing to better understand what would be needed.

Preliminary technical investigations are underway, including ecological studies, and additional Cultural Impact Assessment activity related to the river mouth area has also been commissioned to ensure cultural values are comprehensively considered across all components of the more holistic flood plain management approach.

We recognise that for many in the Wairoa community, what happens at the river mouth is just as important as the North Clyde floodway works. With early enabling works on the floodway now underway, we are turning our attention to ensuring the river mouth work is shaped by the community. A dedicated period of community engagement on the river mouth and groyne project will begin in May, and we look forward to hearing from all those with an interest, including hapū and other community stakeholders, as this important mahi advances.



TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O TE MATAU-A-MĀUI